

I am a mother of young daughters, a partner in a small but growing startup social research bureau and a resident of West Launceston and I make this submission with my family, our business and all of Tasmania's inhabitants in mind.

It is my personal view that climate change is the single greatest threat we currently face. While the country's politicians play with the topic of climate change as a political football, I believe climate change will be something that all of our children (and the children who come after them) will face very real effects of in their daily lives.

Already we witness new extremes on a regular basis: more extreme bushfires, species extinctions, new threats from invasive species travelling south as water temperatures increase, hotter summers, sea level rises. These I consider to be part of climate change and such phenomena will increasingly impact on the quality of life of future generations.

It is for these reasons that I argue for strong action on climate change and I respond below to the three questions in the consultation brief:

1. Do you support the proposed revised objects of the Act? If not, what other objects should be considered?
2. Do you support the proposed principles to guide decision making? Are there other principles that should be included? If so, why?
3. Do you have any other comments or suggestions relating to the proposed amendments to the Act?

Question 1.

No, I do not support the proposed revised objects of the Act. I strongly argue that the ten current objects of the Act must be retained.

I am most concerned about the objects proposed to be removed from the Climate Change Act, especially objects e), f) and g), I became really concerned since these were the only objects that name 'conservation', 'research', 'community consultation' and 'early action' in relation to climate change. These are vital inclusions and I object in the strongest possible terms to the removal of these objects.

I believe the Act should require that climate change impacts need to be addressed and reported on in other Acts relating to future development in Tasmania. Specifically in the area of town planning, development applications should require the applicants to report on the potential climate change impacts of their proposal and this should be considered when making development application decisions. Such decisions need to be made transparent to Tasmanians during the development application consultation process so that Tasmanians can weigh up the likely impacts of proposed developments and provide their input into that decision-making process. Further, climate change impacts need to be incorporated into building codes, town planning and energy strategies to build future resilience to climate change impacts.

Question 2.

I support the proposed principles with the exception of the second principle of "complementarity with national policies, programs, initiatives, standards or commitments relating to climate change...". My concern here is that this ties the state of Tasmania, which should be aiming to be a world leader in early climate change action, to the shifting fads of the Federal Government. Tying the state of Tasmania to the commitments and initiatives of the Federal Government is dangerous, particularly given the leadership instability within the office of the Prime Minister.

Question 3.

I propose that the Act should refer to the value we place on Tasmania as a region of important histories, cultures and natural environments. These are part of our climate change action, which inspire us to take strong action on climate change. Tasmania can and should be a leader in this effort. In addition to these aforementioned intrinsically important perspectives, from an economic perspective, advancing Tasmania's clean and green brand is increasingly going to be part of our state's global competitive advantage into the future.

The recent IPCC special report (SR15) emphasises the need for the global community to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This recent IPCC report needs to be the frame for the Review of the Climate Change Act. Rather than having the current timeframe of the Climate Change Act of 2050, I argue that an interim target timeframe of 2030 is more appropriate. This would draw attention to what is needed within the next decade and forms the basis for my below advocacy for a ten year Action Plan.

Most importantly, I argue that a Climate Change Action Plan must be part of the legislation. The Discussion Paper (for the Review of the Act) states "In response to the independent review's recommendation that a climate change action plan should be a statutory requirement, the Tasmanian Government considers the ongoing preparation, implementation and evaluation of climate change action plans is better considered as a policy commitment rather than a statutory requirement." (p. 11). I strongly disagree with the view of the Tasmanian Government and call for a Climate Change Action Plan with a time frame of ten years (rather than tied to a four year electoral cycle).

The Act makes no reference at all to fossil fuels and I believe that it should make a commitment to transitioning the state away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy forms. Tasmania should consider a beyond-zero net emissions trajectory as this is what will be required to limit global warming.

Climate change action is about the people, the species and the places that will experience its impacts. Again I think about all of our children and the future generations of species who we share this island with as I make this submission and ask that it be considered in the review of the Climate Change Act.

Yours sincerely,
Sherridan Emery