

Submission
No 87

INQUIRY INTO CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023

Organisation: Mudgee District Environment Group

Date Received: 25 October 2023

Submission to: Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023

Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG) is pleased to see emission reduction targets in NSW law. We are also pleased to see the establishment of a Net Zero Commission to monitor and report publicly on progress towards the target. This is positive news.

There are a number of matters we would like to see included in the Bill to ensure a stronger commitment to climate action, and a more cohesive approach within and across legislation. We submit that the Net Zero Commission would have greater effect if its functions were more extensive and powerful.

Stronger commitment

MDEG submits that the targets put forward need to be stronger. The targets of 50% by 2030 and net zero by 2050, will not be sufficient. NSW must step up and play its part in planning immediate and drastic cuts to emissions. Other jurisdictions have stronger targets and as we are in a global emergency it makes sense to plan together, and not undermine the goals and achievements of others. We must become a leader and not a laggard.

Intermediate targets would assist with monitoring, and ensure that actions are on track to guarantee the desired outcomes. E.g., It would be desirable to include the agreed 70% reduction by 2035, within the proposed Bill.

A mechanism for reporting achievements and increasing the target progressively would facilitate a greater understanding of the benefits of actions. Future actions could then be scheduled and planned with greater certainty.

Cohesive approach

The Bill must require other government statements and actions to become aligned with its objectives. Consistency and coherence are required within and across all policies and guidelines. E.g. NSW cannot approve any new coal mines or extensions to existing coal mines – to do so would be totally counter-productive and prejudice the stated emission targets; NSW 'Strategic Statement on Coal' must be repealed as it is entirely inconsistent with climate action and the objectives of this Bill.

It is logical that NSW must urgently reduce its gas use. Our national gas production and domestic use must drastically reduce and cease as soon as possible. We must urgently reduce methane gas emissions. Action is required immediately.

For this Bill to succeed in its objectives, it should include requirements that climate action be considered in all aspects of government decision-making. Successful climate action planning must be a whole of government approach. It requires cohesive planning, policy and implementation across all areas of government responsibility and influence. This Bill has the potential to provide such a positive initiative.

Net Zero Commission functions

The Commission should have wide-ranging powers to monitor, report and facilitate the achievement of emission reduction targets. E.g. advise on all new emission intensive projects; audit government departments and agencies to identify further opportunities to reduce emissions; provide advice on targets; ensure science-based evidence is used.

The Commission has the potential to provide a clearing house of advice, information, auditing, monitoring and enforcement to attain the stated objectives of the Bill. The Net Zero Commission is fully supported and members of MDEG encourage the expansion of its role.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Hadaway
Chair, Mudgee District Environment Group
25th October 2023