

**Submission
No 66**

INQUIRY INTO CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023

Organisation: Wollongong City Council

Date Received: 27 October 2023

The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC
Minister for Climate Change and Energy
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000
office@sharpeminister.nsw.gov.au

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Dear Minister

SUBMISSION ON THE NSW CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023

We welcome the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 (Bill) and its associated 2030 and 2050 targets for the reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions and note that the Bill and targets are generally aligned with Wollongong City Council (WCC) commitments on climate actions.

WCC recognises the urgent need to respond to the impacts of Climate Change and proudly aligns with the principles of the Paris Climate Agreement through our partnerships with the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) for Climate and Energy and the Cities Power Partnership. WCC became a signatory to GCoM in August 2017. Council also declared a Climate Emergency in August 2019.

The following comments are provided for your consideration:

- Many NSW Councils already have Climate Change Mitigation Plans in place. It is important that future initiatives led by the NSW Government build on and support existing local government frameworks and commitments on climate action rather than dictate new approaches that could derail the significant planning and investment that Councils like WCC have made to date.
- We encourage the NSW Government to increase its financial and technical support for local councils. In particular, it is recommended that a proportion of the NSW waste levy revenue be dedicated to a waste infrastructure and sustainability fund for councils. Such a fund would go a long way towards achieving our Net Zero targets.
- We encourage the NSW Government and Net Zero Commission to focus on the energy sector transition to renewable energy and reducing emissions from transport and the industrial sector. We encourage the NSW Government to work collaboratively across the 3 levels of government and peak industry groups to ensure planning, approvals, regulations and enforcement of climate actions for the industrial sector are coordinated and effective. We also encourage the NSW Government to speed up the planning and delivery of efficient and enhanced public transport services in NSW and the Illawarra region.
- We caution reliance on carbon offsetting to achieve a Net Zero outcome. Carbon offsets represent a temporary storage of carbon (for example vegetation and trees have a defined lifetime) which can be affected by heatwaves or bushfires.
- At present, Scope 3 emissions associated with export of coal and gas are not included in the accounting for the New South Wales emissions profile. We suggest this be further considered through the Bill and its definitions.
- Clause 7 of the Bill which suggests *'This Act prevails to the extent of an inconsistency with another Act or law'* is supported. There should be a stronger link with other legislation to ensure decisions made under any other legislation contributes to emissions reduction targets.
- We recommend that the principles of fair and just transition to net zero be further embedded in the Bill and objectives of the Net Zero Commission to address social equity.

Please contact me should you require further information.

This letter is authorised by

Linda Davis
Director Planning & Environment
Wollongong City Council