

6. Protection for the Great Barrier Reef and Management of the Environment

Great Barrier Reef

Direct access to **\$57million** over seven years for Reef catchment local government activities directly benefiting the Great Barrier Reef.



Councils are identified as a significant partner in the Great Barrier Reef, contributing to important aspects of the Reef 2050 Plan and the Reef 2050 Water Quality Implementation Plan 2017-2022 execution.



In 2014-15, Reef catchment councils were the single largest investor in actions that contribute to the conservation of the Great Barrier Reef.



That financial year, there was a conservative investment of **\$228 million in activities that directly benefit the Reef from just 15 of the 32 catchment councils.**



The LGAQ is seeking direct funding of a major integrated project developed by Reef catchment councils, which will achieve a step change in wastewater, stormwater, erosion and habitat management in the Reef catchment.



The project includes three priority initiatives:

- Innovative approaches to reducing impacts to water quality from council sewerage treatment plants in cost effective and energy efficient ways
- Activities that improve water quality from urban environments with tangible outcomes for the community, and
- Application of scientific approaches to road design and management to reduce unsealed road surface deterioration and sediment and erosion loads.

Climate Change Fund

Support communities in climate change response by investing in a Local Government Climate Change Fund of **\$200 million over four years.**



Managing the effects of global warming requires effort by every level of government.



All communities are grappling with the consequences of climate change – such as sea level rise, flooding, heatwaves, cyclones, prolonged drought, bushfires etc. – and need to understand the full impacts of global warming and an appropriate response.



The Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program is building the capability and knowledge for councils to proactively respond to climate change but federal funding support is required to engage and develop multi-stakeholder climate change strategies.



Queensland councils are also developing detailed Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategies through the QCoast2100 Program and require investment and support to implement a range of adaptation actions.

Biosecurity Program

\$9 million over 3 years for councils to deliver environmental biosecurity projects to maintain areas of local environmental significance



Environmental biosecurity is now becoming a focus at the national level, with the appointment of a Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer and expansion of the National Biosecurity Committee terms of reference to consider environmental biosecurity.



The impacts of climate change are likely to increase the spread of invasive plants, increasing the threat to environmental biosecurity.

In 2016–17, Queensland **councils spent \$45.4 million** on invasive plant & animal control



As principal investors in invasive plant and animal control, Queensland councils are well placed to implement programs to improve environmental biosecurity to protect places of environmental significance.



For every dollar spent on controlling invasive plants and animals, \$2.20 direct agricultural production benefits are generated and \$3.00 worth of non-production benefits (socio-economic and environmental benefits) are generated.

Pest Animals and Weeds in Drought-Affected Areas

\$9 million per annum for weed and feral animal funding for drought declared areas



The LGAQ welcomes the announcement in July of \$9 million in 2018-19 across Queensland targeted at pest animals & weeds in drought-affected areas.



Notwithstanding, Queensland councils seek a commitment for ongoing support for drought-affected areas.



Drought conditions provide an ideal opportunity to proactively control invasive plants and animals before the drought breaks.



There are broader community benefits with funding for exclusion fencing providing local employment opportunities for fencing contractors.

National Leadership for Flying-Fox Management

Commitment to implement the recommendations of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy 'Living with Fruit Bats' report including:



The establishment of a national or eastern states flying-fox consultative committee or working group to the Council of Australian Governments.



Dedicated funding pool for flying-fox research and conservation actions.



Funding to develop a suite of education resources for Australian communities regarding flying-fox ecology, behaviour, environmental significance, health impacts, and management options.



However, flying foxes can often cause distress in local communities due to the noise, smell, mess and perception of disease associated with these animals located close to homes, schools and recreational areas.

There are more than **42 towns & suburbs** in Queensland that are significantly impacted by flying foxes.



Queensland councils spend more than **\$1.4 billion per year** managing flying fox roosts.



There is no coordinated approach to management within Queensland and across all States and Territories, and a lack of coordination of research activities to improve the management of the species.



Many Queensland councils are also spending limited resources developing local management plans and community engagement materials, all of which could be developed and funded at a national scale to allow for an efficient, strategic and coordinated approach to management.



National leadership is critical.