

19 September 2023

Annastacia Palaszczuk MP
Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games
via email: dpc@premiers.qld.gov.au

CC: Steven Miles MP, Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; Cameron Dick MP, Queensland Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment; Mick de Brenni MP, Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and for Public Works and Procurement, Leanne Linard MP, Minister for Environment.

Dear Premier,

Urgent need to significantly improve Queensland's Emission Reduction targets

On the 6th of June 2023 our organisations urged incoming Minister for the Environment, Leanne Linard MP, to significantly improve Queensland's emissions reduction targets and provided the information set out below.

The world has just endured the three hottest months on record, and Australia's Bureau of Meteorology has just declared that an El Niño event will hit Australia and Queensland this year. We know the devastating impacts of extreme heat events on Queensland's people and nature, and we urge you to announce significantly more ambitious emissions reduction targets in the next few months before the peak of summer hits.

We write to you to reiterate our request that Queensland urgently significantly improve Queensland's emissions reduction targets to at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030, 70% below 2005 levels by 2032 and 90% below 2005 levels by 2035.

We greatly appreciate the steps the Queensland Government has taken thus far to address climate change. Your government has shown commitment and dedication to this critical issue, and we commend the progress that has been made through your existing plans and initiatives, such as Queensland's Energy and Jobs Plan¹ and Queensland Climate Action Plan 2020-2030. We believe that there is still much more that must be done to increase the scale of climate action ambition across Queensland's economy. We were encouraged to hear that your government is reviewing the Queensland Government's climate strategy, including Queensland's State-wide emission reduction targets.²

We, the undersigned 14 organisations, representing 931,508 Queenslanders, call on your Government to **urgently increase Queensland's emissions reduction targets to at least 60% by 2030, 70% by 2032 and 90% below 2005 levels by 2035**. These targets will bring Queensland more in line with the ambition of other states and closer to what climate science shows is the minimum that is necessary for Queensland to do our part to hold warming to 1.5 °C.³

¹ Energy and Jobs Plan. Queensland Government. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.epw.qld.gov.au/energyandjobsplan>

² Emissions Ambitions. Courier Mail. 3 October 2022.

³ This is in line with analysis from globally leading climate science experts which shows that Australia has exhausted its fair share of the global emissions budget, but applying a generous 0.97% share, that it must reach net zero by 2038 at the very latest and set a 2035 target of 90% below 2005 levels to have an emissions reduction target consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C with a 50% chance. For details see: Meinshausen, Professor Malte and Nicholls, Dr Zebedee, June 2023, Briefing, Updated assessment of

Why Queensland must do more

We are facing a climate emergency and a period that is extraordinary in our lifetimes. Queenslanders are witnessing record rain, floods, bushfires, heat waves causing mass coral bleaching, and rising sea levels. The latest IPCC report projections give cause for Queenslanders to be concerned for the safety of our children now and in future decades.⁴ Queensland's current emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2050 are too low, too slow and risk Queensland's people and nature.⁵

Queensland's new renewable energy targets for 2032 and 2035 are welcome, but they do not commit Queensland to adequate climate action.

Research we have commissioned from Accenture shows Queensland can reach at least 60% emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2030 with a handful of policies and create tens of thousands of jobs in the process.⁶ While this would be a significant lift in ambition, it is still short of what the science says is required for Queensland to maintain a safe climate.

The climate science shows 75%⁷ to 93%⁸ below 2005 levels by 2030 is in line with Queensland's fair share of holding warming to 1.5°C with a 50% probability.. As Australia's most biodiverse state whose economy is the most exposed to climate change and the state most prone to extreme weather events - Queensland has the most to lose if temperatures exceed 1.5°C warming. The difference between 1.5 and 2°C of warming for Queensland is stark. Limiting warming to 1.5°C means avoiding the worst climate impacts that put humanity and natural ecosystems at risk.⁹ For example, at 2°C of warming, >99% of coral reefs, including the World Heritage Listed Great Barrier Reef will be lost, along with the tens of thousands of jobs it supports.

Queensland's ambition is lacking

Queensland is currently the least ambitious State in the National Electricity Market on climate action and is not aligned with limiting warming to 1.5°C. Queensland's current emissions reduction target of 30% below 2005 by 2030 levels is out of step with its ambition in the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan and with the threat the climate emergency poses to our unique state.

Doubling the existing 2030 emissions reduction target is a step towards aligning with what the

Australia's Emissions Reduction Targets and 1.5 C pathways, Commissioned by WWF-Australia. Available online here: https://www.climate-resource.com/reports/wwf/20230612_WWF-Aus-Targets.pdf

⁴ Synthesis report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). Summary for Policymakers. IPCC. 2023. Retrieved from https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

⁵ A/Prof Malte Meinshausen and Dr. Zebedee Nicholls, Climate Resource, Comparison between Queensland's 2030 and 2050 emission reduction targets, 1.5°C pathways and 2.0°C pathways. Retrieved from https://www.climate-resource.com/reports/wwf/WWF_March2022_a.pdf

⁶ Accenture, 2022. Queensland Climate Action Plan: Laying the foundation for a successful climate transformation, accessed: https://assets.nationbuilder.com/auscon/pages/20679/attachments/original/1659489171/Queensland_Climate_Action_Plan-FINAL-1_August-PDF-FINAL.pdf

⁷ A/Prof Malte Meinshausen and Dr. Zebedee Nicholls, Climate Resource, Comparison between Australia's 2030 and 2050 emission reduction targets, 1.5°C pathways and 2.0°C pathways. Retrieved from https://www.climate-resource.com/reports/wwf/WWF_March2022_a.pdf

⁸ A/Prof Malte Meinshausen and Dr. Zebedee Nicholls, Climate Resource, Comparison between Queensland's 2030 and 2050 emission reduction targets, 1.5°C pathways and 2.0°C pathways. Retrieved from https://www.climate-resource.com.au/reports/wwf/202206_WWF-Qld-Targets.pdf

⁹ Special Report on 1.5°C. IPCC. 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>.

climate science shows is required for Queensland to do our part to hold warming to 1.5°C. We emphasise it is not enough and that stronger commitments early in the next decade are required.

The solution

A minimum interim target of 60% by 2030 as a first step, with a commitment to ratchet up to 70% by 2032, and a rapid scaling up to at least 90% by 2035. This is in line with renewable energy targets and decarbonisation pathways set in the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan and more in line with other states. Stronger targets this decade would make sure Queensland doesn't miss out on the investment opportunities stronger emissions reduction targets attract.

While we call for these minimum emissions reduction targets as the baseline, it is vital that Queensland continues to look for opportunities to increase the pace of decarbonisation across the economy and in turn protect its international reputation as we head to a climate positive Olympics and Paralympics. The tourism industry will benefit immensely from the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and protecting Queensland's tourism drawcards, such as the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef will be pivotal. The World Heritage Committee is concerned about the health of the Great Barrier Reef and if more is not done, may inscribe the Great Barrier Reef on the list of World Heritage in Danger. To avoid this, the Queensland Government must "ensure the 1.5°C target is supported by legislation, and clear, actionable steps to achieve this target are set within the state's existing climate related strategies and plans".¹⁰

Social licence for the energy transition can only be achieved by linking it with strong climate action

Improved emissions reduction targets would demonstrate genuine climate action that Queenslanders want to see taken by the Queensland Government. Attempting to roll out large-scale infrastructure required for the energy transformation without connecting that plan to genuine and ambitious emissions reductions will be unlikely to achieve the social licence needed across Queensland communities.

Queensland Can

Queensland can and must do more. For our children, our world communities, for our world heritage listed sites such as the Great Barrier Reef. Queensland can achieve ambitious emissions reductions whilst ensuring a just energy transformation for rural and remote Queenslanders that leaves no one behind.

Our organisations stand ready to support an increase in the speed of emissions reductions across Queensland, and the next step on our state's journey to reaching the speed of action that climate science shows is necessary.

Now is the time for Queensland to make a plan to win as the world moves to net zero. Faster action on decarbonising the Queensland economy can be achieved in a way that protects workers, brings benefits to communities and minimises the continued and increasing threats from climate damage that are a serious threat to our way of life across the State.

¹⁰ Report on the Reactive Monitoring Mission to the Great Barrier Reef (Australia), 21-30 March 2022, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/197090>

On behalf of:



AUSTRALIA



MACKAY CONSERVATION GROUP

SUNSHINE COAST Environment Council



Gladstone Conservation Council



SolarCitizens



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