

Submission  
No 70

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

**Organisation:** Newtown Climate

**Date Received:** 25 October 2023

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## Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill – Newtown Climate Inc. Submission

25 October 2023

Dear Committee

Newtown Climate is a local climate organisation based in Newtown in Sydney's Inner West. We work with residents, organisations, businesses and government to achieve our vision of Newtown becoming Australia's first inner-city zero emissions community, through a transition that is fast, fair and fun.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Government's proposed Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill. As the window provided for comment is very short we have included only a few high-level points. We endorse the more comprehensive feedback which will be provided by larger climate organisations, such as the Climate Council, the Nature Conservation Council and the Environmental Defenders Office, in their submissions.

Over the past year we have talked to hundreds of people in our community who are concerned about climate change and would like to see stronger action from all levels of government. Many people in our community have taken action to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions, and are frustrated by the lack of meaningful action from our elected governments. 60% of households in our community are renting, meaning they have limited control over key decisions that would improve their quality of life, reduce the cost of living, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We therefore look to our elected leaders to show strong leadership to reduce emissions on a systemic level.

While we support the concept of legislated emissions reduction targets we are concerned that the targets included in the current draft Bill do not align with established climate science or with the Bill's stated aim of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. We would like to see the Bill strengthened in the following ways before being passed by parliament:

- The emissions reduction targets should be updated to align with climate science. This should include an ultimate target of net zero by 2035, in line with established climate science and the emissions reduction timeline outlined in the Climate Council's [Mission Zero report](#).
- The Bill should include clear mechanisms for action and accountability, e.g. it should place a positive duty on elected officials, public servants and other decision makers to take climate impacts (including scope 3 emissions) into account when making decisions.
- The time allowed for the Minister to respond to reports and recommendations from the Net Zero Commission should be reduced to six weeks. The climate crisis is urgent and will only be made worse by unnecessary bureaucratic delay.
- Fiscal responsibility should not be a reason for Governments to avoid or delay climate action. Studies have repeatedly shown that [the costs of climate action will be dwarfed by the financial impacts of unmitigated climate change](#).

Our community is keen for the NSW Government to take immediate and ambitious action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are many policy options available which would significantly reduce emissions, in many cases without incurring significant costs. We would like to see the Government demonstrate its genuine commitment to climate action by immediately taking these key steps:

- Ruling out any new coal or gas expansion in New South Wales
- Ending native forest logging in New South Wales
- Developing a gas substitution roadmap with clear plans to phase out gas as soon as possible
- Banning any new offshore gas development and associated infrastructure
- Investing heavily in active transport infrastructure to facilitate an urgent mode shift away from private car use to more sustainable forms of transport
- Providing financial and other incentives to support households, including renters, to electrify appliances and vehicles and update their homes to be more energy efficient
- Reintroducing subsidies for purchases of new and newly imported electric vehicles
- Electrifying buses and all government fleets

We note that both the Liberal Party (70% reduction by 2035) and the Greens (net zero by 2035) took more ambitious emissions reductions targets to the last NSW election than are proposed in this Bill. This suggests that there is likely to be cross-party support for more ambitious emissions reductions targets and more impactful climate action.

We are rapidly running out of time to take decisive action to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change and preserve a liveable world for future generations. We hope the Government will not miss this opportunity to take meaningful action that reflects the scale and urgency of the climate crisis. We look forward to the day when we can work with the Government towards a shared aim of a fast, fair and fun transition to zero emissions.

We would welcome a chance to discuss this submission with you.