

## **Review of the Climate Change Act**

### **Response to the Discussion Paper.**

**Completed by Amanda Blakney, NRM Officer, on behalf of Tasman Council.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this review.**

**Question 1: The Act aims to help Tasmania respond to the challenges posed by climate change. What do you consider are the critical challenges to which this legislation and Government action should respond?**

There are many potential challenges with adapting to and mitigating climate change. The most critical challenge for mitigating climate change in the Tasmanian context is maintaining forest carbon stocks and preventing loss from bushfire events and inappropriate forestry practices. It is also unclear how much is lost as part of unchecked illegal wood hooking activities. In the Tasman and Sorell municipalities, the Tasman Council seeks support for, and conducts, tree planting on an on-going basis, particularly in those areas burnt in the 2013 Dunalley fire. Support for this work currently comes from the Federal Government and the not-for-profit sector, rather than the state. More action from the state in the form of on ground enforcement in land management and forest practices could be beneficial.

**Question 2: How successful do you think the Act has been in influencing action on climate change within Tasmania?**

It appears that the greenhouse gas emission profile for Tasmania has been more dependent on the existence of hydropower and changes to the forestry industry, rather than the Act being particularly influential.

**Question 3: What amendments may the Act require to further drive action on climate change?**

The current situation has already taken into account the natural advantages Tasmania has had with hydropower. Amendments that ensure commitment to protecting our carbon stores, investigating behaviour change in the community and a mandate for looking beyond what is manufactured (including energy) locally, would help to drive further action on climate change. Investing in changes to our transport system, such as improving our public transport system, and assessing other large energy users, will also be important.

**Question 4: The Act creates a narrative on how the state regards the challenges posed by climate change. How do you think the Act can provide a narrative that helps to project Tasmania's clean-green-liveable brand?**

Tasmania needs to be seen to be investing in real and workable solutions to climate change challenges. It will not be sufficient to make clean-green claims purely based on the enviable position of having hydropower, forests and the clean air blowing from the Southern Ocean. The state needs to build on this position and be a world leader, sharing success stories and supporting innovation. In addition, any reversal of carbon stores and inaction (perceived or real) could be damaging to this

brand. This was seen in the most recent summer when fire sensitive environments in the Wilderness World Heritage Area were severely damaged and made headlines internationally.

**Question 5: With Tasmania providing just 0.3% of national emissions, how important is it that the Act supports the achievement of national and international targets for climate change?**

It is very important that the Act supports the achievement of national and international targets on climate change. Tasmania's economy, environment and community cannot be protected from the affects of climate change by only addressing emissions within the state. Supporting action at the national level has the potential to have a far-reaching global effect.

**Question 6: Should the Act recognise the possibility of  $2^{\circ}$  of warming as a means of driving action on climate resilience?**

It could be useful to recognise the possibility of  $2^{\circ}$  of warming, as a benchmark for building resilience. It could also be beneficial to have the Tasmanian legislation and policy consistent with international commitments. The danger lies in  $2^{\circ}$  of warming turning into the goal rather than the upper limit, and this being used as a political excuse for insufficient action.

**Question 7: What should the Act include to help Tasmania build resilience to climate change?**

It is important that resilience is not just thought of as in response to warming. Storm events already have a substantial impact on the community in the Tasman municipality. This winter has seen several power outages, road closures and loss of business and perishables. During power outages, communications are impacted, sometimes for days at a time. In addition, reliance on diesel power generation increases. Improvements to communication infrastructure and investigating sustainable alternatives for functioning during power outages will be required.

Regulations to support appropriate water storage capacity and minimum stores, both in hydro dams and on individual properties, are crucial. No matter the annual rainfall, the more irregular it is, the greater the water storage required.

Building resilience should also extend to research, innovation and succession plans for Tasmania's industries that could be worst hit. The marine environment, including ecosystems such as kelp forests, supports a range of industries in the Tasman region. They include tourism (scuba diving, wildlife tours, game fishing) and seafood such as rock lobster and Atlantic salmon. With warming water, kelp forests could eventually run out of southerly coastline that is cool enough to exist in. It is also important that the value of avoiding these impacts are considered when calculating exactly what we are investing in when we tackle climate change.

**Question 8: How can the Act facilitate action on climate change at state and local levels and among businesses and the broader Tasmanian community?**

The Act can facilitate action by having a plan that contains commitments, budget and timeframes that have favourable emissions profile outcomes, and implementing them successfully.

**Question 9: To what extent should Tasmania rely on the Land Use-Land Use Change Forestry emissions sector to achieve its emission reduction target?**

Maintaining the contribution LULUCF makes to Tasmania's emissions profile is important, and does not exclude increasing contributions from other sectors. The state should seriously reconsider any plans to increase harvesting activity in native forests as this means to stimulate the economy, when LULUCF has been the single most important contributor to emissions reduction and does not require innovation to make happen. Managing native forests with carbon stores in mind has other benefits, including to the clean-green-liveable brand and the tourism industry. Further investment in protecting wet eucalypt, fire sensitive environments and peat from devastating fires will help ensure large carbon stocks are not lost.

The models used to estimate carbon stocks are not transparent. Improving the accessibility to the models to generate contributions of tree planting and protection of vegetation could help with action at the grassroots and technical officer level.

**Question 10: What 2050 emissions reduction target would you consider is consistent with Tasmania seeking to be an international leader on climate change?**

Clearly, emissions 60% below 1990 levels is not appropriate as a target given we are currently at 92% below 1990 levels. South Australia and Victoria have net zero targets for 2050. Tasmania is in the position to aim for net negative emissions by 2050. This would better place Tasmania to be an international leader on climate change.

**Question 11: Should Tasmania's targets account for emissions and abatement associated with its importation and export of electricity?**

Yes. Tasmania should take responsibility for using imported coal power.

**Question 12: What other types of emissions reduction target should be considered (e.g. interim, sectoral, energy efficiency, mandatory/voluntary)?**

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**Question 13: How willing would your business, community group, local government or region be to commit to pledges to reduce emissions?**

Willingness to commit to pledges does exist. Pledges would need to reflect the capability of the entity. For example, compared with other councils Tasman Council is small; once you approach the smallest base for maintaining operation, finding savings and implementing largescale actions can be harder. Those actions can also have less impact compared with at larger entities.

**Question 14: What do you consider might be appropriate principles to guide government decision-making which influences climate risks and greenhouse gas emissions?**

It is really important that governments acknowledge that they need to take action on climate change even if results are far beyond their term of government or an election cycle. Unfortunately, the long term planning and investment required, and global nature of climate change are not conducive to our current mode of politics. We need the state to commit to taking action.