

Emissions from the fossil fuel sector inquiry hearing

Held on 12 December 2025

Question on Notice

1. **Regarding any coordination between the Net Zero Commission and Common Capital on the release of their reports, and the detail in relation to why the commission report was released at this time and in the way that it was.**

Answer:

- No, there was no coordination between the Net Zero Commission and Common Capital on the timing of the release of either report.
- The Commission released the Coal Mining Emissions Spotlight Report on the day of the hearing because it contains information and findings relevant to the hearing.
- The Commission considered it important to transparently provide supporting context, both to the public and the Joint Standing Committee members, for the evidence the Commission presented at the hearing.
- The report was not released earlier because it was not ready. The report is the culmination of more than 6 months of research, stakeholder consultation and analysis.
- The Commission released the report as early as possible, with substantial additional effort since the date the hearing was announced, to ensure the report was finished and able to be considered at the hearing.

Supplementary Questions

1. The Commission's Coal Mining Emissions Spotlight Report states that "at the request of the Minister for Climate Change, the Commission is reviewing the NSW Environment Protection Authority's (EPA's) Proposed Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Guide for NSW Coal Mines. This review will draw on the findings of this spotlight report." Can you please provide details of this request?

(a) Will the Commission publish its advice to the NSW EPA on the draft Coal mitigation guide?

i. If yes, when does the Commission expect to publish this advice?

Answer:

- The Minister for Climate Change requested the Commission review the NSW Environment Protection Authority's (EPA's) Proposed Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Guide for NSW Coal Mines and to make that review public.
- Accordingly, the Commission will publish this review.
- The Commission expects to publish its review in January or February 2026.

2. The Commission also stated in the Spotlight Report that it would be "providing advice to support the development of the NSW Government's new net zero plan, identifying priority areas for emissions reduction by 2030 and 2035." Will the Commission be making this advice public?

(a) If yes, when does the Commission expect this to occur?

(b) If not, why not?

Answer:

- The Minister for Climate Change requested the Commission's advice on the development of a new Net Zero Plan to 2035 on 27 June 2025 within eight weeks of the request.
- The Commission provided an initial response in late August 2025. A subsequent response will be provided in mid-January 2026 outlining the outcomes from a range of complementary work underway by the Commission.
- While the Minister did not request this advice be made public, the Commission intends to make its advice public in the first quarter of 2026.

3. Has the Commission provided any advice to the NSW government in regard to policy and programmes required to reduce emissions from industrial gas use in NSW?

(a) If yes, is this advice publicly available?

(b) If not, is there a plan to provide advice on this in 2026?

Answer:

- In its 2024 Annual Progress Report, the Commission noted that the Climate Change Authority as well as recent academic studies and industry advocacy bodies found that “replacing gas appliances with all-electric technologies is the lowest-cost path to reduce emissions from on-site fuel use in homes and buildings.”
 - The Commission’s 2024 Annual Progress Report also noted challenges and opportunities for decarbonisation of the industry sector, including industrial gas use. The report is publicly available.
 - A consultation paper released by the Commission in May 2025 noted significant opportunities in electrifying gas used in industry, in particular through heat pumps that replace gas used for low to medium temperature process heat. The consultation paper is publicly available.
 - The Commission provided advice to inform the development of the government’s Net Zero Plan 2035. In its advice, the commission highlighted the importance of clear timeframes for the phasing out of gas use in buildings. It also noted that electrifying gas use in buildings and low to medium temperature industrial processes could free up gas for industries where it will take longer to substitute existing processes with renewable alternatives. This advice is not yet publicly available.
 - The Commission considers that electrification of gas use is an area for policy attention in NSW and intends progressing further work in this area as part of its forward work program.
4. **More than a year ago, the NSW Productivity and Equality Commission - in their Ensuring a cost-effective transition, Achieving net zero, Paper 1, November 2024 - advocated that governments should send “clear signals about how we use natural gas”. They made the observation in their paper that “[c]utting emissions depends on getting homes and businesses off natural gas and reducing fossil fuel combustion in primary industries and manufacturing.” What is Net Zero Commission’s view on this advice?**

Answer:

- See response to supplementary question 3.