

QUEENSLAND ELECTION 2020

Protecting our Great Barrier Reef

How do the party policies compare?

An independent assessment of parties' policies by the Australian Marine Conservation Society

About us

The Australian Marine Conservation Society is a national environmental organisation representing more than a quarter of a million people across the country. We are a voice for reefs, people, marine wildlife and healthy oceans.

We are proudly independent, non-partisan and funded by donations from the community. Our purpose is to advance the protection of our marine environment. We do not promote or oppose political parties or direct people how to vote, but offer independent policy assessments of where the parties stand on the big issues facing our Reef and our oceans.

How have we assessed the policies of the main parties?

AMCS has written to the main parties* to let them know what's needed to protect our Great Barrier Reef in the next term of government.

The Australian Labor Party, the Liberal National Party and The Greens were the only parties to respond to the substance of our letter and we have independently assessed their position and commitments based on their responses, published policies, statements and election announcements.

We have rated each party as having 'met', 'partially met' or 'not met' the following six key commitments:

Policy recommendations in our letter to parties

- ✓ Do our fair share to limit global warming to 1.5 to give our Reef a chance
- ✓ Deliver significant public investment in renewable energy
- ✓ Maintain Reef water laws, regulations and programs
- ✓ Invest in clean water for the Reef
- ✓ Protect threatened inshore dolphins, dugongs and turtles from fishing
- ✓ Achieve Ecologically Sustainable Fishing in Queensland

An assessment rating of the parties' policies as of 21 October 2020 is provided below.

****Note:***

AMCS wrote to each of the main parties based on their existing seats in Queensland Parliament and whether they're running in a majority of seats. The Australian Labor Party, the Liberal National Party and The Greens were the only parties to respond to the substance of our letter.

Here are links to the policies of some of the other parties competing in this election: [Katter's Australian Party](#), [Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party](#), [United Australia Party](#), [Informed Medical Options Party](#), [Animal Justice Party](#).

1. Do our fair share to limit global warming to 1.5 to give our Reef a chance

Commit to develop and implement a Climate Change Action Plan for 2020–2030 that includes an independent Climate Change Authority and clear emission reduction targets consistent with global efforts to avoid 1.5 degrees of warming.

Australian Labor Party:

- Will develop a Climate Action Plan 2020–2030, to build on the Queensland Climate Transition Strategy released in 2017. The Action Plan will guide the next stage of the post–2020 climate pathway, see [here](#).
- Retains their commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, see [here](#).
- While the goal of net zero emissions by 2050 is in line with limiting warming to 1.5 degrees, Labor’s interim targets need to improve to meet this target.

Assessment: Partially met

Liberal National Party:

- Supports the national target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which is a 26–28% reduction in Australia’s emissions compared with 2005 levels, see [here](#).
- Their national target is not in line with limiting warming to 1.5 degrees and if the LNP removes the zero net emissions target, Queensland would be the only state or territory without this crucial policy, see [here](#).

Assessment: Not met

Queensland Greens:

- Have a clear plan for Queensland to do its fair share on limiting warming to 1.5 degrees.
- Their plan includes strong targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, comprehensive adaptation measures and support for low-emissions practices in agriculture, manufacturing and industry. For more info see their climate change policy, see [here](#).

Assessment: Met

2. Deliver significant public investment in renewable energy

Significantly boost investment in renewable energy and implement at least three Renewable Energy Zones, including at least two along the Reef coast.

Australian Labor Party:

- [\\$145 million to establish 3 renewable energy corridors](#) across Queensland, which includes 5 renewable energy zones from Rockhampton.
- [\\$500 million to establish a Renewable Energy Fund](#) for state-owned energy corporations to increase public ownership of commercial renewable energy projects and supporting infrastructure
- [\\$17 million to establish a renewable energy training facility](#)

Assessment: Met

Liberal National Party:

- Drive the development of 3 Renewable Energy Zones by accelerating the coordinated development of the priority REZ's for Darling Downs, Fitzroy and Far North Queensland
- Changing the mandates of CS Energy and Stanwell to allow investment in renewables
- Committed to building a new Virtual Power Plant
- These policies were outlined by the opposition leader at the Queensland Communities Alliance Maroonprint, see [here](#).
- Delivering a plan to build the New Bradfield Scheme, which would generate enough hydroelectricity to power up to 800,000 homes, see [here](#). AMCS has serious concerns about this scheme because creating dams and diverting natural waterways to this extent would negatively impact the Great Barrier Reef and natural water flows.

Assessment: Partially met

Queensland Greens:

- Clean energy policy commitments for 20,000 MW and 100% renewables by 2030. All in public ownership.
- Billions of dollars committed to invest in expanding the network.
- See their [renewables plan](#) for further details.

Assessment: Met

3. Retain current Reef laws and clean up the Reef's waters

3.1 Maintain Reef water laws, regulations and programs

Commit to maintaining Queensland's Reef water quality and tree clearing laws and regulations. Commit to maintaining the \$500 million Land Restoration Fund.

3.2 Invest in clean water for the Reef

Commit at least \$330 million over five years to meet the water quality targets.

Australian Labor Party:

- Committed to retain Reef water quality regulations they introduced in 2019
- Committed to retain Queensland's vegetation management laws, which they reinstated in 2018
- Established the \$500 million Land Restoration Fund. The first round was [announced](#), which has selected projects worth around \$93 million.
- [\\$10 million Reef Assist Program](#).
- \$340 million invested until July 2022.
- Commitment to continue the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Program (outlined in ALP response letter to AMCS), which is the program that delivers on meeting the water quality targets

Assessment: Met

Liberal National Party:

- Voted against both Reef water quality regulations and tree clearing laws / regulations.
- [Moved a motion](#) to disallow the Reef regulations in May 2020.
- Has committed to develop new environmental reef standards which will be enshrined in legislation (outlined LNP response letter and in Environment Debate [here](#)). AMCS has concerns about any changes that will occur to the current Reef regulations, particularly as it is unclear what new reef standards will entail.
- Support [AgForce's landscape management policy](#), which calls for revisions to tree clearing laws.
- Has committed to retaining category R and category A of the vegetation management Act but unclear what other changes will occur ([QLD election environment debate](#))
- Commitment to maintain all current allocated State funding for reef protection (LNP response letter), although unclear what future investment from LNP looks like in regards to meeting the water quality targets.

Assessment: Not met

Queensland Greens:

- Support \$330 million investment over five years in funding to meet Reef water quality targets (outlined in letter to AMCS)
- Has committed to maintaining Queensland's Reef water quality regulations and tree clearing laws and regulations, and to maintaining the \$500 million Land Restoration Fund (outlined in letter to AMCS).
- Has committed to strengthen tree clearing laws, see [here](#).

Assessment: Met

4. Save threatened species by reforming fisheries

4.1 Protect threatened inshore dolphins, dugongs and turtles

Commit \$10 million to provide much needed structural adjustment of the net fishery, prioritising the purchase and quota extinguishment of the three remaining offshore licenses and the reduction of the number of inshore licenses.

4.2 Achieve Ecologically Sustainable Fishing in Queensland

Commit to fully implement and fund the delivery of the [Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy](#) or equivalent strategy for the next term of government.

Australian Labor Party:

- The ALP has not committed any funds to provide for the purchase of high risk commercial gillnets in the Reef that target sharks and are a high risk to turtles, dugongs and dolphins.
- The ALP [released](#) a draft East Coast Inshore Protected Species Management Strategy for consultation prior to entering caretaker mode. Consultation will reopen after the Queensland election.
- The ALP has recently put [regulation](#) in place that progresses the delivery of the *Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-27*. Regulations include management changes for landing sharks with fins attached for improved identification, dividing fisheries into smaller management regions and establishing catch limits and implementing quota and effort units in some of Queensland's largest fisheries, which will improve the control of fishing effort.
- The ALP has released Harvest Strategies for key fisheries for [consultation](#) (consultation will continue after the election).
- The ALP has committed to continued implementation of the *Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027*, with [funding committed until July 2021](#). It is unclear how implementation of the Strategy will be funded beyond 2021 should the ALP form government.

Assessment: Partially met

Liberal National Party:

- The LNP announced an [\\$8.5 million package](#) that includes a \$6 million commitment for a voluntary license buyback scheme.
- The license buyback scheme would prioritise the purchase of high risk commercial gillnets, targeting licenses in the Cape and the offshore commercial shark fishing nets.
- The LNP has specified they are committed to ensuring Queensland's fisheries are sustainable and in line with international obligations (as specified in a letter from the LNP to AMCS).
- As the LNP has not committed to a strategy to ensure Queensland's fisheries are reformed and ecologically sustainable, but it is unclear how they would progress with reforms.
- The LNP has made no commitments to funding ongoing reforms, but has previously called for a [moratorium](#) on fishery reforms and moved to [disallow](#) previous fishing regulations in 2019.

Assessment: Partially met

Queensland Greens:

- Support for a \$10 million structural adjustment of the East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fishery (outlined in letter to AMCS).
- Support the purchase and quota extinguishment of the three remaining offshore net licenses and a reduction in the number of inshore licenses (outlined in letter to AMCS).
- The Queensland Greens have committed to fully funding the delivery of the *Sustainable Fisheries Strategy* (or an equivalent strategy), for the next term of government.
- Their national Marine and Coastal areas and Fisheries policy is [here](#).
- Their Queensland fishing policy, adopted in 2014, is [here](#).

Assessment: Met