

Sustainable Development Youth Bill 2008

Explanatory Notes

Short title of the Youth Bill

The short title of the Youth Bill is the *Sustainable Development Youth Bill 2008*.

Objectives of the Youth Bill

The objective of the Youth Bill is to establish development regulations, increase the use of sustainable and renewable energies and to launch a State-wide sustainable development authority with the aim of decreasing Queensland's environmental impact. The *Sustainable Development Youth Bill 2008* will do this by setting targets for renewable energy usage in households, businesses and industrial enterprises, in addition to setting guidelines for the regulation of future developments.

Environmental awareness is increasing both in Australia and worldwide, as we become more aware of the effects of artificial development. Although most of Australia is semi-arid or desert, it covers a diverse range of habitats, from alpine heaths to tropical rainforests, and is recognised as a widely diverse country.

This is most obvious in Queensland, where environmental elements range from shimmering beaches, to lush rainforest, to endless plains of green countryside and barren desert. Every year tourists flock to Queensland to experience its unique environmental drawcards. In the 2004 financial year tourism contributed \$8.4 billion to Queensland's economy, accounting for 5.6% of Queensland's Gross State Product. Additionally, in 2007 2.2 million international visitors to Australia chose Queensland as their destination.

Queensland is not just a popular tourist destination. The state is currently being flooded by a population boom. By 2026 it is expected that a further 1.54 million people will call the Sunshine State home. Currently, Queensland has approximately 600 new residents move from interstate each week. There is no doubt that Queensland's idyllic environment is a

developmental drawcard. However, increased development places a huge strain on our environment and natural resources, threatening to irreversibly damage the pristine environment for which Queensland is so famous.

Many social, environmental and economic consequences await populations that fail to embrace the environmental revolution. Queensland urgently needs reform policies to stay technologically and socially competitive with proactive European countries in this global challenge. Development restraint and pollution mitigation techniques need to be implemented to ensure the continuation of Queensland's way of life and retention of its unique aesthetic qualities.

Although the Queensland Government currently offers subsidies for the purchase of renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels, the *Sustainable Development Youth Bill 2008* will seek to encourage energy providers to invest in renewable and sustainable technologies, by supplying a guaranteed increasing market demand. The *Sustainable Development Youth Bill 2008* will also be able to effectively place restrictions on development, both coastal and urban, to reduce the impact that Queensland's population boom is having on the environment. This will be achieved by having a State Sustainable Development Authority monitoring the restrictions and limitations that have been legislated. The authority will also have the jurisdiction to limit vegetation clearing while it will also be able to approve or disapprove all local government applications for rezoning in coastal areas and vegetation management plans.

There is an obvious need for enforcing laws that will protect Queensland's unique environment. Population growth will have a monumental impact on local environments and unless measures are put into place to manage energy usage and development now, the effects could be disastrous. The *Sustainable Development Youth Bill 2008* must be put in action immediately, to maintain the sustainability of Queensland's unique local environment.