



Environmental Defenders Office

Our Ref: KR:SE:10223

9 September 2025

Dr Jim Thompson PSM
Chief Executive Officer
PO Box 3300
South Brisbane BC
Queensland 4101

By email: feedback@qm.qld.gov.au

Dear Dr Thompson

Queensland Museum Future Finders Program

1. We act on behalf of Comms Declare. Comms Declare is a climate advocacy charity representing more than 95 advertising agencies and hundreds of communication professionals who have declared they will not promote the growth of fossil fuels, high greenhouse gas pollution or deception around climate science.
2. We understand that the Future Makers program at the Queensland Museum is a partnership with Shell QGC's business, which aims to increase student's uptake and performance in STEM related subjects. Your website states that "Both organisations hope Future Makers' legacy includes a highly capable and innovative workforce ready to tackle problems and seize opportunities facing our state and nation". The website also lists information about Shell QRC's business, including a link to their website.
3. We are concerned that, by virtue of its partnership with Shell QGC, the Queensland Museum may be acting in contravention of its guiding principles, as set out in the *Queensland Museum Act 1970* (Qld) (**the Museum Act**). Section 1A of the Museum Act specifies that the object of the act is to contribute to the cultural, social and intellectual development of all Queenslanders. Section 1B of the Museum Act provides that the principles which are intended to guide the achievement of the object of the Museum Act, include;
 - (a) leadership and excellence should be provided in the **preservation**, research and communication of Queensland's **cultural and natural heritage**".
 - (b) Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture should be affirmed
 - (f) capabilities for life-long learning about Queensland's cultural and natural heritage should be developed.

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4. Fossil fuels, including natural gas, are causing climate change. The IEA estimates that emissions from oil and gas consumption account for around 40% of energy-related GHG emissions compared to around 15% from their production, transport and processing.¹
5. GHG emissions from natural gas and in particular Shell QGC's operations are having direct impacts on Queensland's natural heritage, with Queensland experiencing climate extremes such as floods, droughts, heatwaves and bushfires, as well as higher temperatures, sea level rise, warmer and more acidic oceans.² Climate Change is exacerbating the frequency and severity of these events. Climate change is also impacting on indigenous communities, with rising sea levels impacting several important cultural sites in the Torres Strait. As Justice Wigney observed in the matter of *Paibai v Commonwealth of Australia* (no 2) [2025] FCA 796 at [3]-[4]:

The Torres Strait Islands have in recent years been ravaged by the impacts of human-induced climate change. Rising sea levels, storm surges and other extreme water levels have resulted in flooding and seawater inundation on many of the islands. Trees are dying, and previously fertile areas have been adversely affected by salination and are no longer suitable for growing traditional crops. Rising sea levels and storms have led to the erosion and depletion of beaches and the salination of wetlands. Warmer ocean temperatures and ocean acidification have caused coral bleaching and loss of seagrass beds. Totemic sea creatures like dugong and turtles, once abundant in the region, have become scarce. Seasonal patterns have changed, as have the migratory patterns of birdlife.

*The impacts of climate change on the land and marine environment of the Torres Strait Islands have had a profound impact on the customary way of life of the inhabitants and traditional owners of the Torres Strait Islands. They are finding it increasingly difficult to practise and observe the body of customs, traditions and beliefs, known generally as **Ailan Kastom**, which has sustained them for generations. Sacred sites, including burial and ceremonial sites, have been damaged and are constantly at risk of further inundation. The traditional owners who reside on the islands are increasingly unable to source traditional foods or engage in certain cultural ceremonies, particularly those involving hunting and gathering. Changing seasonal, migratory and stellar patterns make it increasingly difficult for elders to pass-on traditional knowledge to the next generations.*

6. Shell QRC is a company producing LNG from natural gas sourced from coal seams in Queensland through QRC Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Shell Energy Operations Pty Ltd (known as Shell Australia), a wholly owned subsidiary of Shell plc. Shell Australia is a joint venture partner in a number of major gas projects, both in Queensland and in WA through the North West Shelf in WA. Shell Australia is one of the ten largest polluting companies in Australia, with the Climate Council estimating it produced 19.1 million tonnes of CO₂ since 2016.³ Worldwide Shell plc is one of the largest contributors to climate change, with the carbon majors project in 2024 identifying them as one of the top 20 emitters by emissions from 1854-2022, with total emissions of 40,674 MT CO₂e, some 2.1% of the world's emissions. It is therefore evident that Shell's activities have a direct impact on Queensland's natural and cultural heritage.

¹ IEA, 'Emissions from Oil and Gas Operations in Net Zero Transitions. A World Energy Outlook Special Report on the Oil and Gas Industry and COP28' (Report PDF, May 2023).

<https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/743af33c-b2f5-4a93-a925-1b08f6438e61/EmissionsfromOilandGasOperationinNetZeroTransitions.pdf>

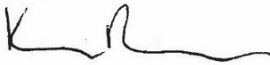
² [Climate change in Queensland](#)

³ [Climate-Council-Report-Introducing-the-Dirty-Dozen-Feb-2023-1.pdf](#) p. 15.

7. Both of Shell's main projects are expanding their operations. Shell QRC commenced a new tranche of onshore natural gas wells in Western Downs in July 2025.⁴ The North West Shelf in WA, is a significant expansion which according to the Climate Council involves 4 billion tonnes of CO₂ until 2070.⁵ An IEA special report on the oil and gas industry in net zero transitions, found that the demand trajectory in a 1.5°C-aligned scenario leaves no room for new oil or gas fields, and also that emissions from oil and gas production (scope 1 and 2) must be cut by more than 60% by 2030 in order to align with a 1.5°C scenario.⁶ Therefore the plans of Shell are in direct conflict with keeping within a 1.5°C-aligned scenario and consistent with the Paris agreement.
8. Our client is of the view that your partnership with Shell presents a significant risk to Queensland's cultural and natural heritage, and as such, is plainly inconsistent with the objectives of the Queensland Museum, as outlined in the Museum Act.
9. With consideration of the objects of the Museum Act, we request that you reconsider the Queensland Museum's partnership with Shell QRC.

Yours faithfully

Environmental Defenders Office



Kirsty Ruddock

Managing Lawyer

Corporate and Commercial

⁴ [Shell invests in new wells in Queensland's Western Downs region | Shell Australia](#)

⁵ [epa.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/EPA_Report/EPA_Report_1727_-_North_West_Shelf_Extension_Project_-_assessment_report.pdf](#), [Labor opens the floodgates on climate chaos as NSW cleans up after record-breaking floods | Climate Council](#)

⁶ <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-oil-and-gas-industry-in-net-zero-transitions>