

27 November 2020

House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy
Parliament House, Canberra

Dear Committee

Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) is the peak body for the community services industry in Tasmania. Our membership includes individuals and organisations active in the provision of community services to low-income, vulnerable and disadvantaged Tasmanians. TasCOSS represents the interests of our members and their clients and advocates on their behalf to government, regulators, the media and the public.

TasCOSS welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. Our interest in this Bill stems from our view that climate change is a key social justice issue and one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. The cost of inaction on climate change will be far greater than any cost of action.

Tasmania is a leader

Tasmania holds a unique position in Australia. The State's latest greenhouse gas emissions inventory shows that for the sixth year in a row, Tasmania has met its legislated emissions reduction target. The State's greenhouse gas emissions have declined by 95 per cent from 1990 levels. Tasmania has also achieved net zero emissions four years in a row.

Tasmania has the lowest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in the country, with the State's emissions at 1.7 tonnes of CO₂-e per person being well below the national average of 21.7 tonnes CO₂-e and the global average of nearly 5 tonnes CO₂-e per person¹.

In addition to these achievements, the Tasmanian Government is undertaking a review of the State's climate change Act and emissions reduction target, with a view to strengthening this legislation and taking a more ambitious approach.

Tasmania's actions towards a low-emissions economy are underpinned by 100 years of investment in renewable energy. Tasmania has achieved 100 per cent renewable energy self-sufficiency² (ahead of the 2022 target) and has legislated a Renewable Energy Target of 150 per cent by 2030 and 200 per cent by 2040.

More recently, a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions has derived from changes in the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector. However, excluding the greenhouse gas emissions from the LULUCF sector, the annual emissions from the rest of the Tasmanian economy have reduced by

¹ Tasmanian Climate Change Office (2019), [Tasmania's Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2017](#), Tasmanian Government.

² Hon Guy Barnett MP (2020), [Tasmania surges to 100% renewable energy](#), media release, Tasmanian Government.

two per cent between 1990 and 2015. This is a significant achievement given that Tasmania's gross state product (excluding the forestry industry) has increased by 58 per cent and our population has increased by over 11 per cent in the same period³.

These figures debunk the myth there is a negative correlation between economic growth and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrate what can be achieved with a commitment to action.

Tasmania is under threat

Tasmania is already facing impacts from climate change despite our actions and national leadership in climate change mitigation. Based on current global greenhouse gas emissions, Tasmania is projected to experience a rise in average annual temperature, significant changes to rainfall patterns, rising sea levels, and more frequent and intense extreme weather events⁴. In addition, the recent [State of the Climate 2020 Report](#) clearly highlights the impacts of a changing climate in Australia, including increasing temperatures, extreme fire weather and reduced rainfall.

Climate change is a serious threat to Tasmania's economy, environment, natural advantages and lifestyle. That threat will only grow with inaction and will drive social inequality into the future.

Recommendations

TasCOSS is a signatory to the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) submission to this inquiry and refer you to that submission. We endorse the ACOSS recommendations to ensure:

- the Bill is strengthened with respect to socially and financially disadvantaged people;
- better recognition of the impacts on people, and the social costs;
- adequate engagement with people, including those most affected;
- recognition of the benefits of early action;
- recognition of the role and capacity of disaster management responders including emergency services, local councils and community sector organisations; and
- membership of the Commission includes a representative of socially or financially disadvantaged people.

TasCOSS supports the need for national legislation with a long-term plan and long-term goals of net zero emissions reduction before 2050. This Bill is a positive, significant step forward. We encourage the Committee to strengthen this Bill to better protect people who are financially or socially disadvantaged and urge the Parliament to work together on agreeing, improving and adopting this legislation.

Yours faithfully



Adrienne Picone
CEO

³ Tasmanian Climate Change Office (2017), [Climate Action 21: Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2017-2021](#), Tasmanian Government, p26.

⁴ ACE CRC (2010), [Climate Futures for Tasmania general climate impacts: the summary](#), Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre, Hobart, Tasmania.