

**Tasmanian Climate Change Office**  
**Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008 Review**

**Submission by NRM South**

**22 July 2016**

**Background:**

NRM South is one of 56 nationally recognised natural resource management organisations across Australia. NRM South is not a regulatory body, we are a not-for-profit organisation that works with the southern Tasmanian community to protect, sustainably manage and improve our natural resources for shared environmental, social and economic benefit.

**Key Points:**

- NRM South is very supportive of the *Tasmanian Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* (the Act) and its review to ensure currency.
- Recent events in Tasmania including the:
  - Fires in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) – Summer 2016;
  - Energy crisis and low dam levels – 2015/ 2016;
  - Outbreak of Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome disease – February 2016; and
  - Flooding across the state - June/ July 2016demonstrate the need and urgency for State Government to continue to be a leader in supporting climate change mitigation, resilience and investigating adaptation pathways for industry, community and the environment.
- The review of the Act recognises the significant impact that the change in classification of Land Use Land Use Classification Forestry (LULUCF) had on the attainment of the emissions reduction target although more work and guidance through the Act is required in all other sectors to reduce their contributions.
- The Act must be considered by other planning processes, strategies and government policy settings and decision making. The State Planning Provisions by way of example must recognise the linkage between land use and development planning decisions and outcomes for the Tasmanian carbon emissions budget.
- Mainstreaming (integration of climate change into budgets, decision making etc) of climate change is essential if ‘real’ change is to occur both within State Government and also local government, industry and community sectors. A recent report commissioned by NRM South and NRM North to support the development of our NRM Regional Strategies outlined governance indicators which can represent uptake of climate change and at the core of these indicators was the degree of ‘mainstreaming’ demonstrated by organisations and agencies.

**Addressing specific questions posed by the discussion paper:**

*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?*

- **Planning:** Linking the Act to other planning processes, strategies, and government policy settings and decision making including most importantly the draft State Planning Provisions
- **Community:** Empowering the community and building capacity is a critical challenge which will require significant resources. Without community understanding, support and ability to support decision making there is a substantial risk in having negative or deleterious outcomes. It is through the community that change in behaviours and beliefs occur which will translate to real outcomes.
- **Industry support:** Usually practice change or modification within industry sectors requires knowledge, resources or time. In order for industry to be able to adapt to climate change successfully then support will be required in various forms.
- **Appropriate management:** Tasmania is in the advantageous position of having exceptional stores of natural resources. It is through the appropriate management of these resources that we will maintain a strong capacity to be resilient to the various challenges posed by climate change and indeed quickly adapt to and take advantage of new opportunities. The appropriate management and ongoing stewardship of our soil, forestry and blue carbon (coastal and oceanic based) stocks is essential.

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

- The existence of the Act and the development of the Climate Change Action Plan are excellent steps to supporting our community, governments and industries in understanding and commencing planning for climate change
- The key to the attainment of the targets is largely due to the existing hydroelectric power generation and forest stocks. We recommend and support appropriate recognition and management of these natural assets, such as through the TWWHA management plan process, while supporting innovation and change in other industries such as agriculture and waste management.

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

- Locking in, and committing activity and resources to, preservation and management of our current carbon stores.
- Recognising, and committing activity and resources, to the blue carbon stocks which Tasmania must consider and manage including coastal saltmarsh and wetlands which are at risk to climate change.
- Identifying other sectors, such as agriculture and waste management, to contribute to reducing emissions

*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 which helps to project Tasmania's clean-green-liveable brand?*

- This can be demonstrated through strong leadership with ambitious target setting. Leadership in the climate change arena will complement our current branding by 'walking the talk' and confirming Tasmania's commitment to its citizens, local, national and global markets and its world renowned landscapes and environment.

*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?*

- Very important. The importance of the Act is not restricted to decreasing emissions but also providing a platform for social acceptance and change; leading agricultural and industrial sector change; and demonstrating global and national leadership which in turn supports the appropriate management of our natural resources into the future.

*6. Should the Act recognise the possibility of 2°C of warming as a means of driving action on climate resilience?*

- Yes. The Federal Government has recognised this through COP21 and it should be included in the Act.

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

- Supporting the community to build their understanding and capacity is the single greatest action to support resilience. It will be the community support, values and innovations which will support resilience to a changing climate.
- The maintenance and appropriate management of our natural resources is essential to maintaining resilience to changes in the climate as it has been proven that resources in good condition can manage change better than those in poor or degraded condition.
- Appropriate knowledge development and sharing, and industry change opportunities are also crucial. This can be seen through the latest work through SenseT, enterprise suitability mapping (incorporating climate change projections) and subsequent industry change such as the viticulture industry ramping up activity

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

- Through target setting and associated timelines which require activity and resource allocation. Reliance on already gained wins will not secure action.

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

- It is vitally important to recognise this sector. The extent of the Tasmanian natural reserve estate combined with the forest estate, remnant vegetation under private ownership all

contribute to these stores. The active management of these carbon stores is a vital contribution towards the global effort that should not be overlooked.

- Effective management includes appropriate fire management planning and actions and this is an opportunity to link with the draft Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 2014 which is currently under review. The evidence is clear through the latest climate change projections as cited in the discussion paper that harsher fire weather will occur – and this has been evidenced through the latest fires in the TWWHA.
- It is very important however that targets be set for other sectors which have seen marginal decreases over the reporting periods.

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

- A legislated 2050 emissions reduction target of at least net zero would demonstrate alignment with other jurisdictions such as the ACT, South Australia and Victoria as outlined in the discussion paper
- To demonstrate clear leadership a net negative target could be set. Given Tasmania's enviable position with regards to our small population and well managed natural resources including protected areas, forestry estate, oceans and rivers we are in a position to achieve this compared to many other jurisdictions.
- A net negative target would also support the branding image of Tasmania through supporting the clean green image and also through our interest in supporting national and global efforts relative to our size and output.

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

- Yes. A true energy balance must account for all inputs and outputs.

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

- Interim emissions targets would be useful to support monitoring of change and activity – this is essential to track progress.
- Sectoral targets would be good to demonstrate the 'collaborative responsibility' of the challenges posed climate change although this would require significant consultation and support with the affected industries.

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

- NRM South already has a 'Green Office' Policy and our projects and operations are continually reviewed to demonstrate commitment to reducing our environmental impact including through emissions reductions.

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

- Transparency: in management of our natural resources and carbon stocks

- Commitment: going beyond the election cycle to being a long term commitment of the government to demonstrate leadership and investment – this will in turn provide surety and confidence in private investment and innovation
- Inclusivity: with community and industry to allocate resources and support adaptation

In conclusion, it is commendable that the Tasmanian Government is continuing to take action and leadership on climate change. This review presents an excellent opportunity to tie together the review of the Act with the draft State Planning Provisions, the TWWHA Management Plan 2014, the recently completed NRM Strategies in Tasmania, and of course the draft Tasmanian Climate Change Action Plan 2016 – 2021. We thank you for the opportunity to be engaged through this process and look forward to supporting the Tasmanian Climate Change Office in the future.

If you have any queries regarding this submission please contact Luke Diddams, NRM Planning and Knowledge Manager, NRM South on 03 6221 6111.