QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 678

asked on Tuesday, 22 May 2007

MS JONES ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

Will he detail the benefit to Queenslanders of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan?

ANSWER:

On 6 June 2007, the Premier and I released the *ClimateSmart Adaptation 2007-12* – an action plan to move Queensland to a ClimateSmart future and ensure the continued and long-term prosperity of our State.

Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing today's world. It can seriously affect our water supply, food production, health and the economy, and damage our sensitive natural environments. Research overseas and in Australia indicates that an early response to climate change brings significant economic benefits.

Due to the amount of greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere, some climate change is inevitable and changes are already being observed. The hotter and drier weather that we have experienced in Queensland in recent times is consistent with projections for future climate change.

As the climate changes, we need to change or adapt to it. *ClimateSmart Adaptation* will provide the framework for doing this. The plan is a major link in the Queensland Government's *ClimateSmart 2050 Strategy*, released by the Premier on 3 June 2007. The Government welcomes feedback regarding the strategy and seeks electronic comments to climatechange@premiers.qld.gov.au by 4 July 2007. *ClimateSmart 2050* provides the platform for Queensland's response to the challenges presented by climate change, including preparing our State for a low-carbon future.

ClimateSmart Adaptation is a five-year plan to provide the foundations for preparing and protecting our State from the potential impacts of climate change, and to ensure that the State's economic prosperity is maintained into the future.

Adaptation is a long-term process, and the aim of this initial plan is to begin to prepare Queenslanders to understand their climate change risks and vulnerabilities, consider climate change impacts in their decisions, and take practical steps to enhance resilience to climate change.

The Queensland Government used feedback from the community on their concerns and proposed management options, together with the best science available, to develop *ClimateSmart Adaptation*.

Under the plan, the Government will implement a wide range of climate adaptation actions in a number of priority sectors, including water planning and services, agriculture, human settlements, natural environment and landscapes, emergency services and human health, tourism, business and industry, and finance and insurance.

The Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence (the Centre) has already assisted the Local Government Association of Queensland in the development of the Local Government Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, and will continue to work with local governments to identify and manage climate change risks. The Centre will lead the implementation of *ClimateSmart Adaptation*. The Centre, which was launched in March 2007 by the Premier and I, was established to study, and advise on, climate change and its impacts.

In the coming months, officers from the Centre will be briefing Queensland's growing wine industry on the science and possible impacts of climate change, and ideas for how to adapt to those changes. The tourism industry will also be briefed this year on climate change science and possible adaptation strategies.

A vulnerability assessment of Queensland's regions and sectors to the impacts of climate change is currently underway. This assessment will provide guidance on key areas to focus on.

In the north of the State, the Centre is assisting with the development of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan, currently being developed by the Department of Local Government, Planning and Sport by providing information on the potential impacts of climate change. This will identify high-risk areas and allow the region to develop the most appropriate responses. These responses could include avoiding development in vulnerable areas such as land subject to increased storm surge, flooding or landslips, or adjusting building design to take into account the effects of a changing climate.