

Submission for the Draft Climate Action Plan 2023

1. Do you agree with the proposed vision and goals for the action plan? Which goals are you most supportive of? Are there any other goals that should be considered?

While I agree with the vision and goals, they are disappointingly unambitious. This is not surprising since they are in keeping with the weak Climate Change (State Action) Act 2022.

As a parent of children who will have to live with our failure to implement climate policies that reflect the urgency of our situation, I am frustrated and devastated that this draft Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) promises so little. The stakes could not be higher, and yet this draft plan sets few actual targets and gives little detail on achieving targets or emissions reductions.

Tasmania has a natural advantage with renewable energy sources and our ability to sequester carbon in our native forests. It appears that this has made policy makers lazy, so that we are squandering our advantage in the low carbon future.

Without stated targets and detailed plans, terms such as “reducing”, “improving”, “increasing”, “strong”, “expanding” and “more resilient” are almost meaningless. The emphasis of these terms in the goals is not in keeping with a science based approach aiming for less than 1.5 degrees warming. A science based approach would include stated and measurable targets, detailed plans and timeframes.

Does the Government intend to increase the use of public transport by 1 bus, 1 person or 500 new electric buses, with free fares that encourage 5000 less car trips/day?

How much will agroforestry be expanded by? 1 hectare? 100,000 hectares?

With so few stated targets, this draft CCAP also does not follow the principle of “transparency and reporting”

I am left to wonder if the lack of stated targets is intended to appease government donors from carbon intensive industries. The Tasmanian people are looking for a CCAP that prioritises the future of our children over the interests of powerful industries and their lobbyists.

I am supportive of electrifying the government fleet before 2030. I would also like to see the EV stamp duty exemption be extended beyond June 2023 (for vehicles under \$100,000) as well as incentives for commercial fleets to electrify. Tasmania could implement Norway’s EV policies and lead Australia in transport emissions reductions.

I support increasing the use of electric public transport by 50% by 2030, as well as a significant stated target for an increase in active transport infrastructure.

The reduction in organic waste needs a stronger “carrot/stick” approach. Tasmania should have a plan to reduce organic waste by 90% by 2030 and eliminate all edible food waste. There should be a penalty for businesses that waste edible food as well as an expansion of the food redistribution system (eg, Loaves and Fishes, Second Bite).

I support the expansion of agroforestry, but this goal needs a stated target. It should also be matched with an end to native forest logging, so that we keep pace with other states that are moving in this direction. The cost savings to the state could be used for climate mitigation measures.

Reductions in livestock emissions need to have a stated target and should not rely on carbon offsets. The most effective way to reduce livestock emissions is to reduce livestock. This must be a careful and just transition for farmers with strong support for transitions to lower emissions agriculture. The use of Asparagopsis and similar feed supplements will not lead to sufficient emissions reduction, soon enough.

Other goals that should be considered include:

- A ban on new coal or gas developments in or around Tasmania
- Wind back gas infrastructure to homes and businesses. It is too late to “let the market decide”
- All major projects should be assessed for their scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.
- Minimise reliance on carbon offsets.
- End native forest logging.
- Electrify everything - subsidies and rebates to get households and small business onto solar, heat pumps, more efficient water heating, induction stoves. This is especially important for social housing to avoid energy poverty.
- Biomass energy needs to be limited to only uses that are very hard to decarbonise.
- Ensure that new renewable projects meet stringent environmental and community standards and properly follow the principle of genuine community consultation.
- Reform political donation laws that publish all donations over \$1000 in real time. We can only assume that government reluctance to adopt stronger climate policies is due to the disproportionate influence of high emitting industries and their lobbyists. Otherwise, the government would act on the best scientific advice for the benefit of all Tasmanians.
- Public transport should be 100% renewable by 2030
- Better urban planning to ensure efficient public transport.
- Consult with the Palawa community and implement sustainable “Caring for Country” practices.

2. Will the three priority areas (1) information and knowledge (2) transition and innovation and (3) adaptation and resilience, help Tasmania achieve its legislated 2030 emissions reduction target, and its vision for action on climate change? Are there other issues not covered by the three priority areas?

The three priority areas are good. It is the lack of ambition in each of these areas that is the problem.

It is easy to achieve a target of net zero by 2030 when we have already achieved that. Yes, I do understand the lower contribution of LULUCF in the future, but that should be more than compensated for with real emissions reductions in other sectors.

If these three priority areas contained key actions with defined targets, they would give the Tasmanian community some hope. However, the key actions in the draft plan only contain vague terms like “supporting” and “improving”. These terms give no measure of the actual improvement and support planned, so are not transparent or measurable.

3. Will the key actions under Priority area 1 help support decision making for you and your community or organisation? What types of projects should be supported under the final action plan?

This priority area looks like a delay tactic for priority area 2 and real action on emissions reductions. It is important to note that we already have more than enough information to take stronger actions. That should be the highest priority, while ongoing research continues.

It is important that the results of the information gathering are directly linked to mitigation measures. As a scientist I am highly distressed and frustrated by the failure of the Government to act on the information already gathered. This plan should include the detail of how this information will be used for emissions reductions and when.

I am pleased to see “Developing a whole of government framework to embed climate change into Tasmanian Government decision making” listed as a key action. To date, we have seen almost no evidence of this. Recent housing and gas strategies did not include the necessary consideration of climate change and the need to reduce emissions quickly.

4. Will the key actions under Priority area 2 support Tasmania to achieve its 2030 emissions reduction target and continued emissions reduction across Tasmania? What types of projects should be supported under the final action plan?

Since the target for emissions reduction has already been achieved, it is too easy for the Tasmanian Government to do little. This really is a “do little” plan, as part of the “do little” climate change legislation.

As the community increases our understanding of the details, we are looking to keep our lead in climate mitigation, not lose it to other jurisdictions. We should build on our advantage, not waste it.

I agree with the vast majority of the emissions reduction measures listed in the draft CCAP.

I have concerns about the “Battery of the Nation” concept leading to environmental damage, eg. Robbins Island wind farm. The Government has a history of poor community consultation that leads to too many environmental battles. This plan should detail the genuine community consultation that should be included in new renewable energy developments. The solution cannot be as bad as the problem!

I would also like to express cautious support for green hydrogen developments. Green hydrogen will have a place in a low carbon future, but it should be a lower priority than providing energy for the expansion of Tasmanian industry and jobs, and for Tasmanians. Government support for green hydrogen should not line the pockets of profit focussed large industrial interests. This opportunity to expand Tasmanian manufacturing should be the focus. It is also important that all hydrogen is 100% green.

Other actions should include:

- Detailed sector plans that follow the principle of a science based approach and include clear targets that are ambitious, measurable and do not rely on offsets.
- Trial electric vehicle to grid (V2G) and vehicle to home (V2H) technology.
- Trial of old EV batteries as static batteries for domestic and commercial purposes.
- There needs to be incentives for large polluting businesses to reduce their emissions. If they are not able to transition to a low carbon future, they need to be phased out with a just transition for the workforce. This is not an extreme measure, given the latest IPCC report.
- Reduce energy poverty through support for low income sectors of the community, eg. roof top solar, community batteries and electrifying heating for social housing.
- Fossil fuel advertisement bans including sponsorships
- Community owned wind farms would have less backlash at the local level.
- Greater incentives for electric vehicle uptake. Eg. extend the stamp duty exemption for EVs past July 2023
- Need an end to native forest logging as it is the highest emitting sector in the state.
- No new coal and gas developments.

- Biofuels are likely to be called out as greenwashing. Most energy use should switch to electric alternatives.

5. Will the key actions under Priority area 3 build resilience and support adaptation planning across Tasmania? What types of projects should be supported under the final action plan?

I support the measures listed in this priority area, but again, they don't go far enough and seem to ignore the seriousness of the impacts that are well supported by scientific consensus.

The cost of our delay in climate mitigation is now unavoidable. Tasmania must significantly improve fire fighting resources and flood preparation. This will be expensive, but cheaper than not preparing.

It is pleasing to see the TWWHA listed as an area worthy of extra consideration. It is important that the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service expands its firefighting capacity.

The draft CCAP does not include sufficient consideration of the increasing insurance costs that will hurt Tasmanians. Of course many homes and businesses may become uninsurable, leaving many people vulnerable.

A major oversight in the draft CCAP is the lack of consideration of the effects of climate change on the health of Tasmanians. Both mental and physical health will be seriously affected by climate change impacts and this must be planned for in consultation with medical experts.

6. Are there other ways the government could make its action on climate change, and progress towards meeting its targets, more transparent and accessible?

A major problem for transparency is the weak political donation legislation in Tasmania. This seems to prevent the Government from acting in accordance with the best scientific evidence. High emitting industries are able to influence decision makers away from the necessary actions, through donations, lobbyists, personal relationships and other means. It is difficult for scientists and the general community to compete with this influence.

Transparency and accountability requires more detailed stated targets. Without them, it is easy to achieve vague terms such as "reduction", "improvement", "support", etc. the final CCAP must replace these vague terms with stated targets that are measurable. Without these, the CCAP will do little and transparently achieve it's plan to do so.

The reporting requirements are good, but reporting on a “do little” plan, under the “do little” legislation is likely to do little to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. We have so many opportunities to do better in Tasmania. Will our children forgive us if we do so little to safeguard their future?