



MEDIA RELEASE

Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 report released

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17 November 2023

The report of the NSW Upper House committee inquiry into the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 was tabled today.

The bill mandates greenhouse gas emissions targets for New South Wales. Specifically, that the state reduce emissions by 50 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. The bill also establishes the Net Zero Commission, sets guiding principles for action to address climate change, and includes an objective for New South Wales to become more resilient to climate change.

The Chair, Ms Sue Higginson MLC said: 'The committee welcomes this bill and the contribution it will make to mitigating the causes and impacts of climate change, which are already being felt by many communities across New South Wales. The strong message to the committee from stakeholders is that immediate action is required to address these concerns. Additionally, while the vast majority of inquiry participants supported the bill, many called for it to be more ambitious.'

The Chair said: 'Many expert witnesses told the committee that front-loading emissions reduction effort is vital to achieving the purpose of the bill, to hold global average temperature increases to well below 2 degrees Celsius. We heard that ambitious early and interim targets are just as important as the long-term goal of achieving net zero emissions. Concerns were raised that the bill in its current form will extinguish the existing target of 70% emissions reduction by 2035 which is currently in regulations.'

Legal experts highlighted that there is nothing in the bill to actually bind governments to achieve the emissions reductions targets, which is different to other like jurisdictions that have enacted similar schemes.

The committee also heard of the economic opportunities which may arise from setting clear, early, and ambitious targets. Stakeholders said that having targets in law will encourage investment in renewable energy projects in New South Wales, including projects in regional areas.

The establishment of an independent Net Zero Commission, with members with appropriate skills and qualifications is welcomed. However, many witnesses suggested that the independence and scope of the Net Zero Commission could be improved. Of concern was the lack of a clear mechanism for the commission to take action and influence government agencies to drive down emissions.

Ms Higginson also said; 'The bill has a clear objective of making New South Wales more resilient to a changing climate. This is a welcome aspect of this bill. It is vital that we learn from disasters such as the floods of 2022 and the Black Summer bushfires and ensure that communities are better equipped to respond and adapt to future extreme events.'

The committee recommended that the Legislative Council proceed to debate the bill and that concerns raised by stakeholders be addressed during debate in the House.

The committee's report and other inquiry documents can be found on the committee's [website](#).

-ENDS-

For further information please contact Committee Chair, Ms Sue Higginson MLC, on 9230 2273