

**CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023**  
**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

Clerk of the Parliaments

**Need: Why is the policy needed based on factual evidence and stakeholder input?**

The Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 proposes to set targets for the reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions, set an adaptation objective, and establish the Net Zero Commission. This Bill implements several key government election commitments.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that human activities have caused at least 1.0°C of global warming, resulting in unprecedented effects on the climate. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is required to minimise the severity of climate-related impacts on the natural world, food security, health, and economic prosperity. In NSW, CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology modelling shows NSW is already warming at 1.4 times the global average.

Implementing a whole-of-government path to net zero emissions and building resilience to the impacts of climate change is complex. Establishing a Net Zero Commission, which will function independently from other departments and agencies, will provide rigorous expert advice for government, drawing on insights gained through engagement with stakeholders and the community.

New South Wales is already experiencing impacts from climate change. Our current systems are not equipped to effectively manage the increased risks and vulnerabilities caused by a changing climate. The NSW Government delivers, among many other services, public health measures, disaster risk reduction and water resources management for NSW. Climate change will impact these services and will have flow-on effects to the broader communities' health, safety and access to essential services.

Failure to implement measures to adapt to climate change costs the people of NSW. The 2021-22 NSW Intergenerational Report estimates that more frequent and severe natural disasters could cost NSW between \$15.8 billion and \$17.2 billion per year on average by 2060-61. It also warns of significant costs from other climate change hazards including rising sea levels and heatwaves, and the impact of changing climatic conditions on agricultural production.

The inclusion of the adaptation objective will ensure the government continues to deliver on addressing the impacts of climate change the NSW community are already experiencing and will continue to experience into the future.

**Objectives: What is the policy's objective couched in terms of the public interest?**

The Government is committed to a low-emissions and climate resilient future that is just and equitable. The Bill provides the framework for emissions reduction and increased resilience that will help facilitate these commitments. The Net Zero Commission will serve the public interest by providing independent advice to government on the transition and the adaptation objective, as well as increasing transparency of government action to address climate change.

The Commission will also educate and inform the community promote action to address climate change across society.

**Options: What alternative policies and mechanisms were considered in advance of the bill?**

The Government considers that the policy is best implemented through legislation, in accordance with interjurisdictional and international best practice. The IPCC reported that climate governance, including legislation and institutions, enables mitigation by developing clear frameworks and pathways which guide action to address climate change. No alternative mechanism will effectively achieve the objectives outlined in the Government's key election commitments.

**Analysis: What were the pros/cons and benefits/costs of each option considered?**

The Bill does not impose any appreciable cost or burden on the public or any group of the public. As such, no alternative policies and mechanisms have been considered or analysed.

**Pathway: What are the timetable and steps for the policy's rollout and who will administer it?**

If enacted, the Bill will commence on assent. The Minister for Climate Change is responsible for administering the proposed Act.

**Consultation: Were the views of affected stakeholders sought and considered in making the policy?**

An interagency consultation group was established to provide feedback and input throughout the Bill drafting.