



Education for Sustainability Tasmania
Hosted by Sustainable Living Tasmania
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6th November 2018

Submission re proposed amendments to *Climate Change Act 2008*

To Whom it May Concern,

Education for Sustainability Tasmania (EfS Tas) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the review of the Climate change Act 2008. EfS Tas is a volunteer grassroots network of educators, practitioners and other interested people working together to build capacity for sustainability in Tasmania by fostering education towards achieving the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Recognised as a United Nations Regional Centre of Expertise in 2015, EfS Tas seeks to create and foster partnerships and collaborations, bringing together the expertise of our members to educate and empower people and communities to take action towards a sustainable future. Our growing network of more than 30 Tasmanian sustainability partners are delivering initiatives across education and research, community, business and government. You can find out more about us at www.efs.tas.edu.au or facebook.com/EducationForSustainabilityTasmania.

Our members have been instrumental in supporting and facilitating the recent Climate Leaders Conferences across Tasmania created by our Youth Leader, Toby Thorpe as part of the Asia-Pacific Youth SDG Challenge to create action towards SDG 13 Climate Action. Next, Toby and his mentor will attend the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change in Poland to share the success of the conferences. The Climate Leaders Conferences brought together hundreds of students from schools across Tasmania. Our members mentored and supported young people to create local actions and change in their schools and communities that will contribute to reducing energy and resource use. These action-based opportunities empower people and link communities to drive changes to behaviour and practices.

EfS Tas commends the Tasmanian Government on the commitment to Climate Change legislation and for ensuring the *Tasmanian Climate Change Act* (the Act) is regularly reviewed and responsive to changing global and national information and agreements. We also commend the achievements to date, including the release of *Climate Action 21 Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2017-2021*, and the positive work of the EPA in producing the waste education resource for schools.

Climate change is one of humanity's greatest challenges and opportunities. The Tasmanian Government has an important role to play in contributing to Australia's reduction in emissions and in creating resilient Tasmanian communities, resources and landscapes. We acknowledge that in 2008 Tasmania was one of the first States or Territories to adopt Climate Change legislation. If Tasmania is to remain a leader in adaptation, resilience and innovation we must ensure our Climate Change Act sets strong targets, with implementation guidelines to support community participation.

Overall we are concerned that some of the proposed changes weaken, or do nothing to strengthen, the Act in particular with regards to the loss of objects pertaining to research, community and promotion of sustainable practices; and lack strength in areas of guiding implementation and decision-making. We summarise our concerns and suggestions below by responding to the questions proposed by the Tasmanian Climate Change Office to frame the consultation.

Question 1: Do you support the proposed revised objects of the Act? If not, what other objects should be considered?

We acknowledge that there is a significant need to revise the existing Objects to improve clarity and some consolidation of the Objects regarding targets is merited. However, we do not support **Recommendation 2** as stated and we do not support the consolidation of ten Objects to four.

The proposed four revised Objects fail to capture important concepts in the existing Objects and miss the opportunity to elaborate and enhance the existing Objects. In particular the revised Objects remove references to important prescriptions including the role of research; and the role of community consultation and engagement. There is also a loss of references to the environment and a loss of reference to embracing opportunities. We suggest these concepts are retained, clarified and refined. For example:

- It is very important to us that the concept of community consultation is retained and strengthened within the Objects to prescribe meaningful and robust pathways for community input and participation in making actionable decisions with regard to climate change

mitigation and adaptation pathways; and community resilience and wellbeing. It is also important that this Object recognises the role of community engagement towards creating pathways to sustainable economic activity that is equitable and just.

- We also suggest consideration should be given to embedding concepts of resilience and innovation in the original or additional new Objects.
- Whilst we acknowledge the important role of monitoring and evaluation this should go beyond climate mitigation to include the breadth of actions towards responding to climate change.
- We would also suggest interim targets in 5-year increments regarding but not limited to emissions. These could be elaborated to include concepts of sustainable development and community resilience.

We suggest that whilst review against national and international targets and initiatives is important, wording of the original Objects regarding those concepts is preferred over the proposed revision. Any revised wording should ensure Tasmania can operate beyond national and international frames if such frames are weakened or fluctuating, to ensure Tasmania can position itself as a leader in climate change response.

In summary, the revised Objects reduce the strength and scope of the Act. The proposed changes remove Objects that encourage participation, research and action towards mitigating climate change and creating resilience. Therefore, we suggest that whilst there is merit in refining the Objects, we do not support consolidating them to four and losing important concepts and detail.

Question 2: Do you support the proposed principles to guide decision making? Are there other principles that should be included? If so, why?

We agree that principles to guide decision making are a valuable addition to the Act. We are concerned that the proposed amendments in **Recommendation 4** fail to pick up some important principles and we suggest that the six principles in the *Climate Change Act 2017 (Vic)*¹ provide a good model worthy of further review. In particular we emphasise that communities should be prescribed as having a role in decision making; that the concept of equity is embedded in the principles; such that transparent and authentic community consultation is prescribed to support the development of a resilient, sustainable society in Tasmania.

Question 3: Do you have any other comments or suggestions relating to the proposed amendments to the Act?

We commend the aspiration for zero emissions by 2050. **Recommendation 1** provides an opportunity for long term emissions reduction targets and is an important opportunity for Tasmania

¹ [Climate Change Act 2017 \(Vic\)](#) [23]-[28].

to demonstrate leadership in implementing the Paris Climate Agreement and setting targets that aim to keep warming below 1.5 °C consistent with the best available science.²

Whilst we commend the Tasmanian Government for taking a proactive approach in producing the *Climate Action 21 Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2017-2021*, the plan should be a statutory requirement in order to ensure that the Plan, along with the Act, can provide certainty and continuity independent of changes in government.

We propose that the Act should refer to the value we place on Tasmania as a region of important natural and cultural values and it is these values that inspire us to take strong action to foster resilient and sustainable communities and environments. Tasmania can and should be a genuine leader in taking action on climate change.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kim Beasy', written over a horizontal line.

Kim Beasy, Chair
on behalf of the Steering Committee,
Education for Sustainability Tasmania

² [IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, Summary for Policy Makers](#)