



23 AUGUST 2019

Submissions  
Climate Change Authority  
GPO BOX 787  
CANBERRA ACT 260

Dear Sir/Madam,

**LGAQ SUBMISSION:** Consultation on updating the Authority's advice on meeting Australia's Paris Agreement commitment

The LGAQ appreciates the opportunity to respond to the request for input to updating the Authority's advice on meeting Australia's Paris Agreement commitment. Input was sought from Queensland's local governments in the preparation of this submission.

The LGAQ supports the recommendations of the Australian Local Government Association and offers additional points for consideration, which are made in the context of the following member endorsed policy statements:

- Local government is committed to providing a leadership role to assist local communities, including industry, to understand and address the impacts of climate change.
- Local government is committed to working in partnership with all spheres of government, industry and the community to develop and implement effective climate change strategies focusing on emissions reduction and adaptation.
- Local government seeks appropriate policy and legislative frameworks from the federal and state governments to allow necessary decision making and responses to climate change to occur without prejudice or undue risk exposure to councils.
- Local government seeks timely access to high quality, nationally consistent but locally appropriate data, methodologies, standards and codes from the federal and state governments to ensure responses to climate change are safe, timely, appropriate and equitable.
- Local government is committed to utilising current and reputable scientific information, robust risk assessment methodologies and community engagement when developing climate change strategies, establishing priorities and the allocation of resources.
- Local government seeks appropriate levels of funding and resourcing assistance to meet urgent climate change requirements for the short, medium and long-term protection and benefit of communities.
- Local government supports a whole of government approach to improving energy performance across all sectors and greater recognition of local governments' powers



and capabilities in delivering improved energy use performance through access to appropriate programs and incentives.

- Local government supports effective and consistent standards and regulations where necessary for cleaner and more efficient energy use management.
- Local government supports whole of government support for regional implementation of energy use management initiatives including capacity building programs, incentives schemes, regional strategies for land use planning and transport.

Queensland local governments are demonstrating their commitment to their communities through a range of actions to address climate change. Brisbane City Council was the first local government in Australia to become carbon neutral in its operations. Nine regional and remote councils are participating in community decarbonisation pilots, including three islands, two located in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and over 14% of Queensland local governments have specific statements or strategies in place regarding achieving emissions reductions.

Over 50% of Queensland local governments are participating in the Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program, which is designed to increase the internal decision making process and capabilities to consider and respond to all aspects of climate change, including greenhouse gas emission reduction.

The following additional comments encourage the consideration of how policies and incentives can benefit regional communities:

#### **Achieving a net zero emissions economy in the long-term**

The Australian Government plays an integral role in coordinating and implementing the uptake of low-emissions technologies and growing the emissions reduction and offsets industry, especially for the electricity and transport sectors. Council encourages Federal collaboration with State and Local Governments to support low carbon industry development initiatives in the long term.

#### **Sectorial and economy-wide policies**

##### *Renewable Energy Sector*

The LGAQ recognises the opportunity that renewable energy provides in regional areas to diversify the economy and reduce the environmental impact of emissions.

Recommendation:

- Enable rapid deployment of renewable energy in Regional areas via network augmentation as identified in AEMO's Integrated System Plan;
- Prioritises regional Renewable Energy Zones to support regional economies; and
- Streamlines the approvals process for renewable energy developments for expedient delivery.

##### *Construction Sector*

There are many opportunities to support the low carbon building sector to reduce building operating costs. This can be supported through:



- Strengthening the Energy Efficiency requirement of Section J, Volume 1 of the Commercial and Section 3.12, Volume 2 of the Residential National Construction Code. This is increasingly important as Australia experiences more extreme temperatures and increasing reliance on HVAC systems;
- Supporting the building industry, including supply chains, to transition to low-carbon construction, particularly in regional areas which might otherwise be penalised through higher freight costs; and
- Extending Minimum Energy Performance Standards and Energy Ratings from residential only to include commercial equipment.

#### *Transportation Sector*

There are opportunities to develop low emissions freight networks, fleets, public transport and touring in tourism destinations in Queensland. There is also opportunity to better utilise the existing electricity network to power electric vehicles with locally generated renewable energy.

#### Recommendations:

- The development of a national policy to accelerate electric vehicle (EV) uptake, including consideration of regional planning. This could include policy incentives (such as the removal of the import tax for EVs), support for charging infrastructure and whole of life servicing and disposal;
- Electrification of vehicles powered by renewable energy to reduce operational fuel costs, particularly in regional areas where liquid fuel transport costs are high;
- Introduction of robust vehicle emissions standards consistent with other OECD countries;
- Partnership with regional local governments for increased investment in public transport infrastructure and fleet; and
- Introduction of more stringent standards around heavy vehicles and support electrification of the freight industry.

#### *Emissions Offset and Trading Sector*

The LGAQ encourages the Government to:

- Increase funding to support further projects under the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF);
- Supports the ERF to attract, prioritise and fund abatement projects which deliver additional environmental benefits (such as restoration of riparian areas to improve catchment water quality, or mixed species plantings to improve biodiversity and connectivity); and
- Build the capacity of regional and small-scale proponents to participate in the ERF.

#### **Supporting innovation, finance and new industries**

##### Recommendation:

- Programs and grants to support innovation and new industry in regional centres (e.g. EV uptake); and
  - Sustainable procurement practices for federal government operations and projects.
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## **International Context**

### *Purchasing Offsets*

Offsets purchased through Australian emissions projects, with secondary benefits to local economy and environment, will likely deliver more value to regional areas than low-cost overseas projects.

Please don't hesitate to contact Ms Dorean Erhart, Lead – Climate change and the Great Barrier Reef on T: [REDACTED] or e: [REDACTED] should you wish to discuss any aspect of these comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Bucker', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Bucker PSM  
GENERAL MANAGER