

Submission
No 85

INQUIRY INTO CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023

Organisation: Parramatta Climate Action Network

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We are pleased that the government has proposed a Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. The bill puts emissions reduction targets for NSW into law. These targets are 50% by 2030 and net zero by 2050. However, we don't think the targets are strong enough. We agree with the recommendations of the Climate Council that says it is necessary to reach Net Zero Emissions by 2035 to ensure a safe climate for the planet. If we don't take stronger action and have interim targets to get there we will continue to have severe floods fires and droughts as we have experienced over the last few years. Also the sea level will continue to rise. This sea level rise has already resulted in salinity in ground water of several Pacific islands making it impossible for the people to grow their crops. It has also resulted in some burial grounds being washed away or at least impacted by the rising water.

To strengthen the bill there should be requirements that climate impacts are considered in all government policy and decisions such as has been done in the Victorian Climate Change Act (Part 3) which embeds climate considerations into seven other acts.

We are very pleased that the NSW government has decided to establish a Net Zero Commission to monitor and report publicly on progress toward these targets. However unless new and extensions of coal mines are banned it will be impossible to reach these targets. The Federal Government doesn't count the coal that is exported but this is not practical as we are all on the same planet and share the same atmosphere so greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are produced in Japan or China will affect everybody on the planet.

As well as coal, gas needs to be phased out. There should be no new gas appliances in all new buildings. Gas is largely methane which is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide so should be targeted. The NSW government has not banned gas in all new buildings as the Victorian Government has done. This must be changed as it is also harmful to health and some escapes every time a gas heater or stove is turned on.

With no new coal mines opening and old ones progressively closing, the Government will need to consult with local communities and like is being done in the Hunter will need to provide alternative employment for the workers in these areas. Some of these jobs will come from renewable energy projects but there may be a shortfall of jobs. Some will be happy to transfer to a different town (especially if they don't have a young family) and some will be ready to retire