

**Submission  
No 13**

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY  
ZONES (REZ) ON RURAL AND REGIONAL  
COMMUNITIES AND INDUSTRIES IN NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

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**Date Received:** 8 January 2025

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## **Renewable Energy Zones for regional and rural communities and industries in New South Wales**

The construction of renewable energy is a lifetime opportunity to transform rural and regional communities and industries such as farming and nature restoration.

Global warming has posed threats to nature with symptoms such as drought, fires, heatwaves, storms, floods, melting ice and rising sea levels. Australia now has over 1000 known species of animals at risk of rapid extinction caused by illegal logging by hungry corporations.

The Paris agreement has already been breached, with further studies showing that the likelihood of 2°C warming is more than probable by 2050 or earlier. Current trajectories show that we are going to lock in 2.7°C of warming by 2100, and it is not looking likely when our industries and jobs are not fully net zero until at least 2050. According to Nature Conservation Council, 4 out of the current known 12 coal fire stations are at risk of blackouts because they are not resistant to heatwaves and 2 of the 4 blackouts are unplanned.

Renewable energy not only protects our planet from global heating, but also relieves cost of living and health crises. Due to the exposure of pollutants in the atmosphere as well as rising temperatures, criminologists argue that crime will increase tenfold this century unless more action is undertaken.

The New South Wales government is currently providing us with 40% of the renewable energy available for general household and business consumption as you can see with increasing numbers of businesses and houses with rooftop solar panels.

For example, the NSW government is planning to provide \$715 million in the next-decade proposal of wind and solar projects with as much as \$68 billion in economic activity which could be generated by 2030 alone.

Climate heating deniers risk losing their reputation by delaying the urgent much needed action on global warming currently threatening our wildlife, economy and even our general wellbeing. If left unabated, death by climate related disasters will increase dramatically and economic debts can amount up to 6.8 trillion if no urgent action is taken. There is no risk of running out of energy when the 'wind doesn't blow or the sun doesn't shine' as these technologies can store a huge amount of energy to last for days at least and there will always be opportunities when the sun does shine and the wind does blow.

Farmers for climate action and Clean Energy Council plan to deliver from about \$2.6 to \$3.3 billion by 2050 for landowners of farmers.

Solar energy and sheep grazing is increasingly colocated because it provides the benefits of preventing excessive grass growth and increase wool production by per the same amount of labour effort.

Development by urban sprawl should be regulated too, as we do not have enough information about the boundaries of certain habitats. Once these are mapped out, we should focus on improving existing areas rather than taking more land. The Independent Review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act in 2016 welcomed Nature Conservation in the practice of regulating logging and preventing illegal development however, it is only implemented but not enforced. The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme in 2024 has strengthened regulations against the loopholes of logging corporations but there is a lot more work to be done. The Hunter and Illawarra regions are hotspots for mining activity and there should be plenty of opportunities for transitioning their workers from the mining company to renewable energy companies. There are factors such as fire risk, in accordance with the construction of renewable energy.

Extreme weather has made insurance more costly, with Australians paying \$30 billion more than they did in 2014. The Actuaries Institute August report in 2024 has shown that they have a 30% increase in insurance stress compared to 2023. Insurance itself is already a burden on our current economy.

Contrary to the popular belief, gas and nuclear energy are not sustainable transition energy resources as they inadvertently prolong the operation of dirty coal and oil power stations. An electric car can surely not produce pollution directly, but their charging stations could source their electricity from such power stations.

We also need more community awareness, by educating the dangers of unabated global heating and fast tracking transition and prevention efforts towards a cleaner future. For example, we can facilitate a community battery project in which the battery can be shared by more than one household or business. We can also work on solutions for improving internet access to rural areas sustainably.

Some pro-climate residents worry about the decommissioning of renewable energy resources. For this reason, the NSW government has provided a template about the private landholder agreement guideline to use decommissioning calculators to provide more information to landowners about liasing matters related to decommissioning agreements by developers.

One last bit of information, our First Nations (Aboriginal) people has had a connection with our Country Continent for over 60,000 years. They do not consent with their land to be wiped out from fracking and coal projects. Some locations, such as Uluru, are considered sacred by many Aborigines.

Therefore, the rollout of renewable energy should encompass;

1. Include first nations people in the transition to renewable energy.
2. Partnership with first nations as part of the Australian community and not 'minors'.
3. Provide economic support for first nations people.