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Secretary: <i>[Signature]</i>

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Committee Secretary

LGAQ Submission Into The Inquiry Into Climate Change And Environmental Impacts On Coastal Communities

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Senate inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities.

Please find outlined below a number of Local Government issues related to the matters being addressed by the inquiry and include:

Existing policies and programs:

- The existing coastal management policy in Queensland is the State Coastal Management Plan. This policy is empowered by the Coastal Protection Act. The Plan is currently under review.
- The State Coastal Management Plan is a high level policy document and provides councils with only general guidance in relation to responding to or planning for climate change. The Plan requires the preparation of regional coastal management plans and defines coastal management areas.
- Under the Queensland Planning System, the state coastal management plan is regarded as a State Planning Policy and must be addressed by councils in preparing planning schemes for coastal areas and in assessing development. The Integrated Planning Act 1997 also gives the Environmental Protection Agency a concurrence power in relation to certain developments in coastal management areas.
- The State Coastal Management Plan references a Guideline: Mitigating the adverse impacts of storm tide inundation. This provides advice to councils and developers on mitigating this natural hazard. The guideline makes only a very general statement in relation to climate change impact and does not provide any detailed methodology for incorporating climate change impacts.
- Land use planning schemes prepared by councils are the primary policy instrument for managing development in coastal management areas. These plans range in degrees of sophistication along the Queensland coast depending on the resources and level of development in a given council area.
- Queensland's current planning legislation does not enable certain types of development to be prohibited or development to be prohibited in certain areas. Additionally, it has been possible for owners of coastal properties to exercise development rights in coastal areas that would not now be granted due to state policy positions or local government planning schemes. These two matters have made councils reluctant to challenge or refuse inconsistent coastal proposals due to the fear of losing subsequent legal actions.



Impacts of population growth

- Queensland has and continues to experience substantial coastal population growth. This is occurring in the historical areas of growth (Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Cairns and Fraser Coast) and also in new areas particularly in central Queensland as the fly in-fly out work practices of the mining boom lead to substantial developments in areas such as Yeppoon, Agnes Waters, Bowen, Mackay, Sarina and Bundaberg.
- The pace of coastal development has stressed the planning system and the available numbers of planning professional in Queensland. The land use planning system has not effectively addressed sustainable use of resources on the coast.
- There have been and are significant pressures on all levels of infrastructure and in particular water supplies to coastal communities. Prolonged droughts on the Queensland coast has resulted in water restrictions in most communities and near crisis situations in some (e.g. Gladstone)
- The state government response has been a large program of pipeline, weir and dam upgrading or construction. This has long term effects on water resources and coastal riverine environments.

Impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with adaptation, particularly with regard to projected sea level rise.

- Some councils (Cairns, Mackay, Fitzroy (Livingstone), Fraser Coast (Hervey Bay), Sunshine Coast (Maroochy) and Gold Coast) have taken detailed positive steps to assess sea level rise impacts and to develop appropriate land use planning responses. However, this only affects future development and not current risks.
- Climate change impacts are solely related to sea level rise, the Gold Coast, Whitsunday and Mackay have recently experienced very high intensity rainfalls that have caused serious flash flooding in low lying areas and serious landslides in steep areas. Coastal development areas in Queensland include many locations that are low lying or at risk of landslide.
- Land use planning for adaptation has largely focused on extreme events with very little consideration of incremental change (e.g. sea level rise, salt water intrusion, changes in erosion patterns, declining water balance). Councils generally lack clear guidelines on how to address these matters in land use planning and neither the state or federal government has been willing to set benchmarks that give councils a legitimate basis on which to make decisions.
- There is a general lack of resource support from Australian and State government to invest in capacity building all coastal councils in understanding the impacts of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with adaptation.

Mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal arrangements

- State or federally authorised benchmarks for climate change impacts (e.g. defined regional sea level rises for 2030, 2050) that enable defensible planning decisions by councils.
- Tools and resources to measure and forecast impacts of slow moving impacts (e.g. salt water intrusion in ground water tables; changes in extent of areas affected by airborne salt corrosion).
- State and federal support in addressing the impacts fly in-fly out working arrangements on coastal communities; particularly if there are significant changes in coal mining sector.

Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone

- No change required to governance arrangements for land use planning; more resources required to make the arrangements effective and forward looking.



Finally, I have attached a recent LGAQ publication *Adapting to Climate Change: A Queensland Local Government Guide* for your information. The publication is designed to assist councils to undertake a risk management process to identify, prioritise and respond to the anticipated impacts of climate change. Whilst the LGAQ has run a number of introductory workshops across the State it does not have the resource capacity to effectively support all Queensland councils in undertaking this process.

To this end, the LGAQ continues to seek resource support from the Australian and State governments and industry to assist all Councils in understanding the impacts of climate change and develop consistent adaptation strategies to deal with them.

If you have any questions in relation to the proposal please contact Malcolm Petrie on (07) 3000 2202 or email, malcolm_petrie@lgaq.asn.au or Gavin McCullagh on (07) 3000 2291 or email Gavin_McCullagh@lgaq.asn.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Hoffman', written over a horizontal line.

Greg Hoffman PSM
DIRECTOR
POLICY AND REPRESENTATION

mp:sm

attach