

Question on Notice
No. 624
Asked on Tuesday, 29 April 2008

QUESTION:

MR FINN asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) — Will he advise what initiatives the Queensland Government has put in place to assist businesses to adapt to climate change, to lessen the contribution they make to generating greenhouse gases and the way they use diminishing resources like water?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is providing a number of avenues to assist companies to adapt to Climate Change and to lessen their impact on the environment.

The Environmental Protection Agency's *ecoBiz* Program helps businesses make better use of water, energy and materials, and reduce greenhouse emissions, and provides businesses with tools to improve their eco-efficiency, and operate in a more sustainable way.

The program helps businesses decrease their operating costs, and gain a competitive advantage, helping place Queensland businesses at the forefront of eco-efficient practices.

ecoBiz is an industry eco-efficiency program that helps businesses to understand and reduce their impact on the environment. It's a free Do-It-Yourself program. That means it's been designed for business to be able to manage themselves.

The program provides businesses with free training and website resources to assist them with the program, including facilitators, a group of *ecoBiz*-trained, fee-for-service consultants.

Queensland businesses are embracing eco-efficiency and realising that improved environmental performance equates to financial savings and an investment in their long-term viability as limited resources become more costly.

To date, the Queensland Government has awarded more than \$2.3 million in *ecoBiz* rebates to assist businesses adopt innovative eco-efficient practices and make substantial environmental savings in water, energy and waste.

ecoBiz Rebates may also be available for companies that identify innovative eco-efficiency projects. Funding assists businesses undertake initiatives that address major carbon, energy, waste and water resource challenges for Queensland, helping ensure a future that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Projects supported by the program demonstrate their ability to reduce their water and energy consumption, and carbon and waste output.

Applications closed recently for round three *ecoBiz* rebates, and applications have been made for grants totalling \$400,000.

There are a number of other initiatives that the Government has in place to assist Queensland businesses deal with Climate Change:

- The Queensland Sustainable Energy Innovation Fund (QSEIF), administered by the EPA, assists Queensland based organisations develop innovative technologies that reduce consumption of energy and water. Since 1999, QSEIF has committed over \$7 million in funding to support industry development of technology that will allow businesses and the community to better utilise resources, which are critical when adapting to climate change. Support provided has been a catalyst in encouraging a further \$12.9 million in private investment funding to further develop these technologies.
- The Queensland Water and Energy Sustainability Network (QWESTNet), an industry technology network established by the EPA which seeks to match businesses with new technology, has now held two sessions this year with over 100 attendees at each. The next one will be held in June this year.
- The *ecoBiz* conference will again be held in 2008 to focus on the leading edge sectors, companies, and professionals showing the way to profitable investment and business by being climate smart, eco-efficient, and alert to the greening of the marketplace.
- The 2008 Sustainable Industries Awards which provide an opportunity to recognise Queensland business leaders, companies and technologies that are setting best-practice benchmarks in environmental performance. The EPA called for nominations, and entries closed on 30 April 2008. The presentation of the awards will occur at a gala dinner at the Gold Coast Convention Centre on 31 October 2008.

In addition, the Premier and I announced a package of Smart Energy Solutions for Business on 18 February 2008. Initially highlighted in the *ClimateSmart 2050* strategy last year, this package provides up to \$100 million for new renewable energy projects and industry energy efficiency projects.

The Office of Climate Change has been established within my Portfolio to lead a whole-of-government response to climate change by progressing the development of climate change policy and programs based on the best available science and information. The Office of Climate Change is currently undertaking a review of the *ClimateSmart 2050* strategy to take account of the latest scientific assessments and policy developments. *ClimateSmart 2050* represents over \$844 million in Government funding as part of a \$1.4 billion commitment supporting climate change initiatives across all sectors.