

MISSION 6

WATER

**CLIMATE
HEROES**

BETTER WORKPLACES, BETTER FUTURE

SUPPORTED BY



What a bumper month July was for Climate policy in Australia – with the release of the Garnaut Review and then the Greenpaper, things are about to get very busy!

Thanks to all of our Heroes – and other QPSU members – who joined us for the Garnaut Teleconference last month. It was a great success with some wonderful recommendations resulting, that have been entered in a submission from the QPSU to the Garnaut review, and also that will be taken to the Union's Climate Change Committee for further discussion and development.

The big mission – Contact your MP

During last year's federal election, QPSU members and Australians in general said they wanted real, effective climate action.

We want our federal politicians to develop an effective, world-leading, fair scheme that ensures a strong economy with retraining programs for new "green collar" jobs. We can green our economy and protect our state's livelihood and natural beauty.

The Federal Green Paper for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is a big step forward, but currently has serious flaws. We are asking Climate Heroes to meet with your Federal representative, to help send a message to our representatives in Canberra. We will send you a lobbying kit with everything you need to prepare you.

We'll be calling you in the next week to talk you through the lobbying process from here. Email climate@qpsu.org.au if you would be prepared to visit your MP.

We'll help you team up with others in your area to make sure you have strength in numbers.



Welcome to Water Month in the Climate Heroes campaign!

Queenslanders used to be some of the world's worst water wasters, but as climate change has warmed our continent, in line with predictions, dry years have become more common and more severe, leading to substantial water shortages in all of Australia's major urban centres – with the exception of lucky tropical Darwin!

But in the last ten years, Queenslanders have stepped up to the challenge and become world-class water savers. Water-efficient appliances are common, tanks have been installed in approximately 10% of Queensland houses, and 4-minute shower timers are a common sight. Most workplaces now have strong water management plans, and industry is responding with industrial water-recycling schemes becoming more common.

1. Fresh Water, Salty Water

Climate change means that our rainfall can be expected to decrease further in coming decades, and we must prepare for this. In addition, the impacts of climate change on our marine ecosystems – especially Queensland's Great Barrier Reef – are significant.

See attached for information sheet about these issues, and discuss this information with your colleagues and family. Personal discussion and sharing our concerns is vital in raising community awareness and knowledge!

2. Water at Work

Last month we focused on monitoring and cutting paper usage in the office. For our Water mission, solutions will depend greatly on what sort of environment your workplace is.

In the Garnaut Teleconference last month, a key recommendation that came from our members was to encourage the Queensland government to provide sustainable workplaces for all government workers. This included a motion to develop union policy on all government buildings having rainwater storage included. While the formal QPSU policy is yet to be developed, we ask our Climate Heroes to raise this intention with facilities managers.

CONTINUED OVER ➔

Welcome to Water Month in the Climate Heroes campaign! (continued)

Check out the 'Green Office' profiles in this kit, and also the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council article

"Water use and sustainable commercial buildings" at www.yourbuilding.org. From these articles, and from discussion with your workmates, you might be able to identify major water saving opportunities in your workplace. Suggest any of your water-saving ideas to senior management or your facilities manager.

As you can see from the graphs in this briefing, a large portion of water use in commercial office buildings is in the air-conditioning system. Ensuring that the system is set to the right temperature and is turned off at night is a big step in saving water, and also cuts energy bills and greenhouse pollution. For other types of workplaces, for example schools, large portions of the water use are outdoors and in bathrooms – unless rainwater is used for this water supply, this is drinking-quality water that we are flushing down the loo! Rainwater supply in all workplaces would make a big saving! Let's start asking for it!

3. Eco-calculator competition

We want to get as many people as possible to understand their environmental footprint and to try and minimize it! There will be a eco-friendly prize for the hero who gets the greatest number of their colleagues and family to complete ACF's Eco-calculator.

It's easy – just visit www.acfonline.org.au/greenhome and find the link on the right-hand side to the Eco-Calculator, which will help you calculate your Eco-Footprint in under 5 minutes. After completing the calculator you will be given three results – your Carbon-footprint, your water-footprint, and your land-footprint. Enter these three results in the web-form at www.qpsu.org.au/climate including your Climate Hero's name.

We will tally the results and report back to each climate hero! Whichever hero gets the greatest number of people checking their eco-footprint will receive a water-friendly reward! (And we promise that it's more than a 4-minute shower timer!)

4. Upcoming Climate and Water events in Brisbane

There are so many wonderful organizations working on raising climate awareness, so we wanted to share the following events and opportunities, to help you meet other concerned citizens within your community. You might like to let your family, friends and colleagues know about the events and take a small group along!

Green Cross Australia is the Australian affiliate of Green Cross International, founded by former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Scientists predict that 145 million people - mostly in the Asia-Pacific region - will be displaced if seas rise by 1 metre. Some scientists think that a 5 metre sea level rise within this century is possible. Australians love living

near the coast so we are very exposed, not to mention our neighbours in the Pacific Islands.

The National People's Assembly will offer ordinary citizens an opportunity to think on and contribute to discussions surrounding how we should prepare for people's displacement in our region. It's on August 29th/30th at RiverFestival.

Visit www.greencrossaustralia.org and click on 'A National People's Assembly' to learn more.

Brisbane's famous RiverFestival will be held from Friday 29 August to Sunday 7 September. Check out the events at www.riverfestival.com.au

As part of the RiverFestival, 'RiverSymposium' is held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition centre, including a public program. The discussions this year are focused on the challenges associated with the increased incidence of flooding and drought expected with climate change. What changes can we anticipate, and how can we adapt?

Visit www.riversymposium.com

Finally, see attached for an invitation to 'Walk our Talk', an Interactive Film and Speaker night hosted by Oxfam and Green Cross, on Tuesday August 5th. They are still accepting RSVPs, so get in contact!

Contact

Email us at climate@qpsu.org.au, or call 1800 177 244 if you have any questions.

Water Use in Office buildings or schools:

[Data from Qld Dept Natural Resources Mines and Water, 2006]

