

Developing Tasmania's next whole-of-government climate change action plan

Tasmania has a strong record on greenhouse gas emissions reduction. We are 100 per cent self-sufficient in renewable energy and we have met our target of net zero emissions by 2050 four years in a row. It is important that this momentum continues to ensure Tasmania consistently achieves and maintains its low emissions status, and leads Australia in the transition to a low-emissions economy.

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Thank you for the opportunity to input to developing Tasmania's next whole-of-government climate change action plan. In line with the requested format we offer our views on the suggested set of questions as follows:

Reducing Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions

1. What do you think are the key opportunities to reduce Tasmania's emissions? Please choose your top three.

a) Legislation: put into law the intention. This should be the ambitious target of net zero emissions by 2035, with 5-yearly interim targets to drive action. Given Tasmania's advantage in electricity generation this should be achievable. This legislation will then drive change across all sectors.

b) Transport: Introduce an annual 'warrant of fitness' for all vehicles, this should cut emissions by removing old vehicles and/or forcing them to adopt emission reduction modifications. In parallel introduce incentives and if necessary subsidies to encourage the uptake of EVs (as in Norway); biogas is another option (e.g. Sweden diverting waste from landfill) provided sufficient biogas generation is put in place; and hydrogen, but this will be at least 10 years away.

c) Agriculture: targets should be set for reducing livestock emissions (e.g. by seagrass food additives). The changing climate also suggests a proper review of agriculture practice with actions to phase out certain practices and introduce new ones.

2. What do you think are the key gaps in Tasmania's current efforts to reduce emissions?

Integrated transport policy promoting EV usage across all sectors, e.g. increased use of buses, with the necessary park & ride facilities, and ferries. In the Hobart region most congestion at peak times arises from travel by single occupants or trips to schools (private and public).

An across sector evaluation of energy usage, and the reduction of subsidies for existing bad practice (e.g. subsidies for inefficient industry (e.g. forestry), and removal of fuel subsidies for heavy goods vehicles, instead replacing with an axle-weight charge to reflect road damage – Norway is considering such a policy)

Construction sector practices, both commercial and residential. Suitable infrastructure must be part of any new developments so that the need to travel is minimised (e.g. to shops); building codes should require high-efficiency construction; electric heating/cooling should be encouraged over coal/gas/wood burning; roof top solar systems should be mandatory on new builds and local battery storage sub-grids should utilise these panels – this way the subgrids at a future time could be replaced if necessary by hydrogen energy hubs.

3. What do you think are the main opportunities for Tasmania to transition to a low carbon economy?

Vast opportunities for the mix of renewable energy sources (hydro, wind, tide) to meet the goal of 200% self sufficiency by 2040 (preferably 2035). This increase should first and foremost be used to raise the standard of living of all Tasmanians, so that there is less stress on the health service requirements (mental and physical). The opportunity for using renewable energy for green hydrogen production is noble, but this must go hand-in-hand with a plan for development of infrastructure to use it in Tasmania; green hydrogen should not be seen as solely an export commodity. A \$50 million fund is insufficient.

Tasmania has a relatively small population, with aspirational 20% growth by 2050. Small populations provide the opportunities for rapid transitions, this should be capitalised on.

The removal of non biodegradable plastics from our industrial processes. The removal of energy intensive production processes (e.g. cement/concrete) and their replacement by sustainable alternatives.

Helping Tasmania adapt to a changing climate

1. What aspects of Tasmania's projected future climate most concern you and why?

Bushfires are likely to be an increasing threat to communities. Care must be taken when planning new building infrastructure to minimise the burn risk. The risk of losing old growth forests due to increased lightning strikes (because of changing atmospheric composition) will be difficult to manage – atmospheric conditions (i.e. green house gas emissions) need to be reversed as quickly as possible.

Loss of biodiversity both on land and in the ocean through changing environmental conditions. Regulation of commercial activity must take account of changing conditions.

Flooding arising from increased intensity of rainfall impacting on poorly designed (or old) roads / culverts. This can also lead to increased nutrient (from sewage/farming)/sediment runoff into coastal seas to the detriment of the marine ecosystem.

2. Which parts of Tasmania (for example locations, industries, communities) do you think are most vulnerable to a changing climate?

The ecosystem

Wilderness

Coastal waters

Aged and vulnerable people

Fossil fuel industries (coal/gas/forestry) through reduced demand

Agriculture as dominantly practiced

3. What do you think are the key opportunities to help Tasmania adapt to a changing climate? Please choose your top three.

Abundance of renewable energy

Small distributed population and Indigenous knowledge about land management

Luck ... compared to predicted changes for the rest of Australia, Tasmania is likely to have more benign changes.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

CFT was carried out in 2010; isn't it about time to redo the downscaling so that decisions can be made with the latest (revised) scenarios?

The next 15 years provides an opportunity to change the financial system from a 'profits-first' to a more socially-responsible financial system that improves the quality of life of all, not just the few. The decisions made in implementing the climate change plan and legislation can go a long way towards making a fairer society, Tasmania could lead the way for Australia. The chance should not be spurned.