



Submission to the Review of the Tasmanian Climate Change Act

7th November 2018

General Overview of document

Climate Action Hobart is a volunteer grass-roots organisation formed to promote community involvement in achieving strong climate policy and action in Tasmania. We have over 600 supporters.

Climate Action Hobart welcomes the request to provide comment on the review of the Tasmanian Climate Change Act and would like to thank the Tasmanian Climate Change Office (TCCO) for this opportunity.

General Comments

As stated in previous submissions, we would reiterate that –

- Recent events since the last review of the Act show some important trends in addressing climate change that should be acknowledged in the Act. We are concerned that there is little sense of urgency in the document and that it should include a tone and phrase that is more suited to the situation we are facing. The latest IPCC Report has issued strong warnings about our need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions urgently, with worldwide zero emissions by 2050 and 45% reduction by 2030 from 2010 emissions. The Act must respond to the latest report 6/10/2018.
- The final COP 21 agreement includes a commitment to keeping global temperatures to below 1.5 degree C and the Tasmanian Climate Change Act should also include this in its objectives.
- Local Councils and individuals are at the forefront of climate action. The State Government policies need to facilitate rapid investments in climate change reduction projects at the levels of state and local government, small business, community and consumer. This may require emissions-reduction as a priority in all government departmental activities/grants/actions.

We are heartened by the examples of other jurisdictions such as Scotland, New Zealand and Victoria. They aspire to a generous contribution to the global task and lay down detailed objectives in their legislation. The parliaments of both Scotland and New Zealand accepted their climate legislation unanimously, which enables continuity of effort. Our comments refer throughout to the Parliament of Tasmania to emphasise our hope that we can unite over climate action.

Recommendation 1

The target needs to be strengthened in light of the most recent IPCC report, and the looming possibility that global emissions will cause irreversible climate change before 2100. We are already seeing dramatic impacts locally and globally. A reasonable target is to make a maximum possible

contribution to keeping global temperature rise to not more than 1.5C.

This might translate to Tasmania maintaining zero net emissions every year to 2030, and overall negative annual emissions by 2040. Each sector must achieve zero or below zero net emissions by 2040. Currently Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) is carrying the bulk of our emissions reductions.

Q1. Do you support the proposed revised objects of the Act? If not, what other objects should be considered? (Recommendation 2)

Recommendation 2

The revised objects are considerably clearer than the 2012 version. However, the resulting amendment to Section 4 (Objects of the Act) omits the need for elimination of greenhouse gas emissions as a priority.

The proposed objects are too weak on ways to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions in a timeframe that is necessary to prevent dangerous climate change. As they stand they argue for setting of targets, monitoring, evaluating, reporting and responding to impacts but they do not explicitly call for action. If this recommendation passes, it becomes vital that the targets are ambitious enough to elicit the action needed. There is too little emphasis on emissions reduction strategies. It is much the most important part of climate action policies to reach net zero emissions in all sectors, and below zero emissions in some.

The latest IPCC report is to be the starting place for setting the agenda for Tasmanian climate action.

The Parliament of Tasmania must recognise that the international community has reached agreement to hold the global average temperature increase to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The Parliament of Tasmania must recognise that Tasmania must play its part in global mitigation efforts and in preparing the community for unavoidable climatic impacts, and ensure Tasmania remains prosperous and liveable as we transition to meet these challenges. This must be part of the legislation, as in the Scottish and Victorian examples.

The Parliament of Tasmania must provide support to the actions by state and local government, small business, community and consumer. This may require emissions-reduction as a priority in all government programs, grants and actions.

Tasmania must also take strong action to build resilience to, and reduce the risks posed by, climate change and protect those most vulnerable. At the same time we must recognise that the changing climate is leading to an uncertain and ever-changing future to which, by its nature, adaptation is increasingly difficult and ever more expensive.

The Act should require regular reports to Parliament setting out the proposals and policies for meeting annual emissions reduction targets. The Act must state proposals and policies for meeting Tasmania's climate change targets, and should set out, using interim five-yearly targets, how Tasmania can achieve its mandated target.

The Act needs to provide for an expert advisory panel to government, like the Tasmanian Climate

Action Council that existed a few years ago. This Council should advise not only the progress in science and impending impacts of climate change, but also on ways to achieve the overall target of maximising Tasmania's contribution to worldwide zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, while managing inherent risks.

It is time to account for, and reduce to zero, or below zero, Tasmania's exported and imported emissions.

The loss of the objectives e) and g) from the original Act: 'To promote energy efficiency and conservation' and 'To promote and facilitate business and community consultation and early action on climate change issues', leaves a void in the area of communication and education. As Dr Paul Read from the Monash Sustainability Institute states 'economically, we must continue to work on, but cannot rely on, technologies as yet undeveloped to mitigate climate change'. We are therefore depending to a large extent on a behavioural/cultural shift that requires not only information but a sense of community participation and new structures of government support.

Recommendation 3

Statutory Requirement to have regard to climate change.

The proposed amendments need stronger wording than either 'require' or 'should' or 'consider'. The effectiveness of this Act can be seen in the results so far which have effectively been no change in emissions and no regulations made. The wording of 'relevant decisions' is also weak and does not require Government to routinely make decisions across all departments and Acts with climate change in mind.

The State Government policies in all agencies need to aim for rapid investments in climate change reduction projects at the levels of state and local government, small business, community and consumer. This may require emissions-reduction as a priority in all government departmental programs, grants and actions.

A new Tasmanian Climate Action Council would have a role to play in this recommendation. So the Act should be amended to enable the ongoing presence of a new Tasmanian Climate Action Council.

Q2. Do you support the proposed principles to guide decision making? Are there other principles that should be included? If so, why? (Recommendation 4)

Recommendation 4

This set of principles seems to make greater emphasis on adapting or taking into account likely climate changes relating to a decision. It appears to repeat the objects and it does not seem to drive any emissions reductions/abatement. The recommendation from the independent review was using important terms like abatement initiatives, actions that benefit a low carbon economy, adaptation where risks are greatest. However, it really is essential to be ensuring that decisions seek to minimise adverse contributions to climate change, and seek to maximise beneficial contributions to greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Decision making processes need to aim to optimise their contribution to Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target;

The complementarity with national policies, programs, initiatives, standards or commitments relating to climate change is probably desirable, but we need to be more proactive, and join with

other state initiatives as well where these are beneficial to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to Tasmania. We must not be held back by inaction or slow action at the federal level or use complementarity as an excuse for inadequate action..

With regards to the ‘available science’ wording in subsection c), it is important to add ‘and according to the precautionary principle’. The practical significance of the precautionary principle is its denial that a lack of certainty is adequate reason to refrain from taking preventive action or ceasing a potentially harmful action. The precautionary principle is incorporated into the 1982 United Nations World Charter for Nature, and it is one of the twenty-seven principles of the *Rio Declaration* made at the *1992 Earth Summit*. Therefore it is important here.

In subsection e) a *proactive* management approach is desirable to allow for evaluation of the decision, policy, program or process and to encourage continual improvement. An adaptive approach is not likely to encourage improvement.

We recommend the principles set out in the Victorian Climate Change Act 2017:

Division 3—Guiding principles

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| 24 | Principle of integrated decision making | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 25 | Principle of risk management | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 26 | Principle of equity | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 27 | Principle of community engagement | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 28 | Principle of compatibility | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

Recommendation 5

Even though Tasmania has *Climate Action 21*, we still need in the Act that the Climate Action Plan be a statutory requirement. It must not be linked to the electoral cycle and we would hope for continuing strategies straddling electoral terms. A four-year plan is unlikely to be any more practicable than a five-year plan. Multi-party agreements should be sought in preference to partisan plans, especially given the urgency that is now upon us.

As we seek to “complement national and international climate change initiatives” (object d), we should look to the more proactive economies of the world. Compared with the European Union, Tasmania's *Climate Action 21* is grossly underfunded and this needs to be rectified.

It is in this space that we can look to case studies overseas for accepted initiatives that acknowledge that it is cheaper to do something now than to wait and spend more on adaptation later. It can be argued that adaptation spending will be more costly, and most likely futile in many areas when ecological systems shift to successively new states.

We need to go beyond ‘complementarity’ because we risk working to the lowest common denominator where national policy is woeful. Tasmania can and should lead.

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

We look for a clear statement in the Act recognising the urgency of taking effective climate action now especially in the following key areas:

- energy generation – net exporter of carbon free energy by 2040.

- transport – phase out fossil-fuel powered transport by 2040.
- LULUCF – all future clearing is to be offset by planting, with net zero carbon emissions over the processes.
- agriculture – increase in soil carbon sequestration, reduction in methane emissions.
- industry – use of fossil fuels to be phased out by 2040. Exports and imports of fossil fuels to be phased out by 2050, and no new or extended extraction to be approved.
- built environment – sustainable building codes, and designs.

More resources need to be allocated to the TCCO to enact the plan and to trial new ideas that have other local benefits. For example:

- acting on the joint Climate Change Office/Sustainable Living Tasmania's energy audit of Tarooma and Ogilvie High School with the installation of solar PV systems. This is hugely important from an educational perspective and offers investment potential for the government. The energy audit report is soon to be released.
- supporting the interest free E-bike loan scheme (currently on the table in DPAC) that has a similar structure to the TEELS scheme. This will communicate a climate change solution while reducing transport emissions and promoting a healthy active lifestyle.
- supporting (including standards and assessment criteria) for training Electrotechnology students at TAFE to convert existing internal combustion cars to electric. The current cost is approx. \$15 000 for a conversion and would speed the introduction of EV's into the market whilst valuing our current cars as a valuable resource. Adaptor plates that fit between the electric motor and the clutch assembly are now available for many models.
- providing incentives for energy efficiency across the community, schools and business sector, for example allowing the retention of savings in government units such as schools.

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7/11/2018