

**Submission  
No 56**

## **INQUIRY INTO CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023**

**Organisation:** People for the Plains Inc

**Date Received:** 25 October 2023

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## **Thank you for the opportunity to lodge a submission to the inquiry for the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023**

People for the Plains has members from within and around Narrabri in northwest NSW and our charter is to keep locals updated on the fossil fuel projects in the region. We also fill roles on all of the local Community Consultative Committees established for the local coal and gas projects.

### **Background to the Region**

Our region continues to be under siege from new coal and gas projects and expansions including the following that are at various stages of the state and federal approvals processes:

- Narrabri Gas Project
- Narrabri Lateral Pipeline for gas
- Hunter Gas Pipeline
- Gorman North exploration area
- Narrabri Underground Stage Three Expansion
- Maules Creek continuation / expansion
- Boggabri Mod 8 expansion
- Vickery expansion – essentially a new coal mine

All of these projects have significant climate change impacts.

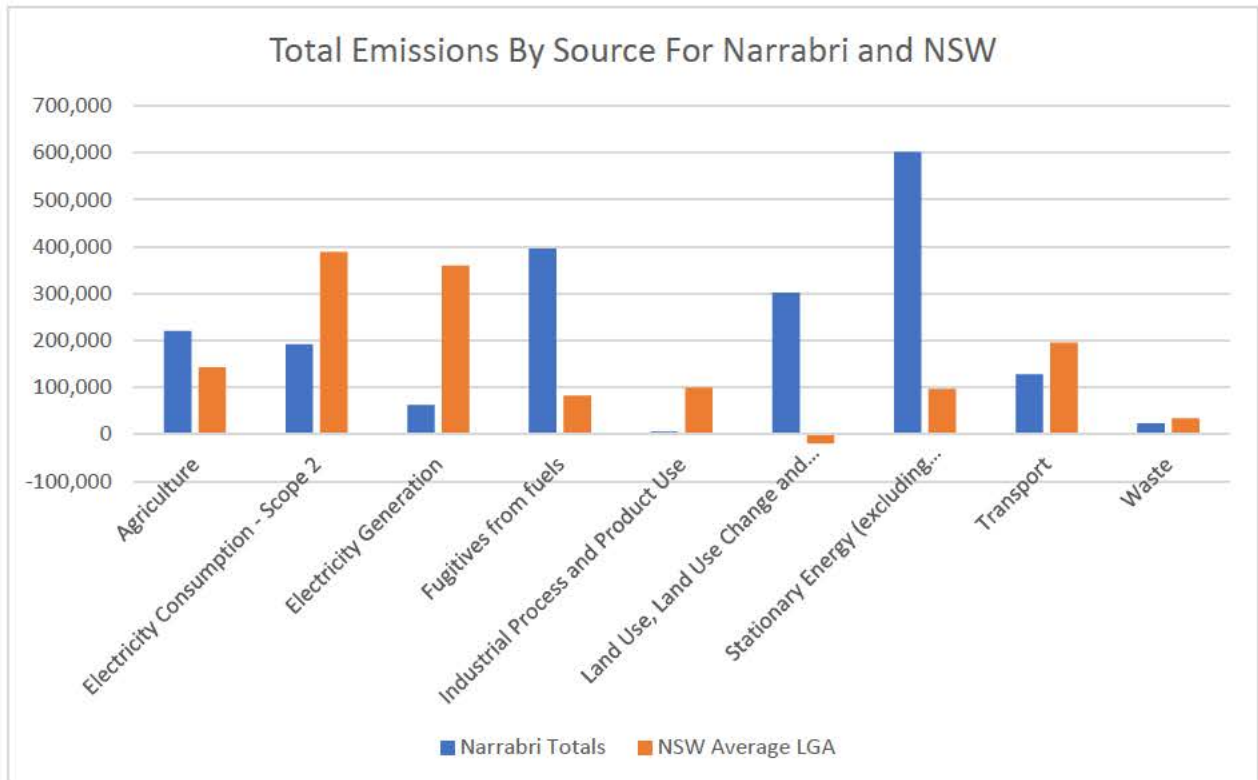
### **Current Emission Profile of the Shire**

According to the NSW government's Emissions Dashboard data for 2021, when considering the contribution that Narrabri LGA makes to the state's total Scope 1 and 2 emissions we see that Narrabri shire contributes significantly to the emissions burden, especially when considering our population size.

Narrabri LGA is responsible for 1,932,343 tonnes (or 1.9Mt) of Scope 1 and 2 emissions annually, out of the total 178Mt emissions from the state. Meanwhile our shire has a population of (2019 data) of around 13,000, out of the 8M strong population of the state.

It is worth noting that the Dashboard numbers appear to be way less than the reporting on the Safeguard Facility data from 20/21 which shows Scope 1 emissions from just the three largest coal mines in the region; Boggabri, Narrabri Underground and Maules Creek mines, being 873,421 tonnes per annum, on their own. The Dashboard shows fugitive emissions from all the Narrabri LGA mines at just under 400,000 tonnes per annum.

So even with this understanding, that the Dashboard is likely to be highly under-reporting emissions, the Narrabri LGA contribution is still startling.

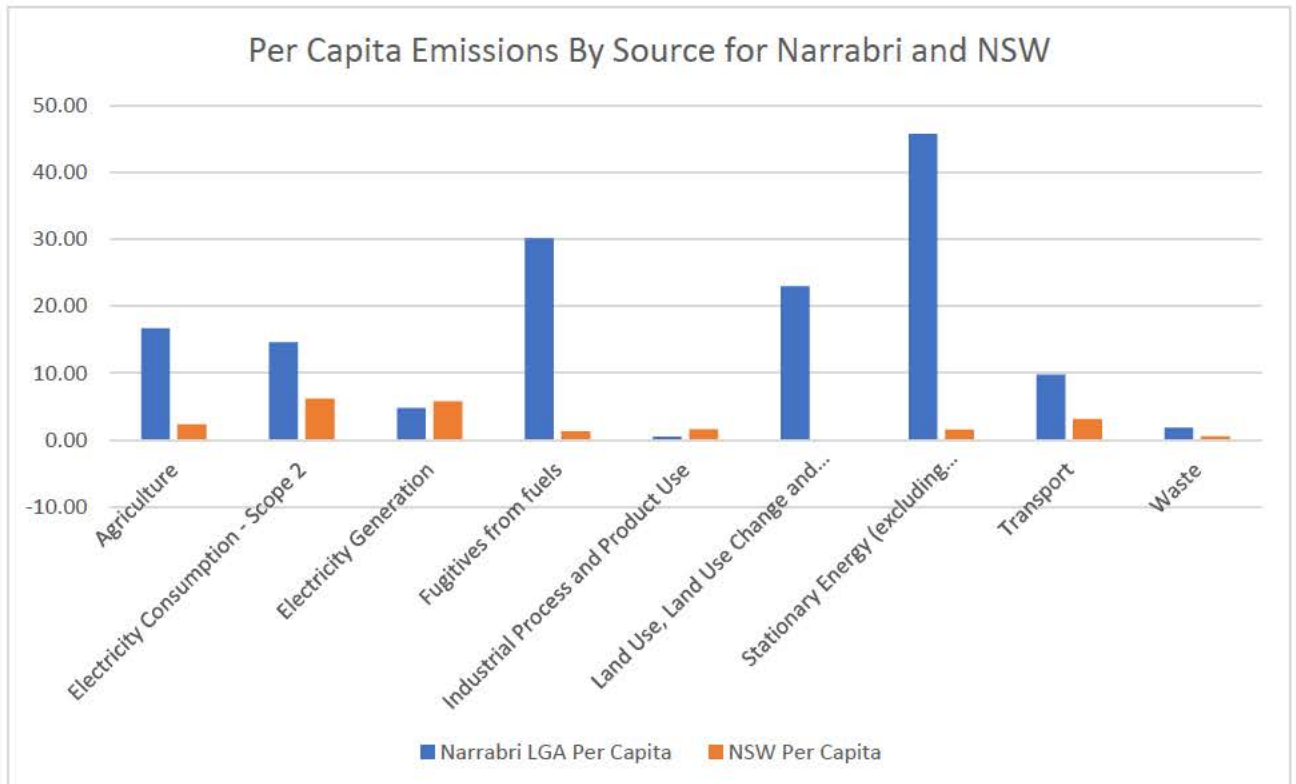


In NSW the average Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions per person is 22 tonnes. In the Narrabri LGA the average emissions per person is a whopping 147 tonnes.

On a per capita basis the Narrabri LGA is drastically different to the state averages in two key sources of emissions:

1. Fugitive Emissions – the main source of which is coal and gas mining
2. Stationary Energy use – primarily the use of fuels in mining

On a per capita basis, Narrabri LGA creates 30 tonnes of carbon emissions annually from fugitive emissions, compared to the state average of 1.3 tonnes per person, and 46 tonnes of emissions from Stationary Energy per person, compared to the state average of 1.5 tonnes per person per annum.



### Future Emissions Profile of the Shire

The projects in our region that have already received approval in the last few years, but are not yet operating will add an additional 3,114,00 tonnes of Scope 1 and 2 emissions each year:

Narrabri LGA	Annual Scope 1 CO2E (tonnes p.a.)	Annual Scope 2 CO2E (tonnes p.a.)	Total (tonnes p.a.)
Vickery with GSC 30% and NSC 70%	84,000	210,000	294,000
Narrabri Underground Stage 3	1,360,000	120,000	1,480,000
Narrabri Gas Project	620,000	720,000	1,340,000
<b>Total extra emissions</b>	<b>2,064,000</b>	<b>1,050,000</b>	<b>3,114,000</b>

As the government legislates to cut emissions and get to net zero, our LGA's per capita emissions are on course to more than double. Our Narrabri LGA Emissions will go from 1.9Mt per annum to around 5Mt per annum, exceeding even Sydney City LGA in total emissions each year. Our per capita emissions of 147 tonnes each, will soar to 384 tonnes per annum, in a period of time when we should be shrinking to zero. Clearly both masters cannot be served.

### How Will the Climate Bill Help?

We have been through countless NSW government processes in the last ten years, only to see project by project be approved, regardless of the evidence put to decision makers. All of these decisions are at odds with a Net Zero trajectory. In recent times this evidence has come from experts such as Dr Penny Sacket and Prof Will Steffan, amongst many others.

Despite the overwhelming scientific evidence presented to these processes, it seemed that the NSW Government did not have policy positions on greenhouse gas emissions. This Bill must align the NSW government's ambitions with policy positions that will successfully achieve this result.

**Our Recommendations:**

**1. Net Zero by 2030 Target**

The Climate Bill as currently drafted needs to be far more stringent. We would like to see targets proposed in the Bill which are science-based and aligned with the evidence with the aim of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees. We believe a thorough review of other states such as Victoria's policy would be useful. A Net Zero by 2030 target with clear and evidenced interim targets should be the cornerstone of the Bill.

A net zero by 2030 target is ideal, however at a bare minimum the existing 70% reduction aim by 2035 should not be abolished by the Bill. The urgency of the climate crisis is now crystal clear.

**2. Interim Targets that are Measurable and Enforceable**

In order to reach a longer term goal, it is sensible to have shorter term targets. There needs to be clear disincentive for those not meeting interim targets so they respond accordingly with the end goal and rewards those seeking to help meet the state's Net Zero goals.

**3. Clear Power Across Laws**

The bill and commission must be embedded into other laws. It should aim to embed action to address climate change as a core feature of all government decision making, and include requirements that climate impacts are considered in all government policy and decisions as well as all government grant making.

**4. Net Zero Commission Advise on New Fossil Fuel Proposals**

The functions of the Net Zero Commission should be amended so the Commission is required to provide advice on all new emissions intensive developments such as fossil fuel projects. The Bill as currently drafted has little to no impact on 13 proposed coal mines expansions in NSW which, if approved, would emit more than 2 billion tonnes of lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.

**5. Moratorium on Expansions Currently Sought**

We recommend a moratorium on proposed fossil fuel expansions be in place until the commission is established. This moratorium should include projects that are seeking modifications and expansions as well as new projects, where there are carbon emissions impacts. Locally this would include Boggabri Mod 8, Maules Creek expansion and the gas pipeline projects.

**6. Ensure Carbon Emissions Reductions are sought across Sectors**

Innovation across all sectors (including residential) should be encouraged immediately, and especially between now and 2030, rather than all emphasis on emissions savings being placed on the electricity generation moving from coal to renewable energy. Whilst this is an important element, this change would create little impact on our localised emissions load as none of our emissions sources provide local electricity generation. Fugitive emission and those from stationary energy should also be rapidly reduced.



#### **7. Full policy review as part of the Climate overhaul**

A systematic review of existing policies should be undertaken to ensure they are compatible with the goal of meeting the emissions reductions targets. Of particular concern and in need of urgent review or removal is the 'Strategic Statement on Coal' and the 'Future of Gas Statement' both put forward by disgraced, former Deputy Premier John Barilaro.

Despite the very short timeframe, we appreciate the opportunity for input into this inquiry.

Regards

People for the Plains