



Interim Strategic Review of the Queensland Decarbonisation Hub

Evidence Base, Analysis and Findings

A comprehensive account of the Hub's purpose, performance, and system role, drawing on expert input, stakeholder feedback, and delivery review

The Hub Coordinating Unit, Dr Liz Young, Angela Elvery and Professor Greg Marston

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters across Queensland. We honour the Elders past and present and recognise the ongoing connection that Indigenous peoples have to Country. Their deep cultural knowledge, care for land and water, and enduring relationships with place remain vital to shaping just and sustainable pathways for Queensland's future.

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This report presents an independent assessment informed by contributions from diverse stakeholders. While these contributors have helped inform the Review and have generally supported the direction of the analysis, the findings and conclusions do not necessarily reflect the individual positions of all participants.

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1. Executive Summary

The Interim Review (Review) of the Queensland Decarbonisation Hub (Hub) provides a clear assessment of the Hub's progress to date and maps a path forward for the remainder of the funded term. Drawing on stakeholder surveys, expert workshops, and internal documentation, the Review offers a strategic reset, one that shifts the Hub from broad ambition to focused delivery, and from promise to proof of value.

The Review begins with an Introduction, which sets the strategic context by revisiting the Hub's original purpose, identifying shifts in the policy and political landscape, and clarifying the Review's aims and audience. The Methodology and Evidence Base section outlines the approach used to assess performance and value, including the analytical framework, stakeholder engagement process, and synthesis methods. The subsequent chapters follow a 'why, what, how' structure: WHY explores the strategic rationale for the Hub and assesses its evolving role and system value; WHAT examines the Hub's activities, outputs, and priorities for the remainder of its term; and HOW analyses the governance, delivery mechanisms, and secretariat arrangements that underpin its work. The final Synthesis section reflects on lessons to date and sets out a strategic pivot to enhance impact in the final phase, positioning the Hub to deliver greater system value.

1.1 A Sound Vision That Remains Strong

The Hub was created to fill a critical system gap: the absence of a cross-sectoral entity capable of aligning academic research and expertise with the real-world demands of Queensland's decarbonisation strategy. It was designed around four core knowledge functions - brokerage, exchange, co-production, and turning knowledge into action - that would connect research with the needs of government, industry, and community.

This founding vision remains both sound and strongly supported. Stakeholders see clear value in the Hub's role as an independent broker of insight, especially in a fast-evolving policy landscape that demands both place-based planning and evidence-informed investment. There is broad goodwill and a shared belief that the Hub's mission is more relevant than ever.

However, this potential has not yet been fully realised. The Review finds that the Hub must now clarify its identity as a strategic enabler, working to bring different partners together and aligning social, economic and environmental dimensions of the QLD decarbonisation agenda.

1.2 From Broad Ambition to Strategic Focus

Since its inception, the Hub has moved through four broad phases: early mission framing, foundational setup, initial delivery, and a recent pivot toward strategic refinement. While progress is evident, particularly in co-produced projects and multi-sectoral engagement, stakeholders also identify key challenges.

The Hub's activities have become diffuse, with a wide remit but limited visibility in critical policy spaces. Its governance structures, while inclusive, are process-heavy. Communications and

translation capacity are stretched thin, and the Hub's contributions are not always visible to decision-makers. Importantly, the Hub remains under-leveraged in regional, Indigenous, and cross-sectoral partnerships, areas where its impact could be distinctive.

Addressing these challenges requires sharper focus, more deliberate delivery, and a clearer articulation of system value.

1.3 A Critical Juncture: The Next 18 Months

The Hub now enters a make-or-break phase. With constrained resources and high expectations, success depends not on expanding its scope, but on doing fewer things better. The next 18 months must demonstrate the Hub's value through high-impact initiatives, streamlined governance, and strengthened partnerships with industry, community and government.

Key strategic imperatives include:

- **Reaffirming Purpose:** Positioning the Hub as a knowledge synthesiser and broker, distinct from directly delivering research or decarbonisation programs, and reconnecting with its original mission.
- **Narrowing Focus:** Concentrating on a select number of initiatives with visible policy relevance and real-world application, including a priority project for regional Queensland.
- **Tailoring Outputs:** Shifting toward timely, strategic outputs such as synthesis briefs, case studies, and policy briefs aligned with policy cycles and departmental needs.
- **Elevating Visibility:** Investing in campaign-style communications and platform curation to raise the Hub's profile and influence in both policy and public spheres.
- **Streamlining Governance:** Moving to flexible, campaign-oriented governance models, recasting existing committees for greater responsiveness and inviting high-level champions to support delivery.
- **Embedding Inclusion:** Ensuring that Indigenous knowledge systems, regional voices, and equity considerations are central to design and delivery.
- **Managing Ambition:** Matching the scale of work to the Hub's capacity, and prioritising quality, influence, and proof of value over breadth or volume.

1.4 The Way Forward: Four Focus Areas

To translate these imperatives into action, the Review consolidates the Hub's future activity into four interdependent focus areas, each aligned with the original vision and tailored to deliver real system value:

- I. **Support Government Decarbonisation Planning**
Deliver responsive, policy-relevant insight into Queensland Government decarbonisation

efforts, with a focus on sectoral plans and climate strategies. This is the clearest pathway to demonstrating the Hub's relevance and increasing research uptake.

- II. **Deliver the Remote and Rural Regions Priority Project**
Lead a high-profile, place-based project that builds regional partnerships, strengthens engagement with Indigenous communities, provides a focal point for the 2025 Hub Forum and delivers a signature output for COP31 at the end of 2026. This will serve as proof-of-concept for inclusive, applied collaboration.
- III. **Translate and Synthesise Research**
Institutionalise the capability to convert research into timely, actionable outputs aligned with policy cycles and targeted at key departments such as Treasury, DETSI, DPI, the Net Zero Authority and Queensland's local governments. This will reinforce the Hub's core identity as a knowledge broker.
- IV. **Map and Mobilise System Capability**
Make it easier for government, industry, and regional actors to access Queensland's research expertise. Refresh the Hub's digital platforms and brokering role to strengthen system navigation, connection, and strategic alignment.

Each of these areas is supported by tailored delivery enablers including improved internal resourcing, a revitalised communications strategy, platform curation, a governance refresh, and clearer role definition across the university network.

1.5 From Concept to System Value

Together, these four focus areas form a coherent framework for the Hub's next phase. They directly address the core findings of the Review: to clarify purpose, consolidate effort, and elevate influence. Importantly, they reflect the seven strategic responses developed through extensive expert and stakeholder engagement, ensuring the next phase of work is grounded, practical, and widely supported.

A clear set of success metrics will be developed with the Steering Committee to track progress, demonstrate public value, and underpin future funding bids.

1.6 Recommendations

The following recommendations translate the Review's findings into a focused set of forward-looking, actionable steps to guide the Hub's next phase. They are designed to support implementation of the four priority areas, which together provide the strategic focus necessary to realise the Hub's purpose and maximise its system contribution over the final 18 months of the current three-year funding period.

Each recommendation is grounded in the Review's overarching logic: the Hub was established to address a system-level gap by brokering knowledge between research, policy, and practice. To assess progress against this founding purpose, the Review drew on document analysis, stakeholder

feedback, and expert consultation, culminating in the identification of seven strategic imperatives. These imperatives now serve as a framework for forward planning, highlighting where the Hub can have the greatest impact and how it can sharpen its distinct role in Queensland's decarbonisation system.

Building on this foundation, the Review sets out a clear strategic direction, expressed through four interdependent focus areas that translate the imperatives into practical action. The recommendations presented here are aligned with this structure. The strategic recommendations operationalise the seven imperatives, turning them into priority actions that enhance the Hub's focus, visibility, and system value. The delivery enablers complement these by strengthening the capabilities, coordination, and platforms required to implement the strategy effectively and sustainably.

Taken together, the recommendations provide a coherent and credible roadmap—anchored in evidence, responsive to system needs, and calibrated for delivery within the current funding period. They reinforce the Hub's value as a trusted connector and knowledge broker, and set the conditions for targeted, high-impact contributions in the critical period ahead.

1) Reaffirming Purpose

- a) Clarify and communicate the Hub's identity as a knowledge synthesiser and broker. Distinguish it clearly from research delivery or funding roles across all messaging, governance, and outputs.
- b) Reframe internal and external language to consistently describe the Hub's function, reinforcing its mission-oriented, system-bridging role.

2) Narrowing Focus

- a) Consolidate effort around a limited set of high-impact activities, avoiding expansion into new domains. Prioritise the Remote and Rural Regions Priority Project and targeted support for sectoral decarbonisation planning.
- b) Align Hub activities with clear use cases that demonstrate value to government partners, regional stakeholders, and Queensland Government decision-makers, with Hub partners actively contributing to the strengthening of these strategic connections.

3) Tailoring Outputs

- a) Develop and institutionalise a suite of strategic output formats (e.g. synthesis briefs, policy notes, short case studies) aligned with policy timeframes and user needs.
- b) Create a rolling engagement calendar linked to known policy cycles (e.g. budget processes, sectoral plan milestones, COP31), ensuring timely and relevant contributions.

4) Elevating Visibility

- a) Launch a targeted communications refresh focused on audience-specific narratives (e.g. policy, regional, public) to articulate the Hub's value proposition.
 - b) Curate a visible and dynamic public platform that showcases current projects, collaborators, and outputs, making the Hub's work accessible and influential.
- 5) Streamlining Governance
- a) Reframe existing governance structures into flexible working groups or strategic taskforces aligned to the four priority areas.
 - b) Identify high-profile champions (from government, research, or regional leadership) and, through the Hub's post-Review action planning, define the specific roles and activities they will undertake to strengthen communications, synthesis, and regional liaison, amplify impact, and secure executive buy-in across systems.
- 6) Embedding Inclusion
- a) Embed Indigenous and regional leadership in the design and delivery of major initiatives, particularly the priority project, through co-design and shared governance.
 - b) Ensure equity is a cross-cutting design principle in project selection, communication, and evaluation.
- 7) Managing Ambition
- a) Develop a clear statement of success for the final 18 months of the initial 3 year funding period, articulating what the Hub will deliver, to whom, and why it matters.
 - b) Undertake regular prioritisation reviews to ensure resources and staff time are concentrated on activities that align with the strategic imperatives and deliver proof of value.
- 8) Delivery Enablers
- a) Invest in core coordination capability, particularly within the Coordinating Unit, to support delivery, communications, and cross-system alignment.
 - b) Strengthen internal planning processes with clear delivery roadmaps, short feedback loops, and milestone tracking across all four priority areas.
 - c) Improve stakeholder navigation by mapping and publicising points of contact, pathways to engage with the Hub, and available services or outputs.
 - d) Refresh digital platforms to better support system brokering and knowledge exchange, including a searchable expert database and output library.
 - e) Continue to convene the annual Hub forum (mid-2025 and pre-COP31 2026) to showcase progress, gather input, and strengthen alignment with policy and regional partners.

2. Introduction

This section provides the strategic context for the Review. It revisits the Hub's original purpose and design, outlines the significant policy and political changes since its inception, and clarifies the Review's intent and audience. Together, these elements establish the foundation for understanding how the Hub's role is evolving, what it is being asked to deliver, and why a mid-point Review is both timely and necessary.

2.1 Origins and Purpose of the Hub

The Hub was established in mid-2023 to help accelerate Queensland's transition to a net zero economy. Initiated through a Vice-Chancellor-led forum (VC Forum) in 2022¹ and formalised via a Grant Agreement between the Queensland Government and the University of Queensland in late June 2023, the Hub was conceived as a cross-institutional platform to deliver research, broker knowledge, and enable coordinated action across sectors.

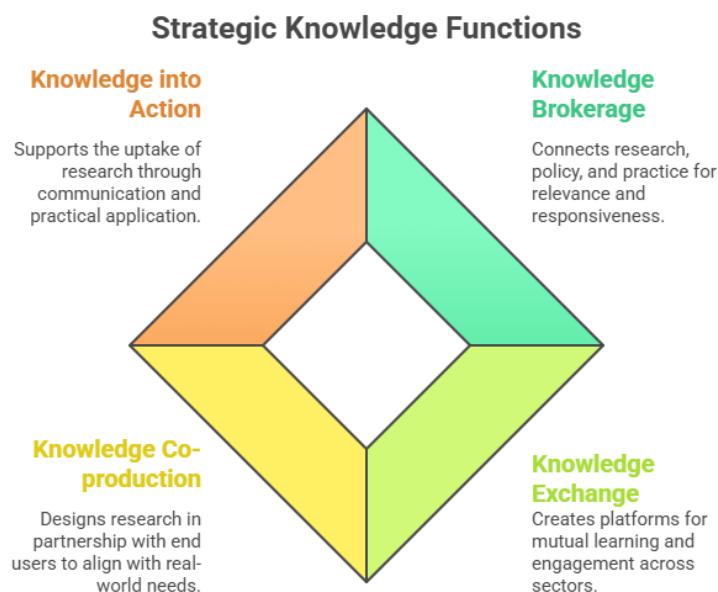
The Hub's intended point of difference was not only to coordinate academic research but to embed that research within decision-making processes.

Four strategic knowledge functions were identified as central to this purpose.

- **Knowledge brokerage** focuses on connecting research, policy, and practice to ensure relevance and responsiveness.
- **Knowledge exchange** involves creating platforms for mutual learning and engagement across sectors.
- **Knowledge co-production** emphasises the design of research in partnership with end users, aligning outputs with real-world needs.
- **Knowledge into action** supports the uptake of research through strategic communication, translation, and practical application.

At its core, the Hub was designed to be more than a grant-maker or research network. It was envisioned as a mission-oriented, strategic platform that could navigate complexity, build trust across institutions, and inform the development of practical decarbonisation solutions for Queensland.

¹ For details on the Vice Chancellors Forum see Yarnold, J., Marston, G., Mackey, B., McVeigh, J., Rolfe, J., Dale, A., Babacan, H., Lyons B., Deane, F., Newlands, M., Plint, N., Molyneaux, L., Keenan-Jones, D., Birch, J., Maguire, R., Quiggin, J., Buleer, D., Lovelock, CE., Doran-Browne, N., & Ashford, G. (2022). *Decarbonising Queensland: Four Pillars Toward an Inclusive and Resilient Low Carbon Economy*. Queensland Universities Vice Chancellors Forum



2.2 Changing Context

The strategic environment in which the Hub operates has shifted significantly since its inception. In April 2024, the *Clean Economy Jobs Act* was passed with bipartisan support in the Queensland Parliament. This legislation enshrined emissions reduction targets for the State, to be achieved through sector-specific emissions reduction plans. In October 2024, a new Liberal National Party government was elected. Consistent with its support for the *Clean Economy Jobs Act*, the government has focused on developing a Net Zero Roadmap, underpinned by emissions reduction plans for Queensland's key economic sectors.

National and international expectations for climate action are intensifying, placing greater emphasis on the need for coordinated and inclusive responses. Decarbonisation planning is no longer just a technical exercise. It is increasingly linked to broader social issues such as equity, regional transition, cost of living, affordable housing, mental health, employment opportunities, and community resilience. This evolving context reinforces the original rationale for the Hub and underscores the need for a more focused and adaptive approach. As challenges grow in complexity and urgency, so too does the expectation that the Hub will bridge the gap between technical research and policy, delivering advice that is timely, relevant, and ready for application by decision-makers.

Stronger engagement with regional and Indigenous communities is essential to ensure that diverse perspectives and local knowledge meaningfully shape research and policy outcomes. Navigating the complex trade-offs inherent in climate and decarbonisation policy requires system-level leadership. This is a role the Hub is well-positioned to fulfil.

There is a critical need for a visible and trusted platform that effectively connects government, research, industry, and community actors. This includes facilitating collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action toward shared goals.

These shifts in the strategic environment carry important implications for the Hub's strategic positioning, what it prioritises to deliver, and the role it is expected to play throughout the remainder of the funded period.

2.3 Purpose and Timing of the Interim Review

The Review was commissioned to assess whether the Hub is on track to deliver its intended impact and how it can most effectively focus its remaining 18 months. As specified in the Terms of Reference (as attachment A), the Review seeks to:

- Examine alignment between the Hub's original purpose and its current activities
- Evaluate the effectiveness of its governance and delivery mechanisms
- Identify opportunities for strategic focus and high-impact work
- Provide a basis for future decisions about the Hub's legacy and potential continuation

Rather than a compliance audit, this is a formative review. It is designed to support learning, reflection, and adaptation to support the future direction of the Hub's work program.

Understanding the evolution of the Hub helps to contextualise the Review. The Hub has evolved through four distinct phases, each building on the last to strengthen its strategic foundations, operational capacity, and system-wide engagement:

Phase 1: Framing the Mission (July 2022 – June 2023)

The idea of establishing a Hub had its formal genesis in the 2022 VC Forum, which was instrumental in defining its purpose and mission. The Hub's remit was solidified through the signing of the Grant Agreement, securing funding and confirming its legitimacy. This phase laid the foundations for the Hub's future role, centred on a shared vision and commitment.

Phase 2: Establishing the Hub (July – December 2023)

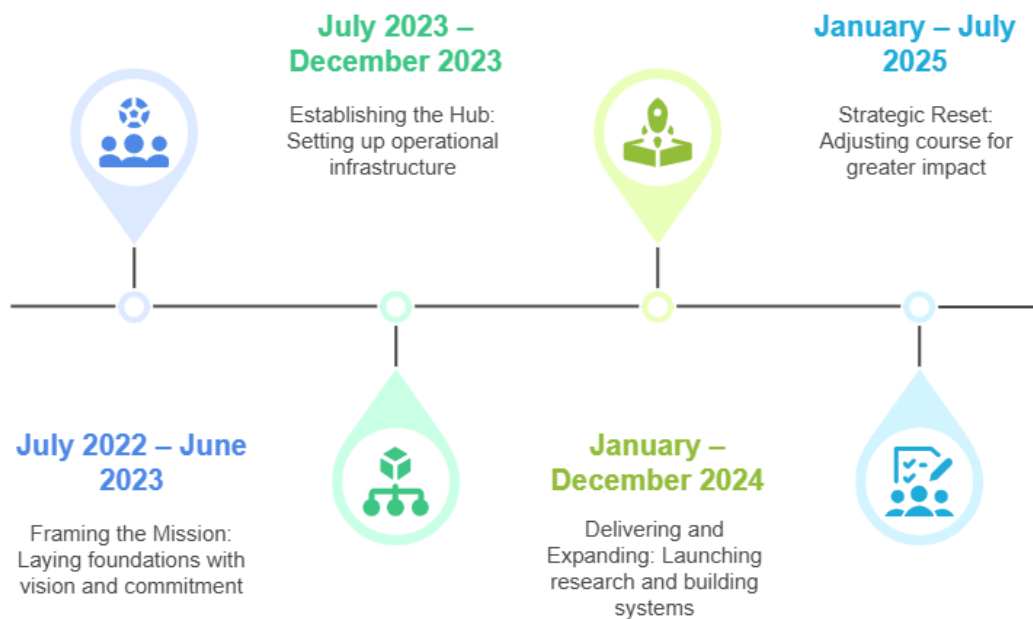
With its mission defined, the Hub moved to establish its operational and strategic infrastructure. Key activities included developing governance structures, internal planning systems, and launching its public presence through branding and a website. This period also saw the beginnings of stakeholder engagement, with early convening efforts helping to build a network of collaborators.

Phase 3: Delivering and Expanding (January – December 2024)

The focus then shifted to delivery and visibility. Research activities commenced under the Hub's three core themes, and initial outputs were delivered in the form of briefings, webinars, and showcases. The first Hub Forum was convened to engage stakeholders more deeply. The Advisory Committee was established, and a call for research proposals for 2025 was issued, signalling momentum in both delivery and system-building.

Phase 4: Strategic Reset (January – July 2025)

In the most recent phase, the Hub undertook a strategic reset to ensure closer alignment with system needs and policy priorities. A Research Director was appointed to strengthen leadership and coherence. Eleven new projects were co-designed with government and industry partners, and the Interim Review was conducted to assess performance and inform the Hub's next stage. This phase marks a deliberate shift toward greater strategic fit and impact.



2.4 Audience and Use of the Review

The Review is intended for a diverse range of stakeholders, each with a distinct role in shaping, supporting, or benefiting from the Hub's work. It is designed to help these stakeholders reflect on what's working, learn from what's not, and make more informed decisions moving forward.

For governance and oversight bodies, including the Steering Committee, Advisory Committee, and Research Committee, the Review provides insights to assess strategic alignment, evaluate governance effectiveness, and guide future priorities.

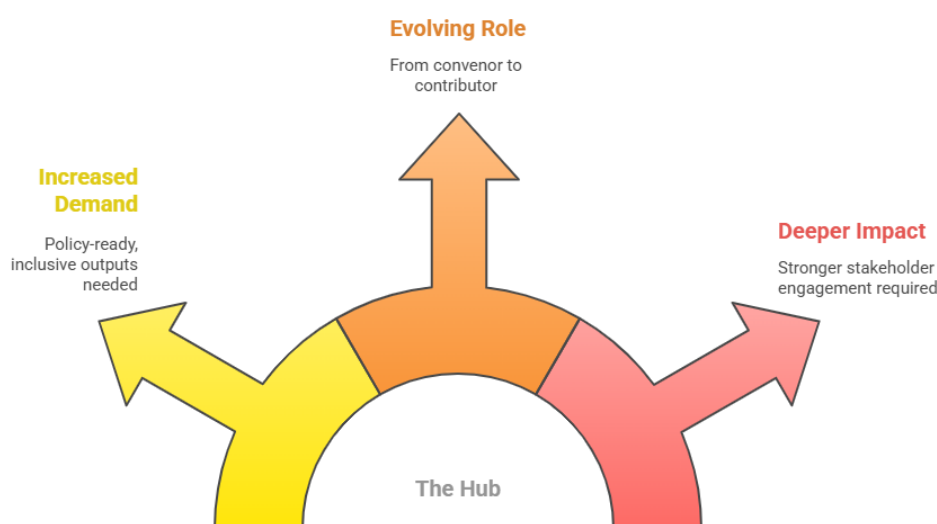
It also supports government stakeholders, particularly Queensland Government agencies across portfolios such as climate, energy, planning, regional development, health, environment, primary industries, innovation, and central coordination. The Review identifies how the Hub can act as a platform for more coordinated, system-wide responses to Queensland's decarbonisation and resilience challenges. Local and Commonwealth governments may also draw on the Review to consider the Hub's contribution to broader policy goals and identify opportunities for collaboration and impact.

Academic and institutional partners can use the Review to reflect on the Hub's evolving mission, strengthen research alignment, and maximise the value of high-impact outputs.

Finally, the Review is relevant to broader stakeholders across the climate and decarbonisation ecosystem to enable them to engage with the Hub’s future work program. This includes industry, community, and regional actors who are seeking to shape engagement approaches and explore opportunities for co-production, knowledge exchange, and shared benefit.

2.5 Key Takeaways

- The Hub was established to address a systemic gap by connecting research, policy, and practice to support Queensland’s net zero transition.
- Its four core functions, knowledge brokerage, exchange, co-production, and translation into action, remain highly relevant and define its strategic value.
- Recent policy and political developments, such as the Clean Economy Jobs Act and sectoral planning, have reaffirmed the Hub’s purpose and increased the demand for policy-ready, inclusive outputs.
- The Hub’s role is evolving from a system convenor to a system contributor, with growing expectations for deeper impact and stronger engagement, particularly with regional and Indigenous stakeholders.
- This moment represents both a mid-point check-in and a strategic inflection point, where sharper focus, adaptive delivery, and clear system value will determine the Hub’s legacy and future contribution.



3. Review Methodology and Evidence Base

This section outlines the approach used to evaluate the performance and strategic value of the Hub. It describes the analytical framework that has guided the Review, the questions that shaped stakeholder engagement, and the methods used to synthesise insights.

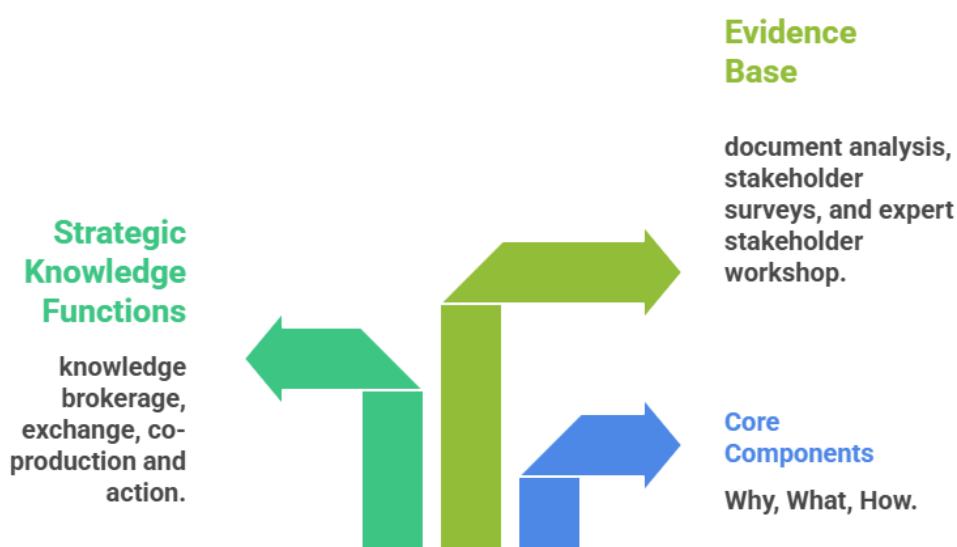
3.1 Review Structure and Analytical Framing

The Review is structured around two complementary frames. The first frame comprises the core components of the Review, which provide its overarching structure and reflect the foundational logic of the Hub's operation:

- Why: Strategic relevance and system role
- What: Activities, outputs, and influence
- How: Governance and delivery mechanisms

The second frame focuses on the Hub's strategic knowledge functions, which are knowledge brokerage, exchange, co-production, and knowledge into action. While the Why, What, and How structure anchors the strategic inquiry and guides the organisation of the Review, the knowledge functions provide a practical lens for assessing the Hub's distinctive value proposition.

This dual framing supports a multi-level evaluation, from strategic alignment to practical impact, and shapes the structure of the evidence and analysis that follows. The Review draws on a diverse evidence base, including foundational documentation, internal reporting, stakeholder survey data, and expert workshop input. These sources are used throughout the Review to assess performance and develop actionable recommendations for the Hub's final 18 months.



3.2 Review Questions

The Review questions operationalise the dual framing, translating strategic and functional priorities into evaluative inquiry. They were designed to test the Hub's coherence, relevance, and delivery across the three core components of the Review, while remaining grounded in the Hub's four knowledge functions.

Why: Strategic relevance and mission

This line of inquiry focuses on the Hub's foundational purpose, its evolving system role, and its

relevance in a changing policy context. Drawing on the original framing from the VC Forum, expert stakeholders were asked to consider:

- The original rationale for the Hub's creation
- The extent to which the Hub is delivering against its intended role
- Whether current governance and positioning enable the mission-oriented leadership envisioned for the Hub.

What: Activities and outcomes

This component examines whether the Hub's activities to date reflect its intended functions. Assessment of this theme was informed by delivery records, survey feedback, and expert reflection. Key discussion points included:

- What the Hub has delivered so far.
- Whether these activities align with its strategic intent and meet stakeholder needs.
- What kinds of influence or outcomes are evident in the Hub's work and where gaps may exist.

How: Governance and delivery

This theme explores whether the structures and systems intended to enable the Hub are effectively supporting its mission. It focuses particularly on governance, leadership, and resourcing. Drawing again on the original framing from the VC Forum, expert stakeholders were asked to reflect on:

- Whether the current governance structures and delivery mechanisms are fit for purpose.
- How committees, leadership arrangements, and the Coordinating Unit contribute to Hub delivery.
- What improvements could strengthen alignment, accountability, and impact.

Together, these questions support a multi-layered evaluation of the Hub's performance, capturing both strategic and operational dimensions.

3.3 Methodology and Evidence Base

The Review draws on a triangulated, mixed-method evidence base to assess the Hub's strategic relevance, operational performance, and delivery mechanisms. The analysis integrates three primary sources: document analysis, a stakeholder survey, and an expert workshop.

Document analysis

A review of key documents was undertaken to understand how the Hub was originally conceived and how this intent has been operationalised over time. Foundational documents such as the VC Forum report and the Grant Agreement outlined the original vision and remit. Operational planning documents, including Annual Work Plans and project summaries, provided insight into how that vision was implemented in practice. Governance arrangements were examined through committee terms of reference, while progress reports and project outputs offered a view of the Hub's delivery record.

Stakeholder survey

An online survey was distributed to stakeholders across government, university, industry, and community sectors via the Hub's mailing list. Key stakeholders also received a direct invitation from the Research Director. The survey included both closed and open-ended questions designed to assess perceptions of the Hub's value, visibility, and effectiveness, as well as to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. A total of 72 stakeholders responded, including representatives from government, academia, industry, and community organisations. Details of the survey results can be found in Attachment A.

Expert stakeholder workshop

A 3.5-hour expert stakeholder workshop was held on 11 July 2025, bringing together ten participants from government, academia, and industry who had been involved in the Hub's development or delivery. The discussion was informed by background papers that synthesised findings from the document review and survey. These papers were structured around the Why, What, and How Review components and served as a springboard for dialogue. Key insights from the discussion were recorded and synthesised to identify areas of convergence, divergence, and opportunity. A high-level summary of the outcomes of this workshop can be found in Attachment B.

3.4 Interpretive Approach and Limitations

The Review adopts a qualitative, synthesis-based approach. Its aim is not to deliver a definitive or quantitative impact assessment, but rather to explore the strategic value the Hub is providing or has the potential to provide. It also seeks to identify where delivery is enabling or constraining that value, and to consider what strategic adjustments may be needed to guide its remaining period of operation.

Several limitations are acknowledged. Not all stakeholders were equally familiar with the full scope of Hub activity, which may have influenced survey responses. Time constraints limited the extent of engagement and the depth of analysis. Because no metrics or baseline data were established at the Hub's inception, parts of the evaluation relied on informed judgement rather than direct measurement or comparison. Nonetheless, the use of multiple data sources and the active involvement of expert stakeholders provide a robust foundation for the findings and recommendations that follow.

3.5 Key Takeaways

- The Review applies a formative, qualitative approach grounded in the Hub's strategic logic ("Why, What, How") and assessed across its four core functions.
- It draws on three key data sources: strategic document analysis, a stakeholder survey, and a facilitated expert workshop.
- While limitations exist, such as uneven familiarity and data gaps, triangulation and expert input have enhanced credibility.

- The Review’s goal is to guide strategic adjustment, not assess compliance, offering a foundation for learning, reflection, and forward planning.



4. WHY – Strategic Direction and System Role

This section examines the strategic rationale behind the Hub’s establishment and its evolving role in Queensland’s decarbonisation landscape. It draws on foundational documents, most notably the VC Forum report and the Grant Agreement, as well as stakeholder survey findings and insights from the expert workshop. Together, these sources assess whether the Hub’s original purpose remains fit-for-purpose in today’s more complex, implementation-focused policy environment. They also highlight where refinement is needed to strengthen the Hub’s coherence, positioning, and system-level value.

Although the stakeholder survey focused primarily on current activities, several insights spoke directly to the Hub’s purpose and are incorporated here.

4.1 Origins and Intent

The Hub was established following the VC’s Forum on Decarbonisation, which recognised that Queensland faces a particularly urgent and complex transition. As the largest contributor to Australia’s carbon emissions, due to coal-fired power generation, fossil fuel exports, and land clearing, decarbonisation in Queensland was seen as both essential and especially challenging. Additional complexity arises from the state’s regional diversity, deeply embedded legacy systems, and fragmented institutional landscapes.

At the same time, Queensland held unique advantages: world-class research capability, abundant renewable resources, and emerging clean industries. The VC Forum concluded that these strengths risked being under-realised without greater coordination and system-level leadership. What was needed was not simply more research or better policy, but a platform to bridge sectors, synthesise knowledge, and steer collective effort.

One of six priority actions was to establish a dedicated Decarbonisation Hub to lead knowledge exchange, policy innovation, and partnership-building. Specifically, the Queensland Government should:

Establish a dedicated Decarbonisation Technology and Policy Innovation Hub to foster knowledge exchange and strong partnerships between research, government, industry and communities to ideate, develop, test, implement and evaluate policy and technology solutions.²

The Hub would not be a traditional research centre but a ‘system-bridging’ institution that is credible, visible, and trusted across government, academia, industry, and community.

This vision was formalised in the 2023 Grant Agreement between the Queensland Government and the University of Queensland. The Hub’s mission was to translate university research into real-world impact by supporting policy development, informing practice, and enabling community-led transitions.

The Hub was never intended to be a generator of academic research alone. It was conceived as a strategic enabler: curating and connecting knowledge, building institutional trust, and fostering applied, place-based, equity-informed responses to the decarbonisation challenge. The Grant Agreement further reinforced these ambitions by committing to collaborative design with government, integration of Indigenous knowledge and regional voices, and operation as a branded, independent platform serving the whole state.

This Review considers how effectively the Hub has delivered on its original role, how its function has evolved in a shifting policy context, and what adjustments are needed to sustain and strengthen its strategic contribution in the period ahead.

4.2 Strategic Fit in Today’s Context

Validation of Original Rationale by Experts

Participants in the expert workshop strongly reaffirmed the original rationale for establishing the Hub. They concluded that Queensland continues to lack a coordinated mechanism that connects research expertise with the needs of policy, industry, and communities. While the Hub has begun to fulfill this important bridging function, workshop participants noted that it has yet to fully realise its potential as a central, trusted platform for connecting knowledge with practical decision-making across the system. In this regard, the Hub’s role as a knowledge broker and convenor remains not

² Yarnold et al., 2022, p. 6

only relevant but increasingly important as the state faces growing challenges in decarbonisation, adaptation, and resilience.

Experts emphasised the importance of returning to first principles. Rather than duplicating existing efforts, the Hub should concentrate on its unique strengths in synthesis, translation, and connecting systems. Its original mission to align research, policy, and practice across sectors was broadly supported, even if it has not yet been fully realised.

Evolving Needs: Resilience, Adaptation, Regional Equity

Since the Hub's inception, Queensland's decarbonisation agenda has shifted from high-level ambition to complex implementation. It now demands equity-conscious, place-based approaches that align technical insight with lived experience, particularly in Indigenous, regional, and remote communities.

Experts emphasised that effective climate action requires connecting scientific research with the realities of diverse communities, ensuring that benefits and burdens are shared fairly. These evolving needs amplify the value of a platform that can synthesise evidence, navigate trade-offs, and amplify underrepresented voices. The Hub is increasingly expected to serve as a trusted sense-maker and broker, helping to steer Queensland toward a net zero future that is both effective and inclusive.

Stakeholder Alignment and Expectations

Survey responses suggest strong support for the Hub's mission and knowledge functions, particularly its role in translating and connecting research to action. However, respondents also highlighted the need for greater visibility, clearer focus, and a more intentional approach to impact.

Respondents rated all four of the Hub's knowledge functions as "very" or "extremely" important:

- Knowledge into Action: 95%
- Knowledge Co-production: 91%
- Knowledge Exchange: 83%
- Knowledge Brokerage: 68%

Open-ended comments revealed uncertainty about the Hub's strategic scope and intended outcomes. One respondent asked "Impact on who or what? Policy and program delivery? Industry investment? Academic research? That's huge. And impossible to deliver." Others questioned whether the Hub's role is to support researchers, influence policy, or broker outcomes, and stressed the importance of taking a clearer whole-of-state approach. As one put it: "Please take a whole-of-state approach." Another added "Collaboration and coordination are essential... but managing eight universities to drive 'impact' across government, community, industry and academia is heroic."

Taken together, the findings suggest strong endorsement of the Hub's strategic intent, alongside a need to clarify and reinforce its purpose—particularly its bridging role between research, policy, and practice.

4.3 Position and System Value

What Problem Is the Hub Uniquely Positioned to Solve?

The VC Forum recommended establishing a dedicated Hub to foster partnerships across research, government, industry and communities, addressing the clear need for more coordinated, inclusive mechanisms to develop and implement decarbonisation solutions. This was not a problem of missing knowledge, but of translation, coordination, and system alignment. The Hub was established to address this need by brokering connections, aligning agendas, and supporting inclusive, mission-driven collaboration, rather than focusing solely on generating additional research.

Expert feedback confirmed the original rationale. There was strong consensus that no other entity currently plays this bridging role, nor is one likely to emerge organically, given existing mandates and constraints. The Hub's perceived neutrality, university affiliation, and whole-of-system orientation gives it a unique comparative advantage as long as it can sharpen its focus, consolidate its position, and visibly demonstrate value.

Comparative Advantage: Brokerage, Synthesis, Inclusiveness

The Hub's core strength lies in its ability to synthesise knowledge, build cross-sector relationships, and foster inclusive engagement. Its value is not measured by academic output, but by its capacity to bridge silos, amplify underrepresented voices, and create actionable insight.

Experts repeatedly affirmed that this system-level function is central to the Hub's purpose. They called for a return to first principles, emphasising the need for the Hub to act as a synthesiser and translator, particularly for Indigenous, regional, rural, and remote communities. While this value proposition is widely supported, it has not yet been fully realised. The Hub's convening power is under-leveraged, its communications uneven, and its relationships with key government actors remain fragmented.

To deliver on its promise, the Hub must consolidate its role as a trusted intermediary, focus its energy on high-leverage opportunities, and use the remainder of its funding period to demonstrate visible, system-relevant contributions.

4.4 Challenges and Gaps

Gaps in Leadership, Visibility, and Positioning

From the outset, the Hub was envisioned as a mission-oriented leader: a visible, cross-sector platform that could coordinate research, policy, and practice. But the founding documents also flagged two key risks: modest resourcing and a distributed model, spanning multiple universities, stakeholders, and areas of focus, that could dilute authority.

Survey responses indicate that while stakeholders value the Hub's functions, many still lack clarity about its purpose and audience. Comments such as "not 100% sure of the purpose" and "who are the Hub's stakeholders?" underscore the need for a clearer narrative. Many view the scope as too broad to be deliverable without sharper targeting.

Experts echoed these concerns. Describing the Hub as "promising but underpowered," they recommended a more focused story, a stronger communications strategy, and the elevation of visible champions inside and outside government. Consolidation, rather than expansion, was advised: prove value quickly, and position the Hub as a trusted access point for actionable, system-wide insight.

Inconsistency in University Engagement and Government Connections

The Hub was built on a networked model involving all public Queensland universities, coordinated by UQ, and linked to government departments that were grappling with the decarbonisation challenge. However, there is no formal mechanism ensuring consistent university engagement or embedding the Hub within government decision cycles.

Some survey respondents questioned the added value of the Hub relative to existing institutional activity: "Managing eight universities to drive impact is heroic." Others emphasised the need to "align language and outputs to Queensland Government framing," suggesting uneven government uptake.

Experts described current delivery as "partial." They noted that while the convening function is active, it is not yet operating at scale. Strategic links to Treasury, DETSI, and DPI remain ad hoc. Recommendations included:

- Refreshing governance to secure higher-level university and departmental buy-in
- Moving from committee-heavy structures to agile, networked influence
- Producing 1–2 flagship outputs—such as a COP31 showcase or ministerial brief—to visibly demonstrate system value

Across sources, a common thread emerges: while the Hub's conceptual mandate is widely supported, its operational presence needs to be strengthened. This includes enhancing its leadership voice, clarifying its narrative, and expanding its network reach to fulfil its envisioned role.

4.5 Key takeaways

- The Hub must reaffirm its purpose with clearer boundaries, focusing on its role as a strategic enabler and trusted broker, not a research delivery agency.
- It needs to demonstrate value through stronger positioning, clearer public narrative, high-impact outputs, and leadership visibility.
- The Hub's comparative advantage lies in convening, synthesis, and translation, not expanding its scope or duplicating others' work.

- Success depends on clarifying core audiences, aligning ambition with resources, and amplifying distinctive contributions.
- Equity, regional relevance, and Indigenous engagement must be embedded across all workstreams, not treated as peripheral add-ons.



5. WHAT – Activities, Outputs, and Future Priorities

This section explores what the Hub has delivered to date, how its activities align with its original mandate, and where it should focus for the remainder of its funded term. Drawing on document analysis, stakeholder feedback, and expert workshop insights, it reflects on the Hub's emerging role as a strategic knowledge platform and identifies high-leverage priorities to ensure visible and enduring value.

5.1 Activities and Progress to Date

The Hub's Development: A Four-Phase Evolution

Since its initial conception by the VC Forum in mid-2022, the Hub has progressed through four distinct phases of development. Each phase has contributed to its evolving role as a strategic, mission-oriented knowledge platform.

Phase 1: Framing the Mission (July 2022 to June 2023)

This phase focused on defining the Hub's purpose and securing foundational support. It included the publication of *Decarbonising Queensland: Four Pillars Toward an Inclusive and Resilient Low Carbon Economy* (Yarnold et al., 2022), which outlined a vision for cross-sectoral, research-informed decarbonisation. The phase culminated in the establishment of a Grant Agreement between the Queensland Department of Environment and Science and the University of Queensland.

Key outputs: VC Forum and Policy Brief; Grant Agreement.

Phase 2: Establishing the Hub (July to December 2023)

With funding secured, the focus shifted to setting up operational foundations. Governance structures were created, including a Steering Committee, Advisory Committee, and Research Committee. A visual identity and a public-facing website were launched. Activities centred on stakeholder engagement and planning, supported by initial events that set the tone for collaboration.

Key outputs: Governance arrangement established (Steering, Advisory and Research Committee); Hub brand and website launched.

Phase 3: Delivering and Expanding (January to December 2024)

The Hub moved into delivery mode, launching research under thematic areas: community and regional transformation, nature-based solutions and environmental integrity, technology and innovation, and sector planning. Outputs included policy briefs, regional showcases, and webinars. The inaugural Hub Forum helped build visibility and deepen engagement. A competitive call for new projects also marked a shift in the role of the Advisory Committee as a strategic decision-making body.

Key outputs: research themes launched (community and regional transformation, nature-based solutions and environmental integrity, technology and innovation, sector planning); delivery of policy briefs, regional showcases, and webinars; inaugural Hub Forum; competitive call for new projects.

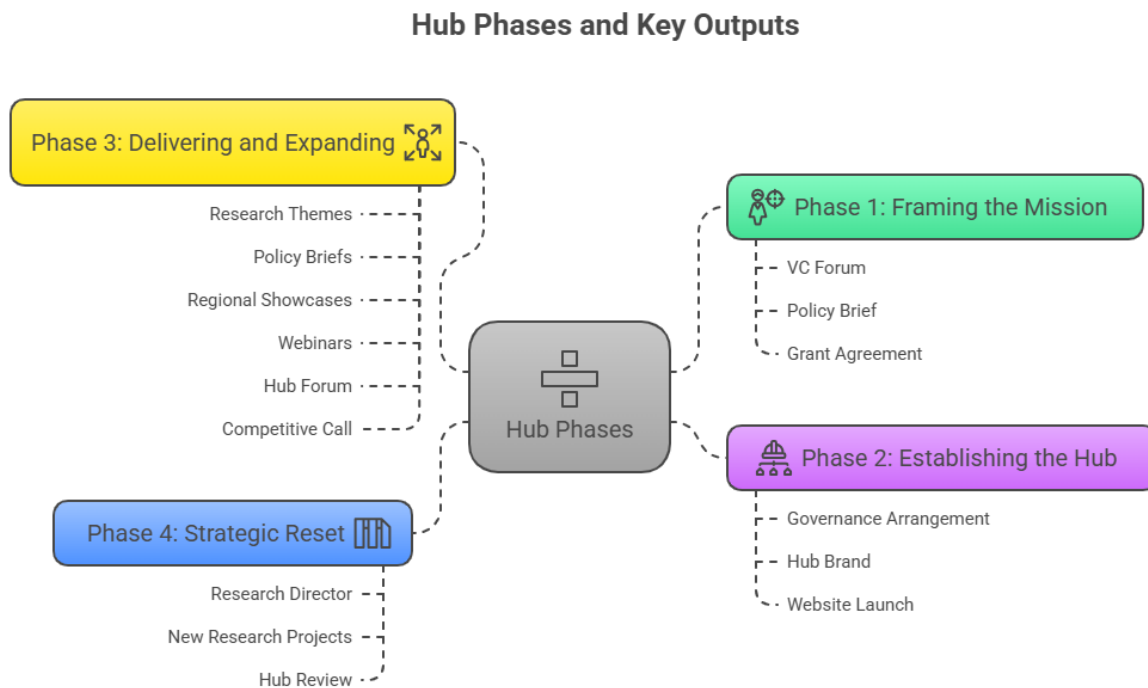
Phase 4: Strategic Reset (January to July 2025)

A deliberate strategic reset occurred in early 2025, including the appointment of a Research Director to lead engagement and coordinate delivery. Eleven new research projects were initiated, many in partnership with Queensland Government agencies and industry. These projects covered issues from regional workforce planning and biodiversity-carbon co-benefits to renewable microgrids and the decarbonisation of construction materials. Review of the Hub initiated to direct future work program.

This phase marked a conceptual shift. The Hub began to operate more explicitly as a mission-oriented platform with stronger alignment between research activity, government needs, and practical application.

Key outputs: appointment of Research Director; 11 new research projects initiated (3 in partnerships with government and industry); Hub Review initiated.

Attachment C provides key reporting data found through the document analysis to support this section.



5.2 Reflections on Strategic Role and Performance

The Hub has made meaningful progress in delivering on its core purpose: connecting academic expertise to Queensland’s decarbonisation agenda. Stakeholders affirmed the value of its design, especially its mission-led approach, system relevance, and cross-sectoral focus.

However, the Review identified a persistent gap between intent and delivery. While 2025 has seen greater strategic focus, challenges remain in demonstrating impact, achieving visibility, and fully leveraging the Hub’s convening power. Senior engagement is uneven, and the influence of research outputs on policy decisions is still emerging.

Survey data reflect this tension. While 86% of respondents felt the Hub was moderately or well aligned with real-world needs, only 10% had observed clear evidence of policy influence. Some respondents acknowledged improvements in recent project design but flagged gaps in visibility, communication, and system integration.

These findings suggest the Hub is at an inflection point. It must transition from an early-stage coordinating entity into a visible and trusted system partner. The model remains valid. Realising its potential now requires more deliberate articulation of value and stronger connection to strategic decision-making.

5.3 Communication, Visibility, and System Influence

Both expert input and survey responses highlighted low visibility and inconsistent recognition across key audiences. This issue goes beyond communications. It reflects a need to strengthen the Hub's strategic positioning.

Survey results showed over half of respondents were unsure or unaware of the Hub's impact on decision-making. Some suggestions for future activities referred to work already completed, indicating a disconnect between delivery and awareness.

Experts noted that both the Hub and its stakeholders share responsibility for this gap. The Hub must actively translate and disseminate its work, while users must engage more meaningfully with its outputs. To improve visibility and legitimacy, communications should focus on enabling impact. This means:

- Reframing communication as persuasion and influence, with emphasis on storytelling, policy translation, and strategic use cases.
- Building visibility with departments such as Treasury, DETSI, DPI, and the Net Zero Authority, and with regional and elected leaders.
- Prioritising a small number of high-quality outputs over volume, aimed directly at current decisions and debates.

This reframing is essential for the Hub to operate as a trusted advisor in a contested and high-stakes policy landscape.

5.4 Assessing Performance Against the Hub's Core Functions

The Hub's performance was assessed across its four foundational functions: knowledge brokerage, exchange, co-production, and turning knowledge into action. These formed the basis of the stakeholder survey and expert workshops.

Knowledge Brokerage

Connecting stakeholders remains a core promise. Yet this was the lowest-rated function in the survey, with 56% of respondents rating the Hub as not effective or only slightly effective. Only one-third saw moderate success.

Suggestions included structured workshops, digital platforms, and better mechanisms for engaging across sectors and regions. There was a strong call for greater inclusivity and transparency in how brokering is conducted. For example, feedback included "Bring academia and industry together through events and topic-specific collaboration groups" and "The Hub could host a citizens assembly to unpack tensions in policy — such as decarbonisation and mining expansion."

Knowledge Exchange

The Hub performed better here. Around 37% found Hub events very useful, and another 42% found

them moderately useful. This confirms the Hub’s strength in convening dialogue when linked to policy challenges.

Respondents requested more targeted engagements such as:

- Events aligned with state and national agendas
- Policy briefs to support GEC implementation
- Briefings for Director-General and Deputy Director-General audiences
- Peer learning spaces, especially for local government.

Knowledge Co-production

This was the highest-rated function. 86% said the Hub was moderately or well aligned with real-world needs, suggesting maturity in recent project development.

Some cautioned that past practices were uneven. One respondent observed “Some projects didn’t connect well with government needs.” Another pointed to regional blind spots “The Darling Downs and South West aren't serviced by the workforce project — this is a critical energy corridor.”

These insights underscore the importance of structured, inclusive, and policy-responsive co-design practices.

Knowledge into Action

This function rated lowest. Over half of respondents had not seen any impact on decisions, and 39% were unsure. Only 10% observed clear influence. The causes likely include project timing, communication gaps, and structural barriers to uptake. Still, this is a critical challenge with usefulness needing to translate into use.

Respondents highlighted the need for:

- Policy-ready synthesis and storytelling
- Outputs that align with political and planning cycles
- Formats accessible to both practitioners and elected leaders.

One comment summed it up: “Workshops and clear briefs matter most — especially if they reflect community values and show international best practice.” Another called for a focus on local government: “We need practitioner support and a maturity scale for emissions reduction. It’s a major gap.”

5.5 Key Takeaways – Activities, Outputs and Future Priorities

- The Hub has established a credible foundation through four developmental phases, culminating in a recent strategic reset focused on alignment and impact.
- A growing portfolio of co-designed projects reflects stronger alignment with system needs, particularly in priority areas such as workforce transitions and regional decarbonisation.
- Stakeholder engagement through events and policy dialogues has added value but remains inconsistent, especially in regional and senior government networks.

- Stakeholders highlight co-production as a strength, though knowledge translation remains underdeveloped, limiting real-time policy influence.
- Going forward, strategic translation, synthesis, and storytelling must take precedence over volume of activity.



6. HOW – Governance, Secretariat, and Delivery Mechanisms

This section examines the governance arrangements, secretariat capacity, and delivery mechanisms underpinning the Hub. Drawing on diagnostic analysis, stakeholder survey results, and expert input, it considers how well current structures support the Hub's mission. It also identifies opportunities to strengthen strategic alignment, coordination, and impact in the final phase of delivery.

6.1 Current Structures

The Hub's governance framework includes three principal committees: the Steering Committee, Advisory Committee, and Research Committee. These are supported by a small but dedicated Secretariat (also referred to as the Coordinating Unit). These entities were designed to provide strategic oversight, stakeholder input, and research coordination across the Hub's multi-university partnership. On paper, they offer a comprehensive governance model that suits the Hub's mission-oriented and cross-sectoral objectives. In practice, however, their functioning has been uneven, and a gap has emerged between design and delivery.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the primary oversight and accountability body for the Hub. It is chaired by the Queensland Chief Scientist and includes an academic representative (through the Director of the Centre for Policy Futures, UQ, who is also the Hub Coordinator), the Hub Research Director, the Chair of the Advisory Committee and a senior Queensland Government representative from Queensland Treasury, which is now the Queensland Government entity with responsibility for climate action, including the Hub. Its formal responsibilities include:

- Endorsing the Hub’s annual Workplan and funded projects.
- Reviewing six-monthly progress reports and advising on strategic priorities.
- Acting as the formal conduit between the Coordinating Unit and the Queensland Government as grantor.
- Ensuring the Hub’s activities are aligned with state priorities and investment objectives.

The Committee was intended to provide high-level direction, ensure policy alignment, and facilitate inter-agency engagement. However, expert feedback suggests that the Steering Committee has primarily played a supportive and endorsing role in relation to strategic direction, rather than actively shaping or driving it. Its involvement has largely centred on reviewing progress and affirming priorities, rather than setting them. Its influence on setting research priorities or shaping engagement strategy appears limited. Its visibility outside formal governance settings also remains low. One survey respondent noted, “The Steering Committee’s role isn’t clear – is it meant to provide advice, endorse decisions, or both?”

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee was established to ensure that diverse external voices, including those from industry, community, local government, and regional sectors, are reflected in the Hub’s research agenda and strategic focus. Its intended functions include:

- Reviewing research priorities and advising on emerging issues.
- Offering feedback on engagement approaches and deliverables.
- Acting as a conduit between the Hub and broader decarbonisation stakeholders.
- Advising the Steering Committee on sector-specific challenges and opportunities.

Despite this broad mandate, the Committee has been under-utilised. Few stakeholders reported awareness of its activities or its role in shaping the Hub’s direction. Its potential as a forum for real-world insight and co-design has yet to be realised.

Research Committee

The Research Committee was conceived as a cross-university coordinating body, responsible for developing and overseeing the Hub’s research agenda. Its membership includes Theme Leads, Node Leads, and academic representatives from across the seven university partners. Key responsibilities include:

- Identifying priority research questions aligned with government needs.

- Developing the annual Workplan for Steering Committee endorsement.
- Monitoring project implementation and outputs.
- Coordinating research activities across themes, nodes, and institutions.

Over time, this coordinating role has become diluted. Research direction-setting has grown fragmented, with responsibilities dispersed across individual Theme and Node Leads. Several stakeholders expressed uncertainty about who shapes the research agenda. Some suggested the original thematic structure has been sidelined. As one respondent put it, “It feels like the themes were set and then abandoned. The research now seems disconnected from where government focus is.”

Secretariat and Coordinating Unit

The Secretariat acts as the operational backbone of the Hub, linking governance, research, and engagement. Its core functions include:

- Developing annual workplans and monitoring deliverables.
- Liaising with committees, researchers, and government stakeholders.
- Managing meeting logistics, communications, and document control.
- Supporting the dissemination of research and strategic engagement.

The Secretariat is also responsible for maintaining alignment across governance bodies and ensuring that activities remain mission-consistent. In early 2025, a Research Director was appointed to strengthen strategic leadership. This role has enhanced the Coordinating Unit’s capacity to lead cross-cutting initiatives and ensure policy relevance.

Significantly, the Review was initiated in response to the Research Director’s view that a clearer strategic focus was needed. Establishing a shared evidence base and strengthening the authorising environment were considered essential prerequisites for achieving this refocus.

Despite these enabling structures, the Secretariat remains under-resourced relative to its mandate. Expert feedback repeatedly identified limited capacity as a structural risk, affecting responsiveness, output quality, and stakeholder engagement. Survey responses reinforced this, with stakeholders calling for better visibility and clearer contact points. As one respondent noted, “It’s hard to know what’s going on with the Hub. There’s no single place to go to get updates or contact people.”

6.2 Governance Issues and Gaps

The Review confirms that the Hub has all major governance bodies in place, and their formal roles are clearly defined. However, their operation has been uneven. Several key functions are under-realised.

The Hub’s distributed model across seven universities has led to inconsistent engagement and unclear ownership. Experts and survey respondents alike described the Hub as lacking a “centre of

gravity.” One respondent asked, “Is it a research hub? A connector? A grant funder? It’s unclear what the Hub is actually for or how to engage with it.”

The Research Committee’s activities are not widely understood. It lacks the authority and agility to coordinate cross-institutional research. Several experts suggested replacing it with smaller, task-specific working groups.

There is no formal mechanism to ensure alignment across government agencies. While government is represented through Queensland Treasury, this has not translated into a whole-of-government interface. Several stakeholders observed a lack of feedback loops between research and policy needs. As one put it, “Research gets funded, but we don’t know if it’s tied to anything we actually need.”

Survey results show low confidence in the Hub’s influence with over half responding they had seen no evidence of policy impact, and only 10% rating the Hub as highly effective in fostering cross-sector connections.

6.3 Proposed Adjustments

To strengthen the Hub’s strategic positioning, there is a need to shift the emphasis of its committees from formal oversight to a focus on collaborative alignment and joint problem-solving. The experts were clear that wholesale changes to the governance structures and terms of reference was not necessary. Rather, that greater emphasis should be placed on using existing forums in a strategic manner. In some cases, small, task-focused working groups could be established to address urgent, specific, or complex issues.

Another opportunity lies in introducing invited champions, such as high-profile Queenslanders or others with a significant stake in Queensland’s decarbonisation efforts. For example, members of the Clean Economy Panel or individuals from senior levels of government were identified as potential champions. These high-profile individuals could act as ambassadors for the Hub, helping to build credibility, foster trust, and open doors to key decision-makers across the system.

Experts also strongly endorsed the need to reinvest in the Hub’s internal capacity. Priority areas include communications, to improve awareness and visibility; regional liaison roles, to support inclusive and place-based engagement; and synthesis capability, to help translate research into clear, actionable guidance for decision-makers.

In parallel, stakeholders called for stronger public-facing infrastructure. Many emphasised the importance of a visible and accessible platform that enables people to see what the Hub is doing, who is involved, and what outputs are being produced.

6.4 Key Takeaways – Governance, Secretariat, and Delivery Mechanisms

- Structures exist but are underperforming in practice. Formal committees lack influence, visibility, and coherence.

- The Steering Committee plays a limited strategic role; the Advisory Committee is underutilised; and the Research Committee lacks authority.
- The Coordinating Unit plays a critical function but is under-resourced, creating structural risks for delivery and coherence.
- The distributed university model creates unclear ownership and inconsistent engagement, weakening the Hub's interface with government and diminishing its visibility.
- Experts recommend flexible governance adaptations (e.g., time-bound working groups), clearer access points, and investment in communications and synthesis capability.



7. Forward Focus: Strategic Direction for the Next Phase

This Review offers a comprehensive assessment of the Hub’s progress, performance, and challenges to date. Drawing on evidence from stakeholder feedback, expert input, and internal analysis, this section identifies seven strategic imperatives to guide the Hub’s next phase. These imperatives reflect a shared understanding of where the Hub can have the greatest impact and provide a framework to strengthen its distinct role in Queensland’s decarbonisation system.

Building on these imperatives, a clear strategic direction for the remainder of the current term is identified. This direction consolidates the Hub’s future activities into four interdependent focus areas that respond directly to the Review’s findings, leverage the Hub’s strengths, and aim to enhance its visibility, relevance, and system value.

Each focus area is designed to translate the strategic imperatives into action. Together, they form a practical and focused roadmap that narrows scope, strengthens delivery, and aligns the Hub’s efforts with real-world needs.

7.1 Strategic Imperatives Emerging from the Review

The seven strategic imperatives are based on a synthesis of the Review’s key findings. These findings draw on stakeholder feedback, expert input, and a thorough analysis of the Hub’s activities, outputs, and governance. Recurring patterns of challenges and opportunities identified throughout the Review have shaped these focused responses.

Each strategic imperative responds directly to specific findings from the Review. Some address operational challenges, such as limited communication capacity and complex governance. Others focus on strategic opportunities, including deeper engagement with Indigenous and regional communities, and aligning outputs more closely with policy needs. Together, these imperatives form a clear framework to guide the Hub’s future priorities and ways of working.

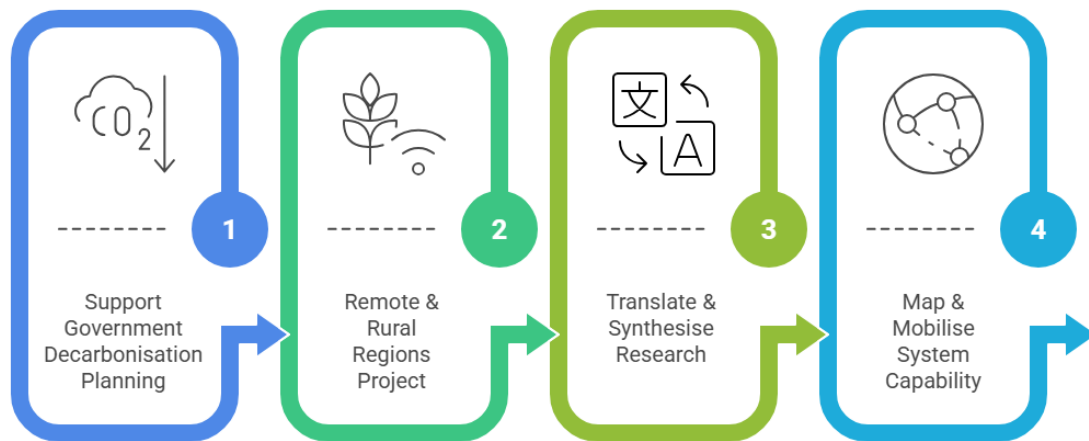
The table below explains each strategic imperative in detail, including its definition and the key findings that support it. This helps turn broad insights from the Review into concrete priorities, while also linking them to the four focus areas planned for the Hub’s next phase.

Strategic Imperative	Definition	Relevant Key Takeaways
<i>Reaffirming Purpose</i>	Position the Hub explicitly as a knowledge synthesiser and broker, distinct from primary research or program delivery.	The founding vision remains sound but the Hub's role has been blurred by diffuse activities. Clarifying this role sharpens strategic alignment and enhances impact.
<i>Narrowing Focus</i>	Concentrate effort on a select number of initiatives with clear policy relevance and real-world application.	Broad ambition has led to diffuse activity and limited visibility in key policy spaces. Narrowing focus enables deeper impact and resource alignment.
<i>Tailoring Outputs</i>	Shift toward producing timely, strategic, and policy-aligned products such as synthesis briefs, case studies, and policy notes.	Current outputs are underdeveloped for policy uptake. Tailored outputs improve accessibility and usefulness for decision-makers.
<i>Elevating Visibility</i>	Implement a targeted communications approach to raise the Hub's profile and influence across government, regions, and partners.	Limited visibility reflects more than promotion gaps; it requires a clearer narrative and stronger engagement with key audiences.
<i>Streamlining Governance</i>	Adapt governance structures to be more agile and campaign-focused, improving responsiveness and leveraging senior leadership.	Existing committees are process-heavy and underutilised. More flexible governance supports clearer strategic direction and stronger accountability.
<i>Embedding Inclusion</i>	Ensure Indigenous knowledge, regional voices, and equity considerations are central to all design and delivery activities.	Equity and regional inclusion are core to legitimacy but have been inconsistently integrated. Embedding these strengthens trust and relevance.
<i>Managing Ambition</i>	Align the scope of activities with available resources, prioritising quality, influence, and proof of value over volume.	Ambition has outpaced capacity, leading to stretched resources and diluted impact. Managing ambition focuses effort for better results and sustainability.

7.2 Four Focus Areas for Impact

To translate these imperatives into action, the review consolidates the Hub's future activity into four interdependent focus areas, each aligned with the original vision and tailored to deliver real system value:

- I. Support Government Decarbonisation Planning
- II. Deliver the Remote and Rural Regions Priority Project
- III. Translate and Synthesise Research
- IV. Map and Mobilise System Capability



Each of these areas is supported by tailored delivery enablers including improved internal resourcing, a revitalised communications strategy, platform curation, a governance refresh, and clearer role definition across the university network.

Focus Area 1 - Support Government Decarbonisation Planning

At the heart of the Hub's future direction is a commitment to delivering timely, policy-relevant insight that directly supports Queensland's decarbonisation agenda, both through sector-specific strategies and whole-of-government planning processes.

This focus area reaffirms the Hub's core purpose as a knowledge broker and policy partner, clarifying its role within the broader system and concentrating effort where policy demand is strongest and decisions have the greatest leverage. It responds directly to a key review finding: the need for increased visibility and demonstrable value to decision-makers.

In practical terms, this work will involve:

- Providing responsive input into government-led planning efforts;
- Providing tailored summaries and briefings for departments such as Treasury, DETSI, and DPI;
- Continuing to contribute to cross-cutting, interagency initiatives in climate and energy planning by leveraging university expertise, institutional connections, and the independent research capability of participating institutions;
- Extending this support to Commonwealth and local government efforts across Queensland, given decarbonisation involves coordinated action across all three levels of government in the spirit of cooperative federalism.

By anchoring effort in these high-impact arenas, the Hub can both narrow its focus and tailor its outputs, delivering curated insights that align with real policy timelines and enhance uptake. It also

creates opportunities to embed inclusion, ensuring regional, Indigenous, and sectoral perspectives are reflected in the state’s decarbonisation trajectory.

This kind of engagement will require more than content, it will demand stronger internal coordination, active brokering, and adaptive governance mechanisms that enables the Hub to work effectively across departmental boundaries and planning cycles.

Crucially, this is not about scaling up effort in all directions but about managing ambition and concentrating resources where the Hub’s contribution is both needed and feasible. In doing so, the Hub can evolve from a promising initiative into a visible, trusted partner in Queensland’s strategic response to climate change.

Focus Area 1: Support Government Decarbonisation Planning - alignment with strategic imperatives

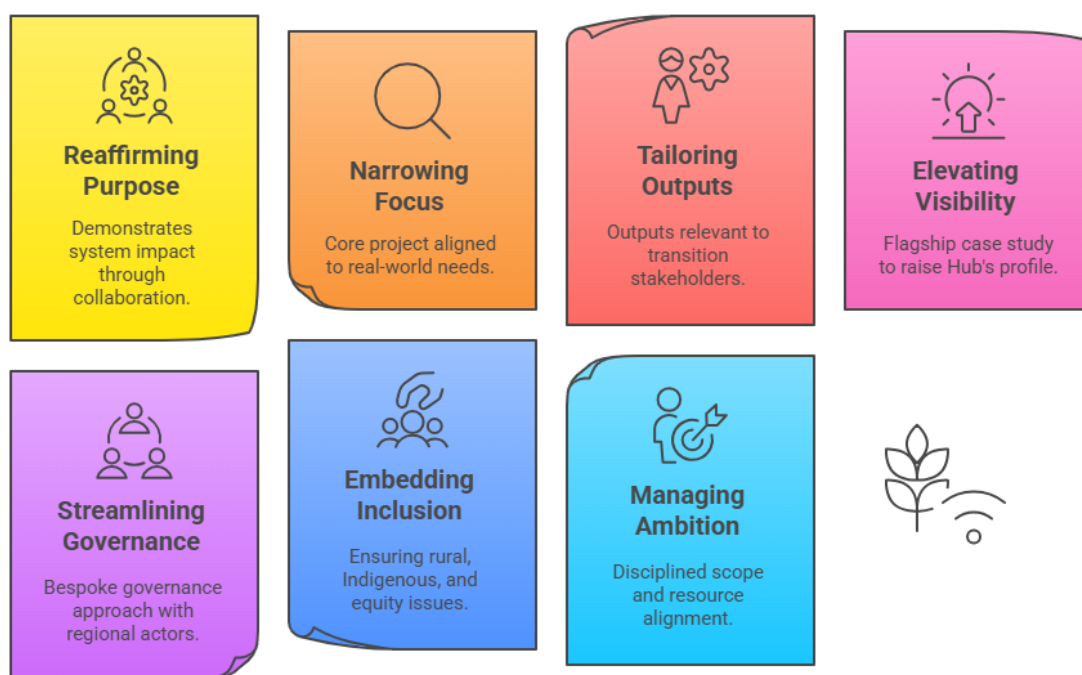


Focus Area 2 - Deliver the Remote and Rural Regions Priority Project

The Remote and Rural Regions Priority Project will be the Hub's most visible demonstration of impact. It will embed research into the realities of regional transitions, build strong place-based partnerships, and deliver outputs that are both practical and high-profile.

As a focused and high-impact initiative, this priority project captures the Hub's shift from broad ambition to concentrated action. It exemplifies the Hub's distinctive value by co-producing knowledge with regional stakeholders, brokering relationships across sectors, and ensuring that research is framed in ways that are meaningful on the ground. This project is not only a vehicle for influence, but a statement of purpose—showing what the Hub does best when it works in place-based, cross-sectoral ways.

Focus Area 2: Remote and Rural Regions Priority Project - alignment with strategic imperatives



The priority project will include sustained engagement across selected regions, co-designed project delivery with local and Indigenous partners, and will serve as the central theme of the 2025 Hub Forum, which will adopt a strong regional lens. It will also culminate in a signature public output aligned with the international COP31 meeting in 2026, helping to position Queensland as a leader in inclusive, regionally informed decarbonisation.

This focus area responds directly to calls for deeper engagement beyond metropolitan centres and for more visible, real-world applications of the Hub's capability. It provides a platform to centre regional and Indigenous perspectives, test more agile governance models, and demonstrate the system value of applied research.

Realising this potential will require targeted project capacity, long-term commitment to trusted partnerships, and clear pathways for Indigenous engagement and leadership. By concentrating effort on one major, demonstrable initiative, the priority project allows the Hub to channel its resources into a project that is ambitious in its impact but disciplined in its scope.

Focus Area 3 - Translate and Synthesise Research

A core opportunity for the Hub lies in establishing a high-value capability that translates academic research into actionable insights for policy, industry, and community stakeholders. This focus area reinforces the Hub's role as a strategic broker, rather than being principally a generator of primary research, connecting the expertise of universities with the demands of real-world decarbonisation decisions.

Stakeholder feedback made it clear that while there is no shortage of research activity, what is needed most are outputs that are timely, accessible, and directly relevant to policy. This workstream addresses that need by delivering synthesis products that are curated for use, aligned with planning and decision-making cycles, and reflective of diverse knowledge systems.

Key activities will include the production of targeted synthesis briefs, tailored case studies, and issue-focused summaries developed in close collaboration with government departments and research offices. This approach not only improves the uptake of existing research but also helps align academic effort with areas of highest policy relevance, without expanding the Hub's remit into original research production.

A strengthened communications function will ensure that outputs are well-packaged and policy-facing, while coordinated engagement with Deputy Vice-Chancellors of Research and university partnership teams will help maintain strategic coherence. This focus area also supports the inclusion of Indigenous and regional perspectives by embedding those voices into the translation process and final products.

Success here means producing fewer but more impactful outputs that meet the expectations of government audiences and clearly demonstrate the value of research translation. It also allows the Hub to stay lean and focused, delivering system-relevant insights while managing scope in line with available resources and strategic priorities.

Focus Area 3: Translate and Synthesise Research - alignment with strategic imperatives



Focus Area 4. Map and Mobilise System Capability

The Hub will enhance its role as a system connector by improving the visibility, accessibility, and alignment of university expertise across Queensland. This work is essential to helping partners navigate the state's complex research landscape and access the right knowledge at the right time to support decarbonisation efforts.

This focus area directly addresses calls from stakeholders for more proactive brokering across institutions, regions, and levels of government. It strengthens the Hub's strategic positioning as a trusted, neutral interface—one that can bridge silos, make capabilities visible, and guide collaboration across the system.

Key activities will include refreshing and curating the Hub's public-facing platforms (for example, the website, webinars and use of social media), developing better pathways for connection and brokering, and mapping relevant capabilities, datasets, and expertise across Queensland's universities. These efforts will be designed not just to catalogue activity, but to support practical use cases and policy engagement, ensuring that insights are discoverable, relevant, and easy to act on.

This work also provides an opportunity to embed more inclusive and representative approaches, ensuring that Indigenous knowledge holders, regional institutions, and underrepresented disciplines are recognised as vital parts of the decarbonisation knowledge system.

By aligning system capability with areas of strategic demand, the Hub can amplify the reach of existing expertise, reduce duplication of effort, and increase the speed and effectiveness of knowledge into real-world action. Delivering this capability will require fit-for-purpose platforms, refreshed communication channels, and dedicated roles that support ongoing engagement and coordination across the network.

This approach is ambitious in its reach but pragmatic in delivery. Rather than attempting to map the entire system at once, it will proceed in a staged, purposeful way, prioritising areas where visibility and coordination can unlock immediate value for Queensland’s decarbonisation agenda.

Focus Area 4: Map and Mobilise System Capability - alignment with strategic imperatives



7.3 Bringing It Together: From Concept to System Value

Together, these four focus areas form a practical and strategic roadmap for the Hub’s next 18 months—one that translates ambition into action and positions the Hub as a trusted contributor to Queensland’s decarbonisation agenda.

By directly supporting government decarbonisation planning, the Hub sharpens its role as a policy-relevant knowledge partner. This work anchors the Hub’s efforts in high-leverage spaces, where

timely, tailored insights can inform real decisions and elevate its visibility across departments and policy cycles. It also provides a clear avenue to embed regional, Indigenous and sectoral perspectives into the fabric of Queensland's transition plans.

The Remote and Rural Regions Priority Project becomes a signature initiative, demonstrating the Hub's value through grounded, place-based collaboration. With a disciplined scope and a strong inclusion focus, it shows what high-impact engagement can look like in practice: community-informed, cross-sectoral, and anchored in real-world transition challenges.

The Hub's capacity to translate and synthesise research into decision-ready insights is another core strength. This workstream consolidates fragmented knowledge into curated, high-value outputs—briefs, synthesis reports, and case studies—that meet the needs of policymakers and practitioners. When well-packaged and policy-aligned, these outputs can raise the Hub's profile while staying focused on quality over volume.

Finally, mapping and mobilising system capability enables the Hub to function as a true connector, clarifying its role within the broader ecosystem and surfacing the depth of expertise across Queensland's research landscape. By partnering with research offices and others, the Hub can better coordinate effort, showcase diverse knowledge systems, and build the connective tissue needed for more strategic collaboration.

Taken together, these priorities strike a deliberate balance: focused enough to be deliverable, inclusive enough to reflect the system, and strategic enough to demonstrate visible public value. They provide a coherent framework for deepening impact, guiding investment, and supporting future funding. A clear set of success metrics will be developed with the Steering Committee to track progress, communicate value, and guide the Hub's ongoing evolution.

7.4 Enabling Delivery

The successful implementation of these focus areas will rely on a targeted set of delivery enablers. These are not new structures, but refinements of existing functions to better support strategic priorities.

Internal capacity must be clarified and aligned with core delivery areas such as synthesis, communication, engagement, and governance. Role clarity and coordination will allow the Hub to remain focused while lifting the quality of outputs and responsiveness.

A refreshed communications strategy will support greater visibility and influence. This strategy will be campaign-oriented and purpose-driven, seeking to engage key decision-makers and audiences across the system.

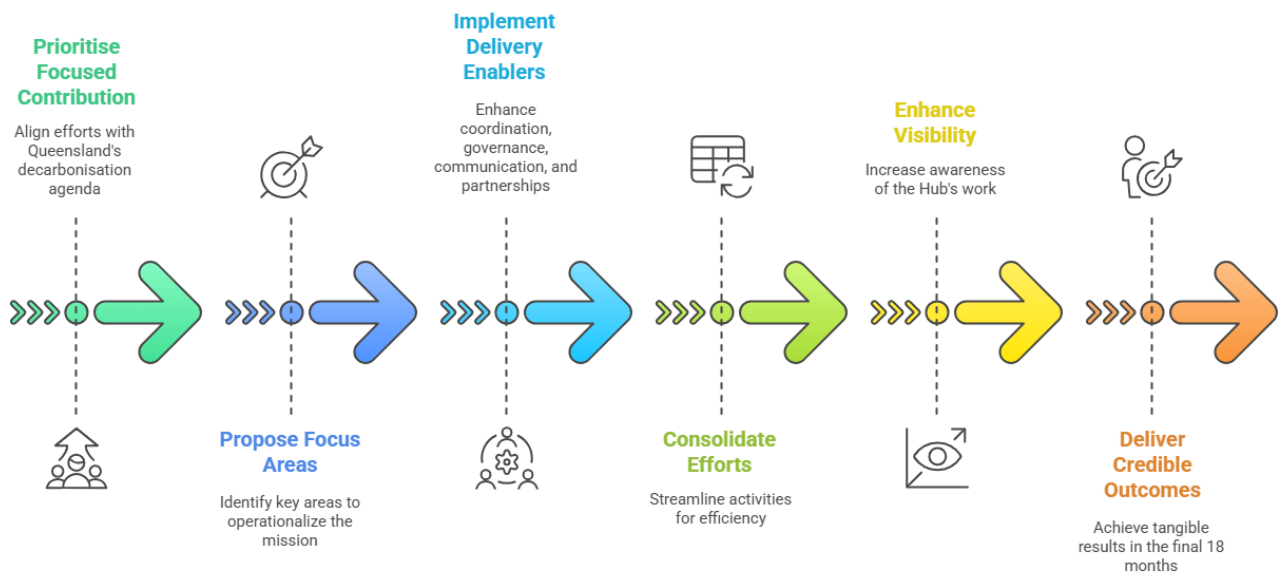
The Hub's governance arrangements will be adapted to prioritise alignment and collaboration. This may include task-specific working groups, a more strategic Research Committee role, and increased involvement of senior university leaders and high-profile champions.

Digital and convening platforms will be curated to reflect the Hub’s identity and amplify its four focus areas. These platforms will serve as active tools for policy engagement, collaboration, and public value creation.

Partnerships will be activated through more purposeful brokering. The Hub’s unique positioning allows it to connect across sectors and disciplines. This relational capability should be deliberately supported and elevated as a core part of its impact model.

7.5 Key Takeaways

- The next phase prioritises a focused and system-oriented contribution aligned with Queensland’s decarbonisation agenda.
- Four proposed focus areas operationalise the Hub’s mission.
- Delivery enablers such as improved coordination, adaptive governance, enhanced communication, and active partnerships are essential to delivering impact.
- The framework offers a realistic path to consolidate efforts, enhance visibility, and deliver credible outcomes in the final 18 months.



Attachment A: Abridged Terms of Reference

A.1 Purpose of the Interim Review

The Interim Review aims to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Hub, considering evolving policy landscapes at local, state, and national levels, research outcomes, and stakeholder needs. Given the Hub's remaining 18 months of operation under current funding arrangements, the Interim Review is? a short-term operational review – evaluating the Hub's current effectiveness and identifying refinements to maximise impact and ensure efficient use of remaining funds.

A final long-term strategic review of the Hub, assessing its future role, focus, and funding models, beyond its current funding cycle, will be completed to feed into the Queensland Government budget cycle for 2026.

Specifically, the Interim Review will evaluate:

- Strategic direction and scope: Is the Hub effectively addressing Queensland's decarbonisation challenges? Given the intersection between decarbonisation and broader climate action (in particular, adaptation), is decarbonisation the appropriate primary focus for the Hub in the short term?
- Operational effectiveness: Are the Hub's structures, processes, and governance mechanisms fit for purpose? What adjustments are needed to enhance efficiency in the final 18 months?
- Research outputs and impact: How has the Hub's research influenced policy and industry transformation? What measures can strengthen the connection between research and decision-making both now and in the future?
- Stakeholder engagement: Are key partners—including government, industry, and communities—effectively engaged and benefiting from the Hub's activities? How can engagement be improved both immediately and in the long term?

A.2 Scope of the Review

The Interim Review will focus on the following:

- Assessing the original purpose and mandate of the Hub against Queensland's current and future decarbonisation needs.
- Identifying practical refinements to maximise the impact of the Hub's remaining funded period.
- Evaluating the extent to which regional issues and challenges with decarbonisation have been identified.

- Evaluating the capacity for the Hub to expand to include broader climate action, particularly the focus on adaptation in the proposed Net Zero Roadmap.
- Reviewing governance and decision-making structures, including the roles of the Steering Committee, Research Committee, Advisory Committee, and Hub Secretariat.
- Reviewing resources required for an effective Hub Secretariat function.
- Identifying key challenges in establishing and implementing the Hub's objectives and develop immediate options to address these challenges.

A.3 Review Process

The review will be conducted through:

- Stakeholder consultations: Engagement with the Steering Committee, research community (including Theme Leads and Research Committee members), government agencies, and the Advisory Committee (capturing industry representatives, and community stakeholders).
- Document analysis: Review of the original Decarb Forum outcomes, Hub workplans, policy white papers, and research deliverables.
- Expert elicitation: A streamlined process to gather key insights while minimising the burden on participants.

A.4 Key Deliverables

- Draft Interim Review Report (early June-2025): to inform the updated 2025 workplan, focusing on recommendation on scope, research priorities and processes along with appropriate supporting governance arrangements.
- Final Interim Review Report (end of June) following review by Steering Committee and key stakeholders.

A.5 Governance and Oversight

- The Steering Committee and one senior representative from the research community will make up a panel to oversee the review and provide strategic guidance.
- The Review Lead (Research Director) will coordinate the process, supported by the Hub Secretariat.
- Queensland Government stakeholders will be engaged to ensure alignment with policy priorities.
- The Research Committee and Advisory Committee will provide input throughout the review.

A.6 Timeline

- **April 2025:** Terms of Reference endorsed by the Steering Committee then circulated to theme leads.
- **May 2025:** Stakeholder engagement, data collection, and preliminary recommendations to inform the 2025–26 research agenda.
- **June 2025:** Delivery of Interim Review

A.7 Expected Outcomes – Interim Review

- A clear assessment of the Hub’s strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in the short term.
- Targeted recommendations for enhancing the Hub’s effectiveness in its final 18 months of funded operation.
- A strategic roadmap for ensuring the Hub remains impactful, and aligned with Queensland’s decarbonisation, adaptation, and climate action agenda.
- Defined pathways for enhancing research translation, stakeholder engagement, and long-term sustainability.

Attachment B: Queensland Decarbonisation Hub Survey Resources – Summary Document

Angela Elvery

B.1 Introduction to the Stakeholder Survey Report

This report presents the findings of a stakeholder survey conducted as part of the mid-term review of the Queensland Decarbonisation Hub (Hub). The survey was designed to assess stakeholder experiences and perspectives on the Hub's performance to date, with a focus on its effectiveness, relevance, and areas for future improvement.

The stakeholder survey opened on 15 May and closed on 28 May 2025. Respondents were either directly engaged in Hub activities or had signed up to the Hub mailing list. The survey was voluntary, and responses were de-identified for reporting purposes. While results are not statistically representative of all possible stakeholders, they provide a rich, directional picture of stakeholder sentiment and practical insights into the Hub's current performance.

B.2 Respondent Overview

71 completed surveys were collected, while an additional 39 were partially completed; these were retained to in the final sample to include the valuable information that had been provided. Most (n = 77) respondents were located in SEQ (see Figure 1).

The majority of respondents (n = 47) indicated their primary involvement with the Hub was through government, with academia (n = 26) and industry (n = 22) the next most common sectors (see Figure 2). Most respondents from government identified that they were from a state (n = 32) or local level (n = 10); four respondents were associated with the federal government.

Figure 1

Location of Respondents

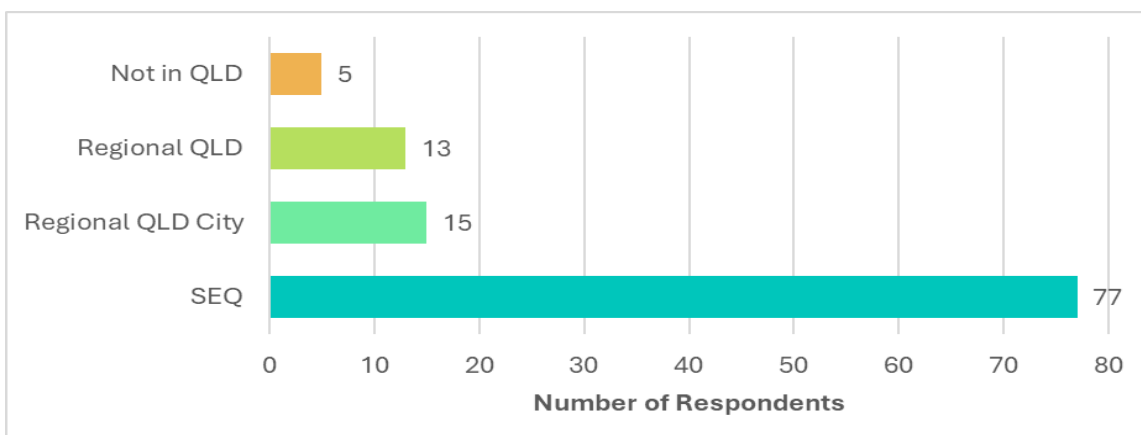
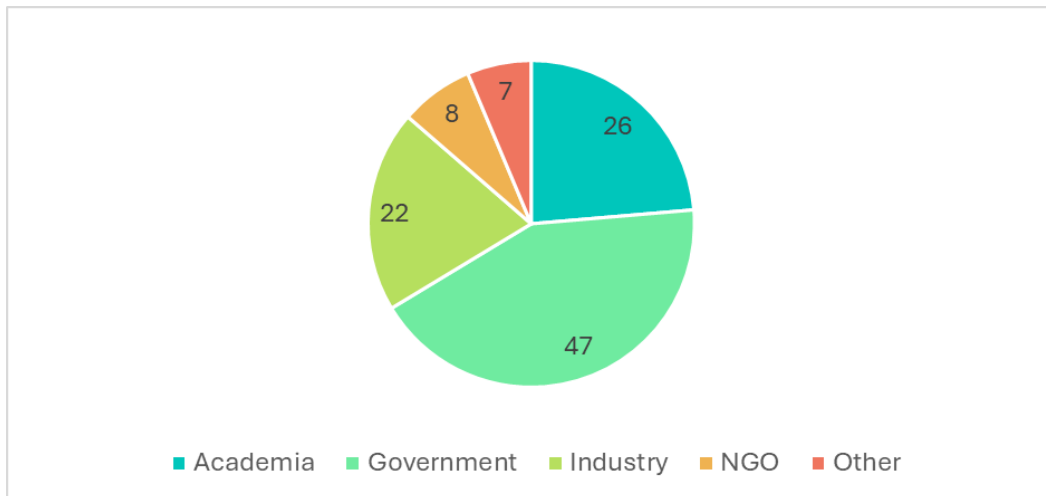


Figure 2

Area of Involvement with the QLD Decarbonisation Hub

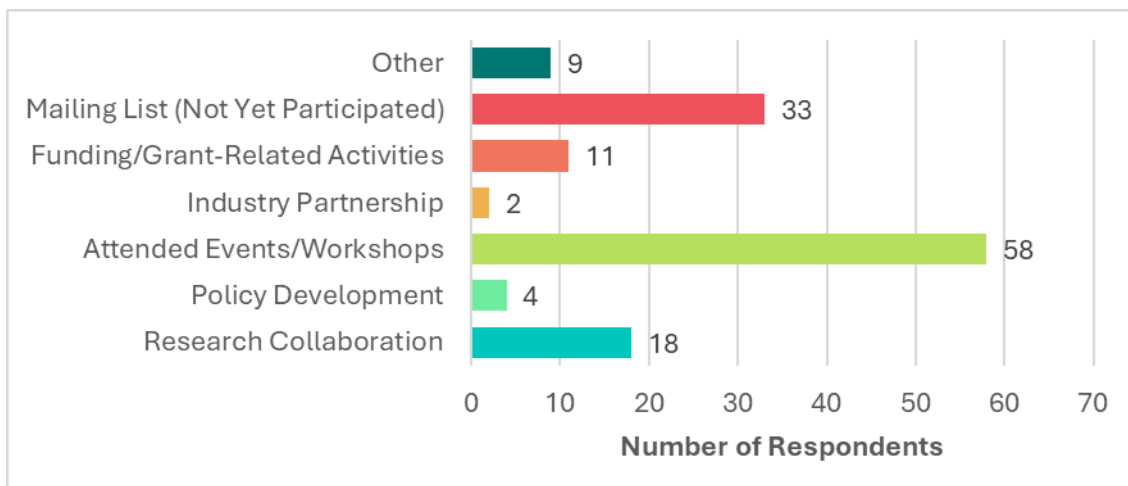


In terms of engaging with the Hub, there were three main ways identified by respondents. Most respondents (43%, n = 58) had attended a Hub event or workshop, 24% (n = 33) identified that they were on the mailing list but hadn't yet participated in a Hub event, and 13% (n = 18) had been part of a research collaboration through the Hub (see Figure 3).

Respondents indicated that they were not particularly familiar with the Hub's work, with 49% (n = 54) selecting that they were moderately to extremely familiar with the work of the Hub. Another 41% (n = 45) indicated that they were slightly familiar, and the remaining 10% (n = 11) were not familiar at all.

Figure 3

Ways Respondents Have Engaged With the Hub



B.3 Key Strategic Themes

The four key strategic themes of the Hub shaped the survey to provide an understanding of users' perceptions of whether the Hub is functioning appropriately and adequately. The four themes are knowledge brokerage, knowledge exchange, knowledge co-production, and knowledge in action.

Knowledge Brokerage Function

Respondents highlighted the Hub's role in fostering connections across industry, government, and academia as a very (n = 44) or extremely (n = 10) important function (see Figure 4). Ten percent (n = 8) found the Hub to be very effective in making these connections, while the remaining 90% (n = 72) identified this as moderately to not effective at all (see Figure 5).

Visibility of Hub connections was lacking for respondents, several (n = 10) called for better systems for facilitating discussion and partnerships, such as AI or a more accessible portal for finding relevant persons across sectors.

Some respondents (n = 3) highlighted that the Hub is too research focused. More cooperative engagement with industry and government and better ways to connect with others were common themes amongst responses. Further, more accessibility of the research that is occurring, updates on the progress of these, and project results was desired by respondents (n = 7).

There was broad interest among respondents—across all sectors and locations—in the provision of additional events. Webinars, collaborative workshops, and networking opportunities were particularly highlighted, with a preference for both online and in-person formats.

Figure 4

Importance of Knowledge Brokerage Function to Respondents

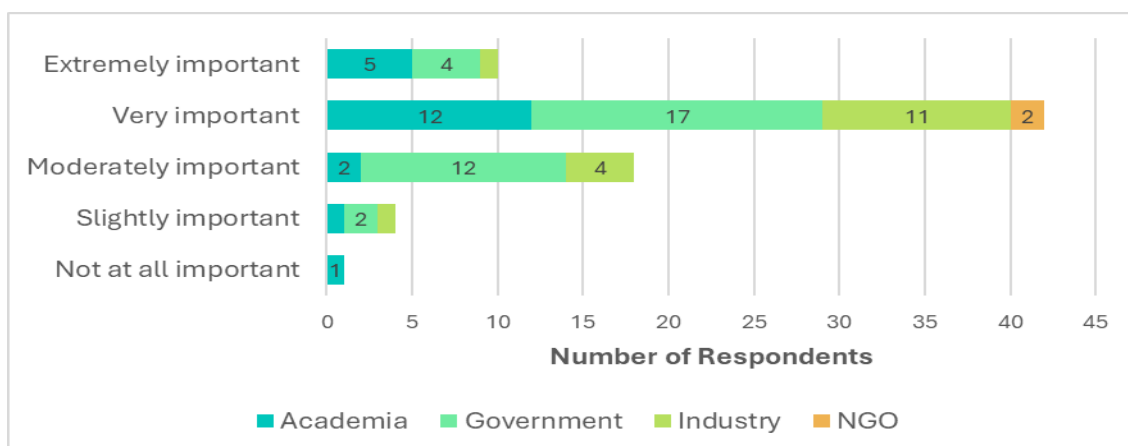
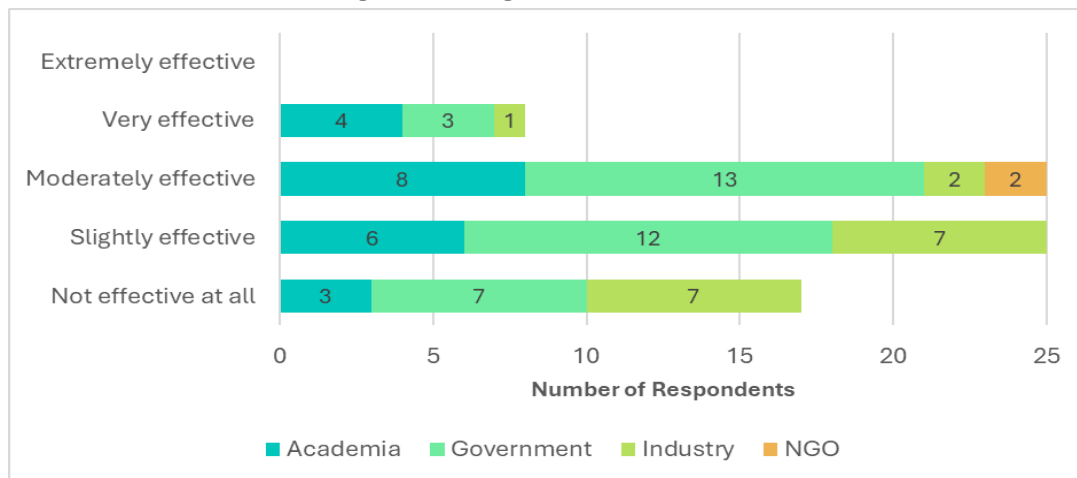


Figure 5

Effectiveness of Knowledge Brokerage Function

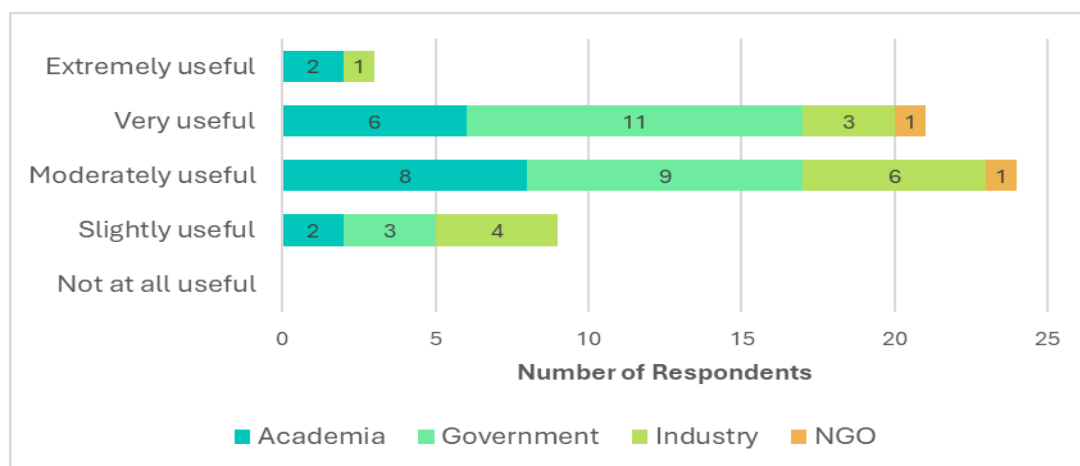


Knowledge Exchange Function

77% of respondents had attended a Hub event or workshop (n = 78), and most deemed these moderately (42%, n = 25) to very (37%, n = 22) useful at bringing together academia, government, industry, and community (see Figure 6). The knowledge exchange function of the Hub was identified by most as very (62%, n = 48) to extremely (21%, n = 16) important (see Figure 7).

Figure 6

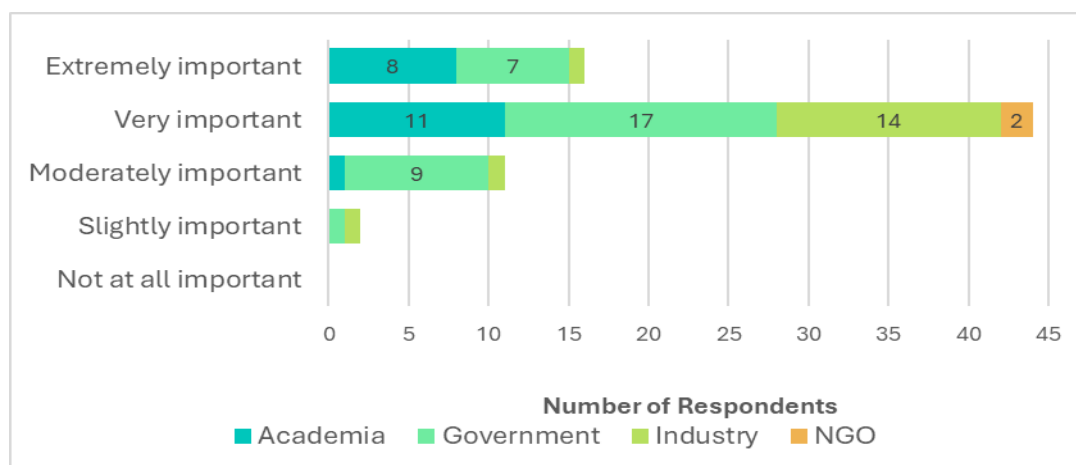
Usefulness of Hub Events for Exchanging Knowledge



Respondents were invited to suggest the types of engagement activities they would like the Hub to offer in the future. A range of collaborative formats were identified, including forums (n = 9) and research showcases (n = 5), alongside informative sessions such as webinars, workshops, meetings, and seminars (n = 18). Several respondents also emphasised the importance of facilitating connections with experts from diverse fields, echoing earlier suggestions regarding improved accessibility and visibility within the Hub (n = 9). Both in-person (n = 5) and virtual (n = 6) engagement formats were recommended, with particular emphasis on ensuring accessibility for stakeholders in regional and rural areas.

Figure 7

Importance of Exchanging Knowledge Function



Knowledge Co-Production Function

The co-production of research was regarded as a very (60%, n = 43) or extremely (31%, n = 22) important function by most respondents (see Figure 8). When asked to assess the extent to which the Hub is integrating real-world policy or industry needs into its research activities, 46% (n = 33) of respondents indicated that the Hub is performing well, while a further 40% (n=29) rated its performance as average (see Figure 9).

In response to a question on areas requiring more policy-relevant research, respondents identified several priority topics. These included local government approaches (n = 2), workforce and industry involvement (n = 2), and Indigenous engagement (n = 1). Regional development and improved pathways for engaging with research were also noted (n = 2). Additional areas of interest included agriculture, emerging energy sectors (n = 4), general climate change issues (n = 1), and housing (n = 1). Several respondents (n = 5) specifically emphasised the need for research addressing barriers to decarbonisation within particular sectors, such as agriculture.

Figure 8

Importance of Knowledge Co-Production Function

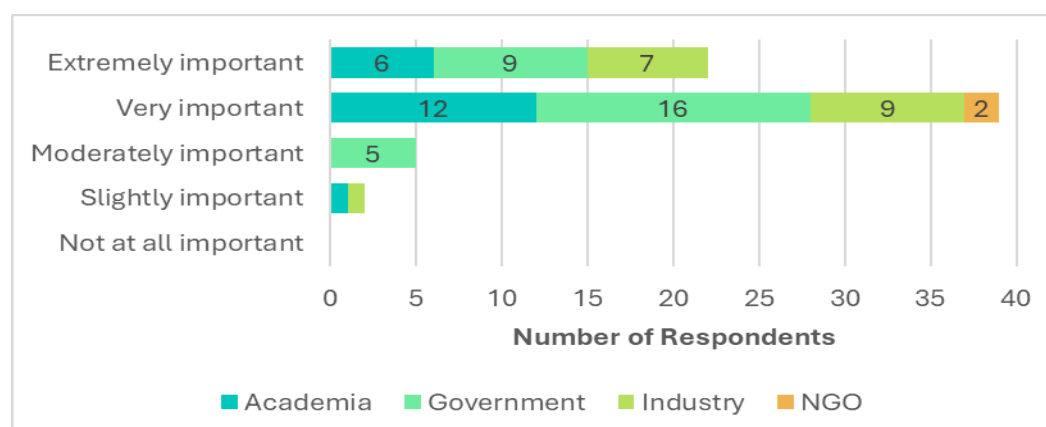
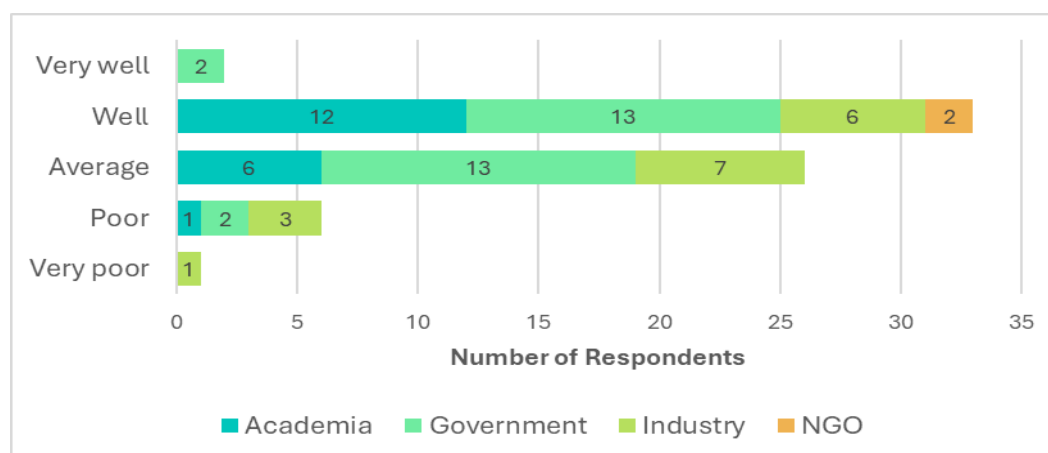


Figure 9

Effectiveness of the Hub at Incorporating Policy or Industry Needs



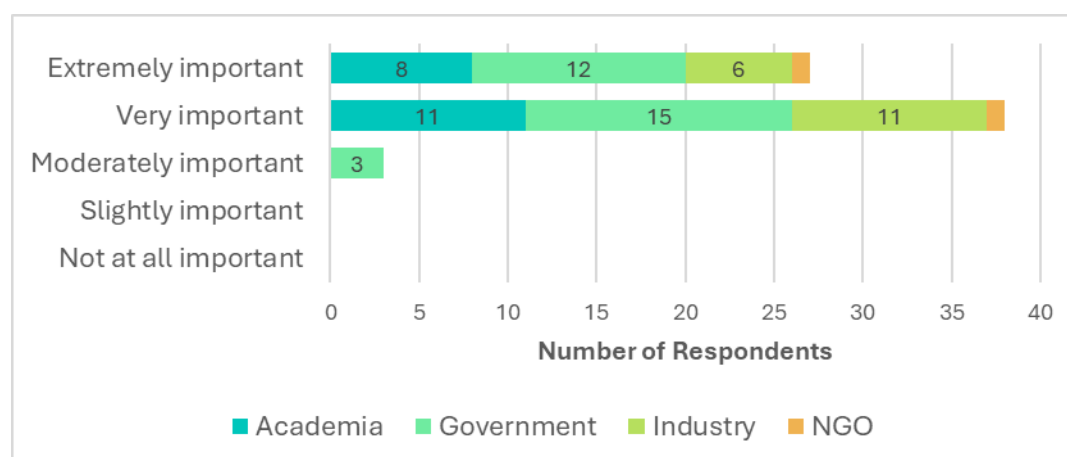
Realistic application of research outcomes to policy and regulation (n = 8), as well as technical aspects of government targets (n = 1), and collaboration across sectors and international connections (n = 4) were highlighted as potential areas to develop in the Hub's future. Research into social change around climate and decarbonisation was also noted (n = 2).

Research-based Solutions/Knowledge in Action

The majority of respondents (51%, n = 37) indicated that they had not observed the Hub's research influencing policy or industry decisions, while a significant proportion remained uncertain (39%, n = 28). Among the seven respondents (10%) who reported observing an impact, three provided specific examples, including research related to cattle and emerging policy discussions on regional development and decarbonisation. Despite limited direct observation of practical impacts, this function was regarded as very (n = 41) or extremely (n = 27) important by respondents (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

Importance of Research-based Solutions



Respondents expressed a preference for research focused on state-wide solutions, rather than the more siloed approaches observed currently. The importance of ongoing liaison with government to align research aims and solution types with policy priorities was also emphasised. Additionally, respondents highlighted the need for collaborative projects and partnerships, particularly between government and industry (n = 12), with one respondent noting the value of long-term initiatives. The ability to access and observe the outcomes of research conducted through the Hub, as well as the ease of identifying relevant connections, were recurrent themes in the responses (n = 5).

B.4 Value of the Hub to Stakeholders

Several respondents (n = 6) expressed that the Hub's emphasis on university involvement and academic outcomes was unhelpful or difficult to access. In contrast, non-academic outcomes and more accessible communications were frequently highlighted throughout the survey responses. Most respondents advocated for the Hub to refocus its scope to include more practical outcomes or projects that involve industry and government; they also emphasised the importance of effectively communicating upcoming opportunities for collaboration and research.

B.5 Additional Engagement Options

One respondent described the current research themes of the Hub as 'tokenistic' and suggested that these themes should be either significantly revised or discontinued to enable the Hub to operate effectively. Respondents reiterated prior recommendations from other survey questions, including calls for increased engagement opportunities (n = 5), greater visibility of connections and research outputs (n = 6), enhanced industry involvement (n = 5), and expanded regional participation (n = 3). Additional suggestions from various respondents included restructuring the funding model (n = 2), incorporating deep technology within the broader climate change agenda (n = 1), and producing a podcast to improve accessibility and dissemination of research findings and methodologies (n = 2).

Attachment C: Summary of Expert Workshop

C.1 Introduction

A 3.5-hour workshop was held on 11 July 2025. A range of experts comprising academics, government officials and industry representatives, all of whom have had some role in the creation and evolution of the Hub, were invited to attend. Background papers on the why, what and how of the Hub were provided as well as an overview of key questions that would shape the discussion. This included data from the survey undertaken (see Attachment B).

The discussion was free-flowing but broadly speaking followed the three key themes being addressed through the Hub review:

- Does the Hub's initial rationale for establishment remain relevant?
- What should the Hub's work program focus on until the end of 2026?
- How should this program focus be achieved?

This paper provides an overall summary of the discussion that will inform the Interim Review paper.

C.2 Overall Summary of results

The expert feedback validates the original intent of the Hub but calls for sharper focus, stronger positioning, better targeted governance, and visible value delivery in the remainder of the Hub's current funding period. The message is clear: this is a time for consolidation, influence, and strategic impact, not expansion or drift.

C.3 Strategic Direction – Revisiting the Hub's Why

Purpose

To explore whether the Hub's original strategic framing remains relevant and fit for purpose.

Findings Aligned to Key Objectives

Revisit the original rationale for the Hub's creation

- Experts reaffirmed that the Hub's foundational idea, to connect university research to policy for decarbonisation and aligning social, economic and environmental policy goals during the transition remains sound.
- The original ambition (mission-led, cross-sectoral) was endorsed, but participants noted it had not been consistently activated or resourced.
- There was a strong call to return to first principles: the Hub should not replicate what already exists but leverage its unique position as a synthesiser and broker of knowledge generated by the Hub research as well as other sources, especially between research, government, and regional, rural and remote actors.

Assess the extent to which the Hub is delivering against its intended role

- Delivery has been partial. The Hub's convening function is active but under-leveraged.
- Lack of follow-through on the VC Forum's system leadership vision was noted, with key structures (like senior engagement or coordinated comms) not maintained.
- While good work has been done, impact has not been clearly communicated, and strategic connections (e.g., with QG decision-makers) remain weak or ad hoc.

Examine whether current governance and positioning enable mission-oriented leadership

- Current governance, which includes community, industry and government voices, could be further refined to support a mission-oriented approach.
- Participants noted the need for clearer leadership structures, more visible champions inside and outside of government, and stronger university engagement at VC or DVCR level.
- There was concern that the Hub is neither sufficiently positioned in the system and resources are not focussed to lead in a coordinated way.

C.4 Key Priorities Looking Forward

Purpose

- To identify where the Hub should focus for the remainder of its funded term.

Findings Aligned to Key Objectives

Reconnect project delivery with strategic goals

- Experts urged the Hub to not spread itself too thin — there was strong support for sharpening the focus on policy-relevant outputs in high impact areas.
- Projects should align more tightly with QG and community priorities (e.g., emissions reduction, regional transition, economic inclusion) and respond to government priorities.

Inform research funding decisions

- A clear message emerged: use remaining funds for:
 - Targeted engagement (e.g., COP31 presence, ministerial briefs)
 - Policy translation (e.g., synthesis, case studies, storytelling)
 - Supporting strategic FTEs to drive outreach and stakeholder work
 - Some flagged the opportunity to add a social science lens to technically focused projects for greater relevance.

Position the Hub for high-impact and enduring contributions

- Success in the next 18 months is key to any future model ("Hub 2.0") — this is a make-or-break phase.
- To position for impact, the Hub should visibly demonstrate value to key QG, industry and community actors — giving them a clear, usable mechanism to access university expertise. This is not only the responsibility of the Coordinating Unit, but all aspects of the Hub's functions.

- Legacy should not be “more projects” but building relationships, demonstrating usefulness, and helping QG make better-informed, inclusive decisions.

C.5 Governance to Achieve Strategic Alignment

Purpose

- To evaluate whether governance arrangements support strategic delivery and identify opportunities for improvement.

Findings Aligned to Key Objectives

Assess the alignment between current governance and strategic goals

- Hub Governance is fragmented. A more agile, targeted governance model was discussed, one that supports quick decision-making, strategic comms, and trusted relationships.

Identify weaknesses and opportunities in committee functioning

- Multiple ideas emerged:
 - Bring in high-profile invited guests (e.g., Clean Economy Expert Panel members) as strategic advisors or champions
 - Consider repurposing the Research Committee for collaborative alignment, not oversight of funded research projects.
- There was concern that the seven universities are unevenly represented or engaged; suggestions included more formalised liaison roles or DVCR-level briefings.

Strengthen the coordinating role of the Hub Secretariat

- Secretariat capacity is a key bottleneck. Experts supported directing remaining funding to enhance FTE capacity — particularly for regional engagement, communications, and synthesis work. FTE could also be dispersed through Hub network, in areas of high impact (e.g., regions).
- Better coordination across university partners is also needed; deeper relationships with University Centre and Institute directors and regional teams were proposed.
- Guide outreach activities to amplify outcomes of existing Hub research projects

C.6 Synthesis – Bringing It All Together

Purpose

- To consolidate expert reflections and identify high-leverage actions.

Findings Aligned to Key Questions

What are the key takeaways for the Hub/Hub Review?

- Narrow the focus; show tangible policy influence; avoid launching new research (unless a priority project that meets a knowledge gap is identified by Advisory or Steering Committee).
- Act as a synthesiser, sense-maker, and amplifier — especially for Indigenous, regional, rural and remote community voices.

Where does stakeholder feedback suggest the greatest urgency or opportunity?

- Align language and outputs to QG framing and current needs.
- Show usefulness to Treasury, DETSI, DPI, DCCEEW and Net Zero Authority and regional communities.
- Reposition the Hub as an access point for informed, inclusive, actionable insight, recognising the resourcing limitations of the Hub.

What governance or strategic shifts would unlock greater delivery and impact?

- Enhance strategic capacity (e.g., FTE, invited champions)
- Shift from committee-heavy governance to networked influence, while maintaining a publicly accountable decision-making process for resource allocation
- Reframe communications as a persuasion, influence and impact campaign (be more ‘think tank’ like in strategy and operations)

Which changes are most tractable in the Hub’s remaining timeframe?

- Develop 1–2 key new outputs (e.g., COP31 showcase, ministerial brief)
- Refresh Research Committee membership or roles
- Realign comms and marketing strategy and allocate remaining funds accordingly

What advice do experts have for ensuring the final phase leaves a strong legacy?

- Treat this phase as a proof-of-concept
- Focus on demonstrating impact and relevance
- Align with QG priorities, language, and processes
- Ensure a focus on equity and an inclusive transition, which is what will make the QLD Decarb Hub distinctive.
- Use the Hub to build trust, simplify access to university expertise, and amplify voices (e.g., community, Indigenous) which are often marginalised in policy discussion and debate.

Attachment D: Tables

Table D.1 Decarb Hub Grant Agreement – Reporting Requirements Summary

Report Type	Clause Reference	Submission Timing	Required Contents
Progress Reports	Clause 11.1(a), Schedule 1	Six-monthly: by 31 July and 31 January each year	(i) Overview of Project status (including highlights, challenges and changes) (ii) Description of activities undertaken (iii) Description of progress against key activities and outputs in the Project Plan, including any unmet outputs (iv) Budget details, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash and in-kind co-investment received • Research projects funded (name, amount, recipient)
Final Report	Clause 11.1(b), Schedule 1	Within 3 months of Project End Date	Same requirements as progress reports, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final outcomes against all Project objectives and activities • Summary of lessons learned Recommendations for future initiatives or continuation
Additional Reporting	Clause 11.4, Schedule 1	As reasonably requested by the State	Any reasonable request for further information related to performance, finances, or administration of the Project
Audited Financial Report	Clause 11.2, Schedule 1	Annually, within 4 months of end of each Financial Year	Audited report of income and expenditure related to the Project, signed by a qualified accountant/auditor
Other Reporting Obligations	Clause 11.3, Schedule 1	Ongoing, as relevant	Immediate notification of material changes to project scope, budget, or delivery. Reporting of issues that may affect achievement of outcomes or compliance with the Agreement

Table D.2 Report Findings Summary - Project Phases – Highlights, Challenges, and Changes

Phase	Reporting Period	Milestones/Highlights	Challenges/Changes
Establishment	Jul–Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project Plan approved by DESI ✓ Governance structures mostly in place ✓ Branding and engagement foundations built ✓ Standup Steering Committee ✓ Hub’s logo, brand and style guide developed ✓ Hub website developed ✓ Hub network established ✓ Knowledge portal established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Initial delays due to slow sign-off of Project Plan
Delivery	Jan–Jun 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work Plan submitted ✓ Major outputs delivered (briefings, showcases, webinar) ✓ Governance consolidated 	
Expansion & Engagement	Jul–Dec 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hub Forum (~260 participants) ✓ Advisory Committee active ✓ Research funding distributed ✓ Regional focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Election-related disruption: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Division moved • Theme 4 paused • Parliamentary Briefing postponed

Table D.3 Report Findings Summary – Hub Activities

Category	Activity	Timing
Events	Parliamentary briefing	April 2024
	➤ Decarbonising Queensland: Fostering Innovation and Competitiveness	
	Regional showcases	May 2024
	➤ “Creating an Investment Pipeline for Decarbonisation in Far North Queensland: pathways for ensuring Queensland meets its net-zero targets” (Cairns, Townsville)	
	Hub Forums	Aug 2024
	➤ Inaugural Forum	
Publications	Webinars	
	➤ Decarbonisation in Regional Queensland	2 September 2024
	➤ Energy Storage in Queensland	13 November 2024
	➤ Nature-based Solutions & Environmental Integrity	20 November 2024
	Policy briefs	
	➤ Community is key to Queensland’s energy future, Rose Stambea et al.	28 February 2024
	➤ Creating public value and social value through the decarb agenda, Prue Brown	19 April 2024
	➤ Carbon farming & nature repair markets Benefits, opportunities and risks for Queensland, Felicity Deane et al.	June 2024
	➤ Natural Capital Accounting & Ecosystem Service Valuation A look at how these tools can support better land management for the decarb agenda, Ed Morgan et al.	December 2024
	➤ Creating an investment pipeline for renewable energy across regional Queensland, Allan Dale	December 2024
Governance	Think Piece	
	➤ Regional decarb (draft)	July 2024
	Policy Report	
Engagement/ Systems	➤ Defining and mapping Queensland’s decarbonisation technology landscape, Dr. Chad Renando and Dr. Moudassir Habib	30 October 2024
	Steering, Advisory, Research Committees formed and operating Regular Research Committee meetings Advisory Committee input into research projects shaping 2025 plans	Throughout 2023–2024 2024
	Stakeholder database ("Hub Network"), innovation ecosystem mapping	Ongoing

Table D.4 Theme led Projects

2024		
Theme 1: Supporting Community and Regional Transformations	First year research for theme 1 was based on work to support Queensland's local communities and regions in positioning the state as a leader in Australia's decarbonised economy. While Queensland has key advantages—strong infrastructure, energy and water resources, and a decentralized population—decarbonisation must maintain social license, protect natural and cultural assets, and ensure First Nations people are equity partners. Though national and state governments play key roles, transition decisions are often made locally. This research provides evidence-based mechanisms to drive economic transformation, support transitioning regions, prevent communities from being left behind, and address workforce challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional showcases and workshops (Townsville & Cairns) • 1 x webinars • 1 x Policy report/presentation • 1 x Think piece • Policy brief/presentation • Contributions to Government and/or parliamentary briefings
Theme 2: Nature-Based Solutions and Environmental Integrity	First year research for theme 2 explored nature-based solutions for decarbonising Queensland's economy, ensuring they uphold environmental integrity through proper valuation, accounting, regulation, and integrated land-use planning. While ecosystems are the only proven large-scale carbon storage, the land sector must both reduce emissions and capture carbon. Well-designed solutions can deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits, but poorly implemented one's risk unintended consequences, including increased emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Report/Issues paper • Webinar • Decarbonisation Forum • Policy brief on environmental markets • Policy brief on ecosystem services • Policy report on SPP

Theme 3: Technology and Innovation	<p>First year research for theme 3 focussed on the development of a dynamic mapping tool to showcase Queensland’s decarbonisation enablers, including technologies, research, startups, skills hubs, financing, and policies. This central platform will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match needs with capability – Connecting industries, communities, and governments with researchers, innovators, and support systems. • Enable analysis – Identifying strengths, gaps, and workforce needs in key decarbonisation areas. <p>The tool will enhance clarity, collaboration, and cross-sector engagement, fostering efficient implementation of innovation and research for Queensland’s decarbonisation transition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a fully functional map with exportable information • Webinar on innovation hubs and ecosystems • Policy report/presentation • Contribution to think piece
2025		
Sector Plan Technology Pathways Partner – Queensland Treasury	<p>To support the development of these emissions reduction plans this project aims to provide an overview of abatement technology pathways for each sector with a strong focus on the Queensland context. For the purposes of this project, an abatement technology pathway describes a set of technological and operational changes that could take place over a period of time to deliver Queensland’s emission reduction goal of net zero emissions by 2050. The project will use these sectoral emissions reduction pathways and an analysis of policy levers in the Queensland context to identify the most prospective areas for policy focus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensland Emissions Reduction Technology Pathways report • Stakeholder Consultation Report • Policy Papers. •
Sector Plan Sector Planning for the Resources Sector	<p>The project will commence by planning a workshop which will bring together relevant experts from government and academia to collaboratively share knowledge and develop a program of work to support developing a sector plan for the resources sector. To support an effective workshop the project team will complete a review of sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short report on sector planning globally with a focus on plans relevant to the resources sector. • Workshop planning and execution

Partner - Department of Resources	<p>planning globally with a particular focus on the resources sector where possible. This early research piece, along with a knowledge of the QLD resources sector, will be used to design the workshop to achieve the desired planning outcome.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop summary paper
<p>Sector Plan</p> <p>The Ag Sector's role in the energy transition</p> <p>Partner - Queensland Farmers Federation</p>	<p>This project will produce a policy review focused on the Queensland agricultural sector's role in the energy transition and climate adaptation. It aims to define sector-specific decarbonisation and adaptation pathways for three key sub-sectors (cotton, sugarcane, and beef), grounded in QFF data and insights. The review will assess future-state scenarios and current policy gaps, identifying strategic risks and opportunities to inform practical, coordinated decarbonisation efforts across the sector. The project will also highlight areas where targeted policy intervention could support emissions reduction, energy resilience, and regional development goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy paper including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sub-sector snapshots (3 sectors) ○ Future-state transition pathways ○ Policy gap analysis • Strategic recommendations • Presentation to QFF and stakeholders • Optional communications summary and QFF-led promotion

Table D.5 Summary of research projects for the 2025 Work Program

Project	Summary	Deliverables	Research Team
Transitioning to Net Zero: Exploring Preferences and Regional Strategies for Decarbonisation in QLD	<p>This research project will examine regional preferences for energy transition strategies in Queensland, focusing on perceived trade-offs in decarbonisation. It will compare attitudes in Central Queensland and the Wet Tropics, highlighting how socioeconomic, demographic, and industrial factors shape public support for carbon reduction.</p> <p>The study will also explore community and workforce perspectives, recognising the importance of equity and cultural sensitivity—issues raised at the 2024 Northern Queensland Hub forums. Findings will inform region-specific, socially responsive strategies that align with local priorities and support long-term prosperity in Queensland’s regional communities.</p> <p>Theme 1: Community and regional transformations (primary) Theme 4: Sector Plans (secondary)</p>	<p>Brief progress report Survey design + Testing & Focus groups Workshop and data collection</p> <p>Brief progress report Results aggregation and reporting - Draft report Final report/results dissemination through the Hub Hub Webinar</p>	<p>Dr Jeremy De Valck, CQU (CI) Prof John Rolfe, CQU Prof Allan Dale, JCU Prof Hurriyet Babacan, JCU</p>
Analysing workforce implications of renewable energy projects in regional Queensland	<p>This project will analyse employment associated with solar and wind energy projects in Queensland. It will begin with identifying all relevant projects—completed, under construction, or planned—and gathering workforce data from planning documents and public sources. Employment impacts will be summarised by region and technology over time. A meta-analysis will then explore the relationship between project size and workforce needs using regression analysis. The findings will inform practical tools to support regional communities and policy makers.</p>	<p>Draft Report on workforce requirements Draft Report/Journal article on meta-analysis Final Report</p>	<p>Professor John Rolfe, CQU (CI) Dr Kalpana Pudasaini, CQU</p>

	<p>Theme 1: Community and regional transformations (primary)</p> <p>Theme 4: Sector Plans (secondary)</p>		
<p>An Outstanding Opportunity: Using Solar Farms for Biodiversity Preservation</p>	<p>This project explores how tropical solar farms in Australia can support biodiversity conservation while generating renewable energy. Amid rising land-use pressures and community concerns, it will assess biodiversity at a tropical solar farm and develop recommendations for enhancing ecological outcomes. By addressing a key research gap, the project aims to provide practical guidelines for industry and government, positioning solar farms as a tool for conservation in high-diversity landscapes.</p> <p>Theme 2: Nature-based solutions and environment integrity</p>	<p>Wet season sampling Dry season sampling Final Report Final Presentation</p>	<p>Distinguished Professor Lin Schwarzkopf, JCU (CI) Dr Myles Menz, JCU Dr Eric Nordberg, School of Environmental and Rural Science, University of New England</p>
<p>Optimising on-farm carbon footprint measurements for the verification of low carbon commodities</p>	<p>This project will develop low-cost, high-accuracy methods to verify on-farm greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions—particularly nitrous oxide (N₂O)—to support sustainable farming and decarbonisation of Queensland’s agri-food sector. Current verification methods are costly and unreliable, limiting uptake. By improving measurement techniques, the project aims to enable credible accreditation of emission reductions, enhance market access for low-emission agricultural products, and align with Queensland’s Strategic Plan 2023–27.</p> <p>Theme 2: Nature-based solutions and environment integrity</p>	<p>Compilation - on-farm GHG datasets Draft report - on-farm GHG driver analysis Draft report on gas sampling optimisation analysis Webinar – on-farm GHG verification measurements Final report – project outcomes</p> <p>Presentation based on the final report</p>	<p>Dr Naoya Takeda, QUT (CI) Prof Dr David Rowlings, QUT Prof Dr Mike Bell, UQ Research Assistant at QUT</p>

Sustainable vegetable cultivation using agricultural waste derived biochar	<p>This project explores using biochar, made from farm waste, to grow vegetables sustainably. By improving soil quality and reducing reliance on chemical fertilizers, biochar can help cut greenhouse gas emissions and lower the carbon footprint of food production. Working with industry partners like Atlas Soils, the study will test different biochar blends to assess their impact on crop growth, water retention, and emissions reduction. Researchers will also evaluate the cost-effectiveness and potential for large-scale use. The findings will provide Queensland farmers with a practical, eco-friendly way to boost yields, enhance soil health, and support climate action, offering valuable insights for policymakers and the agricultural sector.</p> <p>Theme 3: Technology and innovation</p>	<p>Biochar production and characterisation Experimental setup and plant cultivation Plant growth, yield and moisture retention analysis Emission reduction and carbon metrics study Economic feasibility and scalability assessment Final Report Workshop</p>	<p>Prof Mohan Jacob, JCU (CI) Prof David Rowlings, QUT Dr Mahmood Sadat Noori, JCU Mr Jason Lang, Atlas Soils Mr Steve Tiley, Wandarra</p>
Enhancing CO2 Absorption in Shotcrete and Concrete Using Mafic-based Aggregates	<p>Cement production is a major source of CO₂ emissions, but concrete and shotcrete can naturally absorb CO₂ over time through the "sponge effect." However, little is known about how different aggregates, especially Queensland's mafic and ultramafic rocks, impact this process. This project will investigate whether these rock-based aggregates can enhance concrete's ability to absorb CO₂, potentially reducing emissions from construction materials. The findings will support greener building practices and Queensland's sustainability goals. Key outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of how these rocks affect CO₂ absorption in concrete. • New techniques to improve carbon capture in construction materials. 	<p>Material sourcing and preparation Carbonation and pore/grain scale testing using the received aggregates Concrete and shotcrete batching and macro testing Durability testing and Carbonation monitoring Comprehensive report Guidelines and recommendations draft Presentation of research outcomes and recommendations</p>	<p>Dr Mehdi Serati UQ (CI) Mr Muhannad Al Kalbani (PhD Student), UQ Civil Dr Thierry Bore (Senior Research Fellow), UQ Civil Dr Harald Hofmann, CSIRO/UQ</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical guidelines for industry use. • A webinar and presentations to share findings locally and globally 		
	Theme 3: Technology and innovation		
Unique fire-resistant QLD peatlands: a nature based carbon storage solution	<p>Subtropical wire-rush peatlands in southeastern Queensland store carbon, support wildlife, and resist fires, but little is known about their locations, peat depth, and carbon reserves. Research on K'gari has found methane-producing microbes in deep peat layers, raising questions about methane emissions and the impact of disturbances.</p> <p>This project will study how fire, water levels, and land use affect peatlands. It will map pristine and degraded sites, measure carbon storage and emissions, and assess potential health risks from smoke. Findings will help develop conservation, fire management, and rehabilitation strategies to protect and enhance carbon storage.</p>	<p>Commencement of field work. Proposal presentation Mapping and coring Analyses of peat Bulk Density, Moisture Content, and Carbon Content Measurements of background GHG emissions Fire emission experiments Carbon dating of peat cores Analysis of data Compilation of final report Submission of Final Report</p> <p>Final Presentation</p>	<p>Professor Catherine Mary Yule University of Sunshine Coast (UniSC) Dr Adrian McCallum, UniSC Dr Gareth Chalmers UniSC Professor David Chittleborough, UniSC Associate Professor Javier Leon, UniSC</p>
Feasibility Study of Net-Zero Microgrids Lead	<p>The project aims to develop a net-zero microgrid simulation platform to investigate new technologies for achieving net zero (pure renewables) in microgrid operation. A data-driven approach will be proposed to establish novel renewable generation models and a data-driven control and optimisation method will be developed to operate the net-zero microgrid simulation platform. The outcomes of this project will not only advance knowledge in renewable energy integration but also support the ambition to achieve net zero of total electricity supply. This should provide significant benefits, such as reliable, affordable and clean energy supply in Queensland, even whole Australia.</p>	<p>Establishment of stakeholder engagement advisors Technology challenge and barrier analysis Microgrid simulation platform set up Data driven optimisation algorithm development for net zero energy management Final report</p>	<p>Professor Fuwen Yang, Griffith Uni (CI) Professor Junwei Lu, Griffith Uni Dr Mohammad Sanjari, Griffith Uni</p>