

## **Carbon mitigation actions by peri-urban and regional cities in Queensland**

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Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a key objective of Australia's national urban policy *Our Cities Our Future*. During 1997 to 2009, city councils in the Cities for Climate Protection program adopted carbon mitigation actions and strategies. Since 2010, the *State of Australian Cities* reports on key sustainability indicators, including energy, water and waste, for 18 major cities. Under the *Clean Energy Act 2011*, some 34 city councils including 10 Queensland cities are now liable entities required to pay a carbon price since their emissions exceed 25,000tCO<sub>2</sub>-e a year from a single facility, mainly from landfill. The carbon price of AUD\$23tCO<sub>2</sub>-e from 1 July 2012 also impacts on cities through the increased cost of energy, water, fuel, transport and materials. City councils are thus adopting eco-efficiency measures in energy, water and waste management to reduce operating costs and carbon liability. This paper surveyed carbon mitigation actions by 11 cities in Queensland, including four peri-urban cities (Ipswich, Logan, Moreton Bay, Redland), five major regional cities (Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Cairns, Townsville, Toowoomba), and two emerging regional cities (Mackay, Gladstone). One regional city considered renewable energy guidelines in planning decisions, while two cities purchased Green Power. Cost savings, environmental regulations, council climate strategies/resolutions and climate leadership were key drivers for Queensland cities to reduce carbon emissions. Peri-urban cities were opportunistic in adopting carbon actions, while coastal regional cities proactively implemented carbon mitigation actions. The paper discusses barriers and opportunities for Queensland cities in carbon and climate mitigation.