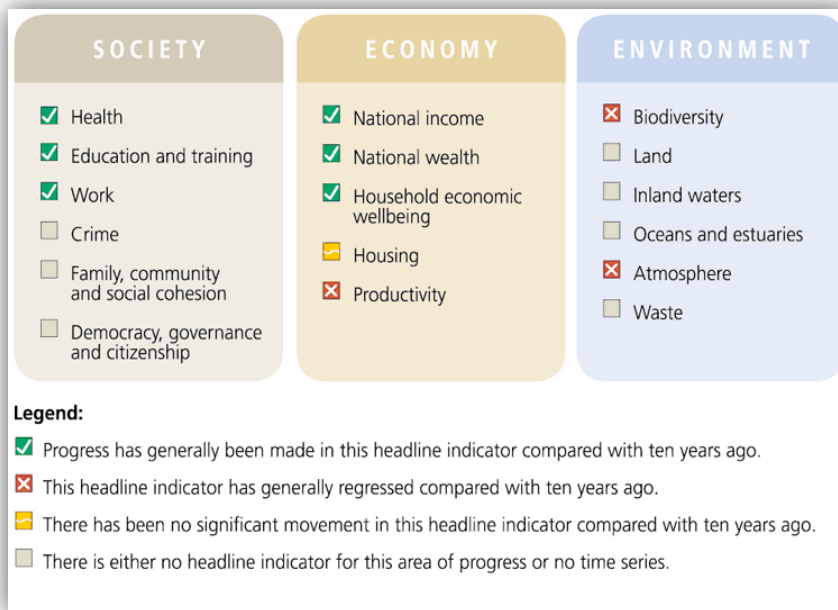




Queensland Environment Organisations Election Position

In its Measures of Australia's Progress Report 2012 (ABS) the bureau asks: *Is life in Australia getting better?* Its conclusions are outlined in this graph of 'progress' over the last decade.



Queensland Environment Organisations are calling on the next Commonwealth Government:

- 1. To protect the Great Barrier Reef from coal port expansions and poor water quality**
- 2. To establish a pathway to a new, low emission economy and safe climate**
- 3. Reverse biodiversity decline by strengthening environmental laws**
- 4. To make communities more ecologically sustainable and lifestyles more environmentally friendly**

Introduction

The future of Australia's environment is dependent upon two fundamentals, the need to protect nature and the imperative of building an ecologically sustainable society.



Firstly, this means acting to fully protect national parks, wilderness and iconic landscapes and repairing those landscapes that have been degraded and no longer fulfill their normal functions of providing fresh air, clean water and healthy land and habitat.

Secondly, this means systematically removing the ongoing threats to our natural environment posed by poor planning, polluting industry and inappropriate activities. Australia must shift towards a more ecologically sustainable society.

Action on these issues will help build a strong economy for the future, provide a healthy environment for all creatures great or small and assist the urgently needed transformation to an ecologically sustainable society.

This is an election where a big start must be made for a better future for our children and our children's children. The next decade must become a decade of urgent transition and transformation, before it is too late.

Smart nations anticipate change and adapt and transform themselves, it is imperative that the Commonwealth provides such leadership.

Fully Protect the Great Barrier Reef

We urge the Commonwealth Government to do everything in its power to avoid having the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area declared 'in danger' next year (2014). This will mean responding to UNESCO candidly and effectively as to how the universal value of the Reef is to be maintained into the future.

We remain deeply concerned about the industrialisation of the Reef area, continuing water quality issues that also contribute to the spread of Crown of Thorns starfish and the impacts of sea temperature increases and acidification on the health of the Reef.

We call on the next Commonwealth Government to:

- Commit at least \$500 million over the next four years towards programs aimed at reversing the decline in water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.
- Place a moratorium on ports and port infrastructure on the Reef's coastline until the Strategic Assessment is completed.
- Stop dredging and dumping of dredge spoil in the World Heritage Area.

Transform the economy and make the climate safe

Australia has committed to reducing emissions by between five to 25 percent from 2000 levels by 2020, depending on the extent of global action. Current targets now need to be reviewed and upgraded.



We believe that it is essential to keep a price on greenhouse pollution to drive an economic transformation and emission reduction agenda.

The age of fossil fuels is coming to an end. Clean, renewable energy is essential for the nation's transformation and must be fully supported.

We are mindful of the direct impacts that current and proposed fossil fuel industries have on communities and their environment. We support actions that will protect the air, land, water and future of these communities.

Many impacts of a changing climate are already locked in and have already affected communities and industries, particularly in Queensland. We support actions to assist these communities to adapt to the conditions of a changing climate.

We call on the next Commonwealth Government to:

- Contribute to global efforts to address climate change by increasing emission reduction targets and helping our Pacific neighbours cope with the impacts.
- Increase the Renewable Energy Target and phase out fossil fuel subsidies.
- Protect air, land, water and communities by prohibiting new coal, gas and oil extraction in areas of high ecological significance and agricultural value.
- Adapt to a Changing Climate by maintaining funding for climate science research, funding disaster relief and protecting affected biodiversity.

Strengthen Environmental Law and Increase Investment

We believe that the Commonwealth has an essential role in safeguarding Australia's environment in the national interest, and remain strongly opposed to proposals to transfer Federal environmental approval powers to the states and territories.

The next Commonwealth Government must re-affirm its commitment and role in environmental assessment, and refrain from entering into bilateral approval agreements with state and territory governments.

Specifically, we call upon the next Commonwealth Government to invest in key environmental resources:

- Commit to protecting native forests and woodlands for their biological diversity, carbon storage and water supply value.
- Provide resources to building the National Reserve System to ensure that at least 20% of Australian's land area is managed effectively for conservation purposes by 2020.



- Allocate dedicated funding to ensure effective management and compliance across the new national marine reserve network. This will require at least \$40 million per annum in new funding.
- Improve the sustainability of Australia's fisheries by fully implementing existing by catch and harvest strategies; permanently banning the operation of 'supertrawlers' in Australian waters; and banning the trade, sale and possession of shark fin in Australia.
- Continued progress on water reform, aimed at increasing environmental flows and protecting water sources and identified Wild and free-flowing river protection.
- Commit to achieving within five years a net reduction in the impacts of invasive species and establish an independent biosecurity authority.
- Continue work towards the nomination of Cape York for World Heritage listing.
- Resist signing the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement that includes the current Investor State Dispute Settlement provisions.

Build a more Sustainable Community and Society

Australia's high quality lifestyle continues to attract people from around the world and our population is growing rapidly. Population growth and increasing consumption is placing pressure on natural areas close to our towns and cities and on regions beyond which supply our cities with food, materials, energy and water.

Ageing transport infrastructure, centralised models of energy and water supply and inefficient homes and buildings further impact the environment while also threatening the country's economic competitiveness and creating social disadvantage.

With rising utility, transport and food costs and homes and cities unprepared for climate change, now is the time to redouble our efforts to make Australians more sustainable.

We call on the next Commonwealth Government to:

- Set Commonwealth standards for new housing developments removing support for developments that do not meet these standards. Minimum standards include-zero emission housing and transport, water sensitive urban design and waste free communities.
- Introduce a national food plan designed to support biological farming methods, local production opportunities, a healthy Australia and adaptation to a changing climate.
- Phase out the use of disposable and non-biodegradable plastic packaging. As a first step, support a National Container Deposit Scheme and plastic bag ban.
- Prioritise public transport investment by providing majority funding for alternatives to road infrastructure on a 2:1 basis.



- Expand the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for televisions and computers to include other priority materials and products such as all other electronic waste, batteries, mobile phones, and compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Establish an independent inquiry into the long-term management of nuclear waste, including examination of the science, risk management, consent and impacts on Indigenous and rural communities. Maintain nuclear issues as Matters of National Environmental Significance.
- Introduce a National Sustainable Population Plan for Australia based upon achieving a stable population determined by regional carrying capacity constraints, quality of life and ecological sustainability indicators.

Contact details for environmental organisations in Queensland:

Queensland Conservation: 3846 7833

The Wilderness Society: 3846 1420

Australian Rainforest Conservation Society:
3368 1318

Australian Marine Conservation Society:
3846 6777

Wildlife Preservation Society (QLD): 3221 0194

National Parks Association (QLD): 3221 0194

Friends of the Earth (Brisbane): 3171 2255

Cairns and Far North Environment Centre:
4032 1746

North Queensland Conservation Council:
4771 6226

Mackay Conservation Group: 4953 0808

Capricorn Conservation Council: 4927 8644

Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council:
4123 3361

Sunshine Coast Environment Council:
5441 5747

**Gold Coast and Hinterland Environment Council
(Gecko):** 5534 1412

Logan and Albert Conservation Association: 3297
0264

Fraser Island Defenders Organisation:
3397 5889

**Householders Options to Protect the Environment
(HOPE):** 4639 2135

Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook (ASH):
0427 724 052

Gladstone Conservation Council: 0418 771 499

Toowoomba Region Environment Council:
0407 489 676