

# SMALL BUSINESSES ADAPT TO CLIMATE-RELATED SHOCKS



QLD's business community is more than ever before analysing the risks, opportunities and financial impacts of climate change and using this in long-term business planning. The catastrophic bushfires and floods of the 2018–2019 summer had an estimated impact to the state budget of at least \$1.5 billion.

The Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy (Q-CAS) envisions an innovative and resilient QLD that manages the risks and harnesses the opportunities of a changing climate.

As part of this, the Government has worked with eight business sectors to help them understand, identify and better manage climate risk.

For QLD's small and medium enterprise (SME) sector, the Government funded and guided CCIQ to work with businesses to develop the Small and Medium Enterprise Sector Adaptation Plan. In developing the Plan, CCIQ consulted with businesses using surveys and workshops.

The 18 proposed actions under the plan aim to help businesses adjust to and get ahead of the impacts and opportunities climate change is bringing. The plan's proposals for action fit under seven action areas which are outlined below. The full plan is available online at:  
<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/climate/climate-change/adapting/sectors-systems>.

---

## Workplace Health & Safety

At June 2017, SMEs were responsible for the health and safety of around 1.42 million workers. With climate risk continuing to grow, QLD employers are eager for support to manage climate-related WHS issues, especially those related to heat stress. Workplace laws are very unclear on the issue of heat stress, and QLD has no code of practice dealing with this specific issue.

Employers need the tools and support to negotiate and clarify these issues with their employees.

---

## Insurability

As extreme weather events grow more likely, insurance premiums are set to rise. On top of this, not all climate hazards are covered by commercial insurance—events such as coastal inundation, erosion, landslip and subsidence are all generally excluded, which means people and businesses are effectively self-insured against these (or insured by the taxpayer).

The issue of an insurability gap is becoming an urgent concern for many QLD SMEs. Cross-sectoral collaboration is needed to find solutions to this crucial issue.

---

## Supporting businesses to support each other

A major source of information for small businesses is simply talking with their business peers.

QLD SMEs need platforms that support them to access and discuss industry-specific and expert knowledge, and to collaborate with other businesses on managing climate-related risks and taking advantage of linked business opportunities.

## THE VOICE OF BUSINESS

As the peak body for commerce and industry, we speak up for the brave businesses in our small to medium enterprise sector.

CCIQ is a member-owned group working to protect Queenslanders who run their own business.

## CONTACT US

Like to join the conversation?  
Contact CCIQ by email at  
[marketing@cciq.com.au](mailto:marketing@cciq.com.au) or for more  
information visit [cciq.com.au](http://cciq.com.au)

## Document management systems

As extreme weather events like floods and bushfires grow more common and severe, paper-based business document systems are a weak point in the climate resilience of a small business.

Actionable steps such as transitioning to digital document management systems can quickly improve business resilience. Many small businesses simply need support to adopt and use relevant software.

---

## Using Queensland's high-resolution climate projection data

QLD's SME sector is largely unaware of the **Queensland Future Climate Dashboard** (<https://app.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/dashboard/>) and what the latest science says about projected future climate for their region—let alone the possible impacts of this on starting or running their business. Some SMEs feel overwhelmed by climate science, or are put off by its complexity or inconsistency.

QLD SMEs simply aren't equipped to understand climate risk, and therefore to take steps to effectively manage it for their business.

Many QLD SMEs are also in the dark about how to profitably transition their business to capture new business opportunities on the horizon due to projected future climate for QLD's regions.

SMEs need tailored resources and education and training programs to become more climate literate and better able to manage the risks and take advantage of the opportunities of a changing climate.

---

## One-on-one business support

QLD's SMEs see electricity costs as a primary concern, with this exacerbated by increasingly hot conditions under climate change.

Responding to such issues, QLD's ecoBiz program, run by CCIQ and funded by the QLD Government, is helping businesses make substantial savings across their energy, water and waste bills. Along with these eco-efficiency improvements often comes reduced climate risk for a business.

One-on-one coaching is a key feature of ecoBiz, and this support for SMEs needs to continue, including in terms of more specific support for businesses to reduce their climate risk and take advantage of business opportunities arising under climate change. This support is also needed for new SMEs at the earliest stages of their business design.

---

## Business development

Many SMEs know that green or ethical branding is a business opportunity that comes with reducing climate risk.

Growing social trends like concern about rising pollution levels, decreasing community resilience, and environmental degradation, are all business opportunities for savvy SMEs.

SMEs that align with such trends by engaging with markets for socially responsible products and services (e.g. climate-friendly and circular-economy markets) will be increasingly better positioned than their competitors who make no changes.

Businesses need support to identify, understand and leverage such business opportunities, and to understand the social enterprise business model.

## THE VOICE OF BUSINESS

As the peak body for commerce and industry, we speak up for the brave businesses in our small to medium enterprise sector.

CCIQ is a member-owned group working to protect Queenslanders who run their own business.

## CONTACT US

Like to join the conversation?  
Contact CCIQ by email at [marketing@cciq.com.au](mailto:marketing@cciq.com.au) or for more information visit [cciq.com.au](https://cciq.com.au)



**Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland**

Industry House, 375 Wickham Tce,  
Spring Hill, Qld 4000.  
1300 731 988