

What is the state of our environment in Queensland?

- The good news is many aspects of Queensland's environment are in relatively good condition by national and international standards. But we need to ensure our past environmental mistakes do not occur in the future, and that our capacity to manage these impacts effectively remains strong.
- The 480-page report confirms we are heading in the right direction and efforts to repair our environment and improve environmental regulation have been worthwhile and should be maintained.
- The report also confirms a number of significant gaps or problem areas arising since European settlement.
- The most challenging environmental issues for Queensland are the cumulative consequences over many decades of unsustainable resource management practices by an increasing and resource-demanding population.

Key areas of concern

- Most obvious environmental damage relates to loss or degradation of forest and wetland habitats, invasions by pest plants and animals, strip development blighting coastal landscapes, soil erosion and altered flow regimes and pollution of many waterways.
- Extensive clearing of native bushland for farming and urbanisation continues to threaten biodiversity and contribute to soil erosion. Urban sprawl precludes land from other productive uses.
- Major pressures such as large scale loss of natural areas stems from very high population growth and the concentration of this growth in coastal areas both in the south-east and further north. Significant natural areas such as wetlands, both freshwater and coastal, are giving way to agriculture and urban expansion.
- Widespread grazing and cropping, catchment and water infrastructure development and fisheries exploitation have caused similar problems to those in other states. Results include soil loss/erosion, loss of farm viability, overgrazing/land degradation, sediment and over-exploitation of marine ecosystems.

Responses

- The report examines how Queensland is dealing with environmental issues in a special section for each chapter entitled *Responses*. (See fact sheet 4 for more information on solving the problems.)
- Many of the problems identified do have solutions and the report examines many positive and successful initiatives by all sections of the Queensland community.
- In many cases it is not possible to decide whether our actions are adequate. In response to this, the report highlights the need for more information and understanding, which will require further research and data collection.

