

**Carolyn Heffernan**

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**From:** John Mabb  
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Please see attachment for my comments in relation to the inquiry into energy efficiency improvements.

Regards,

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this inquiry. I consider efficiency as the primary response to the social, economic and environmental problems facing our civilisation today. Energy efficiency can result in raising awareness, reducing costs and result in less wastage and environmental impact from our society.

**1. What have been the economic and environmental costs and benefits of energy efficiency initiatives affecting households, industries/businesses, governments and communities in Queensland?**

As highlighted in the inquiry paper, energy efficiency is the most cost effective way to reduce the use of fossil fuel energy. The built environment sector is a perfect example of the potential that energy efficiency can play in designing a more sustainable future.

Comprehensive large scale roll out of energy efficiency initiatives has not been implemented for long enough for a review to be undertaken and it would be only after such a wide scale roll out that a cost/benefit analysis would be useful.

The ClimateSmart home service and the Smart Energy Savings Program are only newish initiatives and the costs and benefits will not have been fully realised yet.

Our energy consumption per capita is increasing and as we move to non fossil fuel sources we will have to consume less energy overall. Historically there has been a correlation between energy consumption and GDP however this does not have to be the case, we can be more prosperous and consume less fossil fuel energy.

**2. In economic and environmental terms what energy efficiency initiatives have been effective in Queensland?**

Due to a lack of reporting a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives have not been possible. I am unaware of an analysis of post implementation of the MEPS or energy efficiency minimum housing rating or Sustainable Building Code or the ecoBiz program to see what real impact these have had in Queensland.

We do not have yearly localised data to determine the energy use of each sector and therefore planning and implementation of further initiatives is difficult.

**3. What role do Commonwealth Government initiatives including the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme play in encouraging energy efficiency?**

Energy efficiency needs to be implemented on a consistent basis across the nation in order for economies of scale and a level playing field to be adopted.

The Energy Efficiency Opportunities program has highlighted that even large, well resourced companies can struggle to find the time, money and resources required to maximise the benefits from implementation of such cost saving programs.

The National framework for Energy Efficiency is the key initiative that has had significant, centralised impact particularly in relation to building codes, appliance standards and smart metering.

COAG committed to introducing a National Strategy on Energy Efficiency. They agreed to five key measures to improve residential and commercial building energy efficiency as a first step. Four of the measures, which are subject to regulatory impact assessments, will:

- increase the energy efficiency requirements for all new commercial building types from 2010;

- phase-in mandatory disclosure of commercial building energy efficiency ratings at point of sale and lease from 2010;

- increase energy efficiency requirements for new residential buildings to six stars or equivalent by May 2011 with new efficiency requirements for hot water systems and lighting; and

- phase-in mandatory disclosure of residential building energy, greenhouse and water efficiency at time of sale or lease commencing with energy efficiency in May 2011.

The fifth measure involves reforming the current rating and assessment process for building energy efficiency standards. The objective is for nationally-consistent, climatically-relevant standards focusing on outcomes and allows residential and commercial buildings to be easily compared.

#### **4. What additional policies should the Queensland Government implement to encourage energy efficiency improvements?**

As stated above the best outcome would be a consistency across the nation for simplicity and to increase economies of scale. However, further implementation of the actions highlighted in the SEQ Sustainable Housing Code which are being slowly adopted in the Queensland Sustainable Building Code including the requirement for disclosure of energy rating at point of sale and rent for all class of buildings.

I would not regard the phase out of electric storage hot water systems or the Energywise off-peak campaign as energy efficiency initiatives. The solar hot water is an energy conservation initiative and the off-peak campaign is a demand side management initiative.

The State Government keep jumping from one action plan to another without actually implementing anything. The ClimateSmart 2050 strategy is currently under review, meanwhile the Q2 target of one-third carbon footprint reduction by 2020 has been set with a Target Delivery Plan soon to follow.

#### **5. What barriers and impediments to energy efficiency enhancements exist in Queensland?**

The barriers that exist are all listed out in this inquiry paper and all need to be addressed in order to overcome them.

Only relatively recently have we moved from an energy pricing regime where the more you consumed the less you paid to a flat rate. The rate of change to the pricing regime is proving to be politically insensitive

and the community is voicing objection to the increasing frequency of the price rises.

The disconnect between who produces the energy and who ultimately consumes the energy is the biggest barrier to enhancing energy efficiency. The invisibility of the resource and the payment after consumption instead of before like transport fuel is also impediments to energy efficiency.

**6. What policies should be considered to overcome these barriers and impediments?**

Paying for power before it is consumed should be a payment option offered to consumers. PAYG scheme which is implemented in South Africa and UK.

**7. How can governments make information on energy improvements more accessible?**

The ecoBiz program is not very well funded or resourced by enough personnel.

Greater level of monitoring and public reporting would enable better planning to be undertaken.