

# State Budget 2009–10

Department of Environment and  
Resource Management

## Agency Budget Highlights



Queensland Government

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### Department of Environment and Resource Management



Stephen Robertson MP

#### Message from the Ministers

**The recently formed Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) provides the opportunity for fresh thinking and holistic management of our valuable natural resources and biodiversity.**



Kate Jones MP

The new agency will adopt an integrated approach to achieving natural resource and environmental objectives which support Queensland's long-term sustainability, and social and economic well-being.

Our growing population places great pressure on the State's land, water and vegetation resources, while generating more waste and increasing the risks to our fragile natural ecosystems. At the same time, we must continue to prepare the community for climate change.

With the amalgamation we have already seen significant opportunities for integration in policy, sciences and service delivery, in early initiatives such as the declaration of Wild Rivers, the moratorium on clearing endangered regrowth, and measures to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

The Department of Environment and Resource Management will invest \$914.6 million in service delivery during 2009-10.

DERM's wide-ranging priorities for 2009-10 strategically underpin the State Government's Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland Green and Strong ambitions.

A series of green measures aim to preserve our lifestyle and environment by:

- increasing the amount of land set aside for national parks, nature conservation and public recreation
- developing a waste management strategy to increase resource recovery and production efficiencies, and promoting domestic, commercial and industrial recycling

- building on current climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and engaging with residents, communities and industry to reduce their carbon footprint through the ClimateSmart Living campaign
- improving rural land management through the Delbessie Agreement, by providing longer-term leases to properties in good condition
- a range of regulatory measures and other initiatives to improve the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef.

The target of making Queensland Australia's strongest economy is supported by:

- establishing a sustainable approach to vegetation management, which manages essential biodiversity objectives while minimising impacts on economic production
- quality spatial information for mapping, valuations and land tenure to enable effective State planning
- the State's water reform agenda to maintain secure, reliable and sustainable water supplies throughout Queensland
- improving Indigenous communities' access to and ownership of traditional lands
- ensuring the State's vast leasehold land estate is sustainably managed.

DERM works closely with all its stakeholders to address the challenges of climate change and the health of our natural resources in the most integrated and comprehensive way.

The Honourable Stephen Robertson  
Minister for Natural Resources,  
Mines and Energy and Minister  
for Trade

The Honourable Kate Jones  
Minister for Climate Change and  
Sustainability

**The Department of Environment and Resource Management works with its stakeholders to protect the environment and manage the long-term sustainability of Queensland's land, water and vegetation resources, and cultural heritage.**

## **Environment**

### **Preparing for climate change**

The department will coordinate the implementation of the revised Queensland Climate Change Strategy to ensure Queensland remains at the forefront of the climate change response.

This involves funding for several key election commitments and an additional \$43 million in new investments, including support for:

- disaster management initiatives totalling \$15.6 million over five years
- \$15 million for the ClimateSmart Business Service to be delivered over four years
- extending the Rural Water Use Efficiency initiative with \$4.5 million over four years, and
- \$8 million over four years for the Energy Efficiency Retrofit program.

### **Barrier reef safeguard**

Queensland's Great Barrier Reef is under threat, with broadscale agricultural pollution along reef catchments causing a long-term decline in water quality. The department is taking strong action through a \$50 million package of legislative measures and industry support tools to reduce threats to this world heritage-listed icon. Over the next four years, these historic initiatives will provide for a 50 per cent reduction in nutrient and pesticide pollutants entering the reef and deliver significant improvements to agricultural practices.

### **Tourism and visitor facilities**

Ongoing funding of \$5 million a year has been provided to improve the condition of tourism and visitor facilities on the Queensland Parks and Wildlife estate through the infrastructure maintenance program. This funding will be used to improve visitor safety, park protection and the presentation of protected areas such as Fraser Island, Springbrook and Noosa National Park.



Green Island on the Great Barrier Reef near Cairns

### Environmental assessment

Additional funding of \$1.2 million a year will be used to increase comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) assessments. This will boost our capacity to effectively assess environmental impacts, consider proposed impact minimisation strategies and make sustainable decisions about significant proposed projects, particularly in the mining, gas and petroleum areas. The additional resources will also improve client service and environmental compliance and monitoring programs.

### Great walks

Funding of \$1.2 million has been allocated for a feasibility study and development of a new Great Walk from the Daintree River to the tip of Cape York Peninsula. Initial planning work by the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation indicates the walk has the potential to create up to 380 jobs in the construction phase and up to 760 jobs on an ongoing basis, providing employment and economic opportunities for Indigenous residents. Additionally, four new world-class, long distance walking tracks are due to be completed by June 2010 in Cooloola, the Conondale Range, Carnarvon Gorge and the Whitsunday Islands.

### Moreton Bay

Additional funding of \$0.9 million a year will enable research and monitoring of Moreton Bay to confirm the findings of the Moreton Bay Sand Extraction Study on the impact of continued dredging on marine fauna such as dugong and turtles, seagrasses and inter-tidal sand movement. Additional rangers will perform compliance activities, maintain public infrastructure and respond to wildlife strandings within the expanded green zones of Moreton Bay Marine Park.

The department will also deliver on the new commitment under the Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan by building the first of the three planned artificial reefs. The Harry Atkinson Artificial Reef, north of Peel Island, will provide recreational anglers with new fishing opportunities outside the increased green zones. The impacts of the new artificial reefs on the bay's ecology will be closely monitored.

### Gold Coast Kirra Beach

A total of \$1.5 million is being invested on excavative work to relocate up to 200,000 cubic metres of sand at Kirra Beach. The sand will be moved from the shoreline towards the back of the beach to create sand dunes to reduce the beach width and restore wave activity.

### Wombat recovery

Through a \$3 million sponsorship, the department will work with mining company Xstrata to establish a second colony of northern hairy-nosed wombats in Queensland, by reintroducing this endangered animal to Yarran Downs, near St George. While the only surviving wombat population at Epping Forest National Park has been increasing recently, the colony faces continued threat from natural disasters and disease. It is planned to trap and relocate up to 24 suitable animals from Epping to their new home during the winters of 2009 and 2010.

### Protecting biodiversity

Half of Queensland's plant and animal species are unique to the world. That is why the department is developing a State strategy to protect our biodiversity wealth, and keep pace with national approaches to biodiversity conservation. This strategy will provide a coordinated, whole-of-landscape approach in which government, industry and the community can work together—and will meet the Queensland Government's commitment to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation by 2020. For example, there are more than 19,000 parcels of unallocated State land in Queensland with a total area of more than one million hectares. These are being assessed for inclusion in the protected estate.



Walking Carnarvon National Park , Mt Moffat section

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#### Resource Management

##### Water management

More free-flowing water bores will be capped and open bore drains piped under the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative to preserve water and increase bore pressure across the basin. The State Government will invest \$46.5 million over five years to 2013-14 (\$7.3 million in 2009-10) to support bore rehabilitation work in western Queensland. Under this joint government funding program, 240 bores have been capped and 217 bores piped in Queensland to June 2009, resulting in replacement of about 8800 kilometres of bore drain and an estimated saving of 98,000 megalitres of flow a year from the Great Artesian Basin.

The roll-out of rural water metering continues with \$4.9 million allocated over four years (including \$1.9 million in 2009-10) to support the installation and replacement of meters throughout Queensland. This will allow more meters to be installed in priority water management areas across the State, and supports the National Water Initiative. Accurate and reliable meters give the department the necessary information to manage water consumption so that users receive their fair share of the resource, according to their agreed entitlement, while environmental needs are met.

##### Wild rivers

The Wild River Ranger Program will be expanded in Queensland, with additional funding of \$5.0 million over four years (including \$0.9 million in 2009-10) to employ an additional 10 rangers. Initial placements for negotiation with local Indigenous communities include Hinchinbrook Island and the Staaten River catchment.



Pormpuraaw wild river rangers on patrol

Other negotiations are likely to include the northern Cape York Peninsula area and additional rangers for established groups throughout the Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York Peninsula.

Wild rivers protection will be extended by a further eight river basins on Cape York Peninsula in 2009-10, in addition to the Wenlock River. Action will also be taken over the next two years to extend wild rivers protection to South-West Queensland's channel country, with the Georgina and Diamantina Rivers and Cooper Creek to be nominated as wild rivers. These measures will bring to 21 the total number of declared wild rivers in Queensland.

##### Managing land and tenure

Additional funding of \$1.5 million over two years (\$0.8 million in 2009-10) will provide surveying in six priority Indigenous communities to enable them to act on amendments to the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*, *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991* and the *Land Act 1994*. These changes provide long-term residential and commercial leases up to 99 years on communal land to encourage home ownership, public housing, commercial development and community infrastructure.

About 270 hectares of land at Cosgrove, in the Bohle Plains north of Townsville, will be released this year for residential development. This land is part of the largest parcel of unallocated State land remaining in Queensland and will be developed by commercial interests to provide sufficient affordable land to meet the increasing pressure of North Queensland population growth.

##### Spatial information

A strategic work program will provide a faster, more accurate and efficient flow of digital cadastral information across the government and the surveying industry. This will be achieved through the new Electronic Access for Registry Lodgement (EARL) system, to standardise the storage, retrieval and electronic exchange of survey plans by 2010.

The Address Management Framework project is another significant spatial measure established to tackle public safety issues and standardise the way street address information is collected and used in both government and industry. It is intended to enable emergency and utility providers to locate correct addresses quickly without any confusion.

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Cattle Creek in Halifax Bay Wetlands National Park, between Townsville and Ingham



**Queensland**  
Government

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