



TASMANIAN FARMERS & GRAZIERS ASSOCIATION

Tasmanian Climate Change Office
Department of Premier and Cabinet
HOBART TAS 7001

Email: climatechange@dpac.tas.gov.au

TFGA Submission – Independent Review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008

The Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association (TFGA) is the leading representative body for Tasmanian primary producers. TFGA members are responsible for generating approximately 80% of the value created by the Tasmanian agricultural sector.

Agriculture is one of the key pillars of the economy and, with the current level of support from government, are well positioned to further capitalise on the stature of Tasmania agriculture.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that Tasmania's Gross State Product for 2014-15 was \$25.42 billion. Agriculture, forestry and fishing in 2014-15 was Tasmania's largest industry representing 9.6% (\$2.29B) of Tasmania's total gross value added.¹

The objects of the Tasmanian Climate Change Act have served good purpose since 2008. The TFGA consider that its focus to set targets and reporting requirements has been appropriate.

The TFGA support the continued role of the Tasmanian Climate Change Office that have raised awareness of climate change impacts and developed action plans to continue to reduce emissions. Such leadership has drawn international commendation.

It is vital the Act enables Tasmania to maintain its position as a world leader in developing climate change action. This will be essential for two purposes: Firstly, maintaining targets and reporting are instruments vital to avoiding catastrophic climate change of 2° Celsius. Thus the amendments to the Act should include recognition of the possibility of 2°C of warming, as a means of driving action on climate resilience.

The Act should also maintain the Land Use Change Forestry emissions sector to achieve its emissions reduction target because this is our key natural advantage that can lead to contemporary markets. The current status of the forestry subsector, including massive reductions in forest clearance and conversion in Tasmania, is the major cause of the recently reported reduction of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from 1990 levels of 18.51 mega-tonnes, to 1.56 mega-tonnes in June 2014.

¹ Tasmanian Government, State Accounts (ABS Cat No 5220.0).

Along with hydro electricity generation, Tasmania currently achieves its emissions reduction targets comfortably. However, this must be maintained and Tasmania should include in its accounting the emissions and abatement associated with its importation and export of electricity.

Such shared actions and comprehensive accounting will be necessary to support development of a contemporary forestry and energy sector which is vital to Tasmania's longer term social, environmental and economic future. The narrative that the Act creates around how the State regards the challenges posed by climate change should utilise the current re-building of the forestry sector to leverage value from the extensive environmental services that public and private forests provide, not just for Tasmanians, but nationally and globally. Sharing the risk and benefit of climate change action across sectors will require resources, but should realise longer term value through contribution to the development of a contemporary and agile Tasmanian brand. As demand for social and corporate responsibility increases through the fast pace of globalisation, our brand will require rigorous validation, supported by extensive data.

Rigorous, transparent validation can be achieved but will require intensive data collection. For individual farm enterprises the cost of data collection and reporting is exclusionary and in part the reason for failed initiatives such as the Carbon Farming Initiative. However, the cost of establishing the soft infrastructure, such as digital and sensor technologies can be shared across sectors, but in this way maximum benefit can be derived. It should be tailored to drive the dual purpose that Tasmania will retain a position of international standing in terms of participating in the digital economy, and so other Acts of parliament may need amendment to facilitate data sharing across sectors and agencies.

Indications that such cross sectoral data collection and reporting are important to maintain the Tasmanian brand include legislative changes amongst countries with whom Tasmania seeks to increase exports to. Internationally reporting requirements are being set out in law, including the trend away from principle based legislation to requirement based legislation. For example, France has recently passed its Energy Transitions for Green Growth Bill. It requires portfolio managers in France to report on the environmental profile of their funds, including their emissions profile. If the company chooses not to report, they must publish their reason. The impact of this will see asset managers needing to report their carbon footprint for trade access into France. Such legislative action by one country has already prompted global action.

Whilst Tasmanian legislation has aligned itself well with its national counterparts it will be increasingly important the Tasmanian Climate Change (State Actions) Act to be reviewed and adjusted to international action.

Please contact the TFGA if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Skillern', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Peter Skillern
Chief Executive Officer
22nd July 2016