



ENVIRONMENT  
INSTITUTE OF  
AUSTRALIA AND  
NEW ZEALAND

1 June 2007

Joanne Hamer  
Brisbane City Council  
GPO Box 1434  
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Joanne,

**Climate Change and Energy Task Force Final Report  
Submission from the SEQ Division of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand**

**Introduction**

The Southeast Queensland Division of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (herein referred to as the Institute) supports the establishment of the Climate Change and Energy Taskforce and for it to seek to achieve its terms of reference. We are pleased to be consulted with on the Final Report and provide for your consideration our comments below.

**Overall Position**

In accordance with the Institute's Climate Change Position Statement, it accepts the international consensus of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that human activities are the main cause of the global warming observed over the last hundred years or so. The Institute believes that due to the global nature of climate change, it requires integrated international, national and local responses. As such, proactive strategies by Brisbane City Council to reduce emissions is fundamental in seeking positive outcomes.

The guiding principles for the Institutes approach to climate change policy are:

- The precautionary principle requires that there be no delay in reducing anthropogenic risks to the stability of the climate;
- Action today is better (more greenhouse and cost effective) than action delayed into the future;
- It is Government's special role to provide strong, clear leadership and policy frameworks that encourage rapid implementation of emission reduction strategies and protection of the natural environment;
- Governments, businesses, communities and individuals need to progressively reduce greenhouse emissions through the use of a range of approaches with multiple, sustainable development outcomes;
- Carbon derived from the current carbon cycle needs to replace fossil carbon use;
- Mitigation and adaptation strategies require new approaches and partnerships ensuring actions and investments deliver multiple, sustainable benefits;
- Greenhouse policies must consider intra- and inter-generational equity and sustainability with implications for the economic, social and physical fabric of societies worldwide; and
- While the issue is global, the answer requires actions and encouragement at all levels.

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand - South East Queensland Division  
*The professional association for environmental practitioners*

Physical Address: Level 4, 192 Ann Street, Brisbane Q 4000  
Postal Address: Suite 105, 1B/192 Ann Street, Brisbane Q 4000.  
Phone: 07 3023 6188 Fax: 07 3023 6189 Email: seq@eianz.org

The EIANZ believes that climate change policy needs to embrace leadership, research, mitigation and adaptation strategies in order to deal with the environmental, social and economic implications of climate change. New approaches and partnerships may need to be developed to ensure implementation of effective programs.

## **Key Comments**

### **Key Messages for the Brisbane Community**

The Institute's position statement on climate change clearly identified the need for both mitigation of climate change effects and adaptation. Unfortunately the 'key messages' are focussed a little too narrowly on adaptation, where, for example, key issues of energy consumption and the need to reduce demand is not highlighted, as per the terms of reference.

### **A Challenge for Brisbane**

The Institute supports the suggested target of zero net greenhouse emissions from Brisbane by 2050. Striving for this target will identify Brisbane as a world leader in sustainable development. However the Institute believes that targets associated with carbon neutrality require detailed analysis to ensure the integrity of the target is maintained by ensuring it is achievable, measurable and realistic. We support the approach that carbon offsetting does play a part in carbon reduction after more effective strategies relating to energy demand reduction are fully committed to initially.

We also support the concept partnerships between a diversity of stakeholders who can collectively leverage positive impacts from joint strategies. Fostering community behavioral change is also a strategy supported by the Institute.

### **Recommendations**

Whilst the Institute strongly supports the summary of recommendations, priority, cost and timing (Table 1), motor vehicle transport is one of the key considerations of this task force as it is not only one of the significant contributors to climate change, but will also be most profoundly impacted by Peak Oil.

Although the Institute would like to suggest shortening the timing for all the actions, we consider that the priority should be for the integration of Land Use and Transport Planning, TOD development, increasing residential densities close to public transport facilities, allowing more mixed use development and increasing public transport and active transport infrastructure.

The acknowledgement that "Council must lead by example in adopting best practice in the use of energy, water, buildings and transport fuels if it is to convince the community to change its behaviour" in Section 2.3 is welcomed.

Further to the point above relating to Council leadership, the Institute believes that one of its greatest opportunities to influence change is through the planning process and appropriately addressing urban form issues, and planning for the need for increased densities with a reduced development footprint. Measures to increase the uptake of sustainability of new and renovated buildings is also supported as these frameworks can be influenced immediately, resulting in short term change as supported in the Institute's position statement.

With respect to economic and business vulnerabilities, there are significant cost savings and economic benefits to be gained from the adoption of ecoefficiency and sustainability initiatives by business. For these outcomes to be realized, Council again will need to engage with other stakeholder groups to maximize the outcomes likely from more collaborative actions. The Institute believes, that with strong leadership and access to technical excellence, the drivers are evident for Brisbane to establish a world class sustainability industry ensuring sustained prosperity during the transition.

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand - South East Queensland Division  
*The professional association for environmental practitioners*

Physical Address: Level 4, 192 Ann Street, Brisbane Q 4000  
Postal Address: Suite 105, 1B/192 Ann Street, Brisbane Q 4000.  
Phone: 07 3023 6188 Fax: 07 3023 6189 Email: seq@eianz.org

The Institute believes that the recommendations in Section 6.3 are critical to the strategy's success and will require significant resources, including staff and a budget for particular actions and incentives where appropriate. Brisbane residents, visitors, employers, and workers need to be engaged in the program/issue and to see it as an opportunity for the community.

From a more technical perspective, given the growth challenges facing Southeast Queensland, the recommendations in Section 6.4 is at the heart of the strategy. The Institute believes the current pattern of development in SEQ is not necessarily sustainable, and our advice to the Office of Urban Management has been just this. South East Queensland residents will need to prioritise transport considerations when deciding where to live, work, play and be educated. This has significant implications on our energy consumption, both electricity and oil.

## Conclusions

The Institute fully supports the conclusions of the Task Force in Section 7.1. Our position is also clear, in that an effective strategy for climate change management needs to embrace *leadership, research, mitigation and adaptation* strategies in order to deal with the environmental, social and economic implications of climate change. Unfortunately mitigation was not highlighted enough in the report as a major strategy for Council. Adaptation tended to be the more dominant message.

The Institute believes *leadership*, education and awareness relating to climate change are particular responsibilities of Government at all levels to ensure communities, businesses and governments:

- build an understanding of the risks, requirements and opportunities involved;
- develop the capacity to respond in a pro-active manner; and
- actively and rapidly reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.

We also believe that *research* is a foundation of successful strategies to cope with climate change. The Institute prefers wide-ranging research into environmental, social and economic causes and consequences of climate change as the basis for determining policy, responses and strategies. While not delaying action (the Precautionary Principle), research needs to:

- continually improve the understanding of climate science, modelling and vulnerabilities, including better understanding of regional impacts;
- improve existing technologies or develop innovations to rapidly reduce fossil carbon use and emissions from the energy and transport sectors that will improve sustainable outcomes;
- improve existing technologies or develop innovations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors of the economy that will improve sustainable outcomes;
- improve socio-economic understanding of the consequences of climate change and the penalties for delaying action;
- develop appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies applicable to regions and economic sectors with sustainable outcomes.

Fundamentally, *mitigation* strategies are critical to rapidly reduce emissions and to shift economic and social development to a significantly lower dependence on fossil carbon. Implementation of mitigation strategies should have regard to potential adverse impacts and risks to the biophysical world, society and the economy. These strategies should include:

- funding technologies and supporting industries offering sustainable low carbon or non-fossil carbon alternatives and solutions which are low polluting, especially for energy supplies;
- appropriate development of emission trading regimes or other mechanisms to ensure cost-effectiveness of greenhouse gas abatement, providing for a clear price signal for emitting fossil carbon and incentives to shift expenditure to sustainable low pollution technology;
- assistance for industries and sectors facing difficulties in retooling or transforming to a low fossil carbon future; and
- cessation of deforestation and provision of increased terrestrial carbon sinks through improved land management, to reduce the contribution of agriculture, land use change and forestry to climate change.

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand - South East Queensland Division  
*The professional association for environmental practitioners*

Physical Address: Level 4, 192 Ann Street, Brisbane Q 4000  
Postal Address: Suite 105, 1B/192 Ann Street, Brisbane Q 4000.  
Phone: 07 3023 6188 Fax: 07 3023 6189 Email: seq@eianz.org

Supporting mitigation strategies are those addressing *adaptation* that will be important in adjusting to the human-induced climate change in circumstances where mitigation is ineffective or inappropriate. There is also a need to identify and take advantage of any new opportunities arising from climate change. Adaptation includes:

- provision of support for industries or communities damaged by climate change;
- implementation of programs to assist ecosystems to adapt to changing climatic conditions such as by reducing other pressures on biodiversity and managing biodiversity for natural climate variability; and
- assistance for industries, sectors and regions to identify and take advantage of new opportunities that may arise out of climate change.

The SEQ Division of the Institute welcomes the opportunity to be involved in further dialogue with Council on the issue of planning for climate change effects in Southeast Queensland.

Your Sincerely

**Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand - SEQ Division Policy Subcommittee**

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand - South East Queensland Division  
*The professional association for environmental practitioners*

Physical Address: Level 4, 192 Ann Street, Brisbane Q 4000  
Postal Address: Suite 105, 1B/192 Ann Street, Brisbane Q 4000.  
Phone: 07 3023 6188 Fax: 07 3023 6189 Email: seq@eianz.org