

**Submission
No 73**

INQUIRY INTO CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023

Organisation: Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay

Date Received: 25 October 2023

To the Portfolio Committee No. 7, Planning and Environment

Subject: Submission regarding Legislative Council Enquiry into the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023.

Submitted by Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay Group.

Dear Ms Higginson,

Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay is a grassroots organisation operating across the State electorates of Drummoyne, Burwood, Strathfield and their surrounds. We are well-known and highly respected in the local area for our work educating the public on the impacts of climate change and advocating for solutions to the problem.

We support the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 in its guiding principles and purpose. However, we have serious concerns about the Bill's capability to meet its stated outcomes. At best, the Bill is an aspirational document, not based on in-depth analysis of existing carbon emission levels across the NSW economy, and not in sympathy with the global aspirational goal of keeping carbon emissions to a level consistent with a temperature increase of only 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Bill's target is not based on any clear scientific evidence or analysis of NSW's contribution to the problem of climate change.

A further problem for us is that the proposed Net Zero Commission will have an advisory and reporting role only, leaving sectors of the economy as well as government departments free to ignore the Commission's findings.

We believe that the Net Zero Commission should develop carbon budgets for each industry, for households and for government departments, and advise the Government and the parliament annually when and where reductions are not being achieved in accordance with those carbon budgets. Transparent reporting to the government and to parliament is essential if targets are to be met, and governments should be required to intervene with policies, investments, regulations and other supports, to ensure compliance in meeting those targets and achieving reductions in CO₂ and methane emissions. We ask therefore that the Bill strengthen the role of the Net Zero Commission and include the requirement for government to actually meet its set targets.

We submit that the proposed legislation should require a new target for each five-year period, taking into account the progress made in the previous period in NSW and also considering Australia's progress towards the 1.5°C temperature limit. The legislation should also require governments to provide a Net Zero Forward Plan every 5 years.

We note that climate change action should not be the realm of one authority – that all government departments, policies, regulations and laws should take account of the need to address climate change and contribute to carbon emission reductions. Therefore, the government should embed this requirement in all departmental policies and operations and in the drafting of all laws.

Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay is greatly concerned about current industry practices in not measuring or reporting methane emissions. We strongly believe that reports of these emissions should be made mandatory and for the Net Zero Commission to set sectoral methane targets. Furthermore, we argue that uncontrolled emissions from defunct coal mines be included. There should be regulations to require the capping of these harmful fugitive emissions.

We submit that the Net Zero Commission should be required to assess likely carbon emissions from all proposed emissions-intensive enterprises, particularly new fossil fuel projects. The Net Zero Commission should be required to advise the approval bodies before a decision is made – on a project's impact on that sector's carbon emission budget and on the sector's ability to meet the legislated target. The government should take a much stronger stand against the harmful and long-lasting impacts of fossil fuel mining.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of this submission.

Climate Action Burwood Canada Bay