

Submission on 2023-2025 Climate Change Action Plan

Climate Change has become a very urgent issue because of the slow uptake of change by many governments, especially the Australian Government.

In response to the 2023-2025 Action Plan for the Tasmanian Government this submission emphasises that Tasmania must take immediate action. It is disturbing that such a short timeframe (2023 - 2025) is being proposed. Many climate action plans have been developed and Tasmania is not so different from everywhere else, so why reinvent the wheel?

For example, the ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019 – 2025 sets out many actions that the ACT has already introduced and is proposing to introduce, including 100% zero emissions for electricity generation through large wind energy production that has already been put in place (point 6 p.6).

One of the ACT initiatives has been to reduce domestic use of gas. However, Tasmania does not have the widespread use of gas for home heating so there will be less emphasis on this change in home heating. However, wood fires are common and changing to electric heating, using renewable energy and efficient reverse phase heating, would reduce emissions as well as air pollution. Funding for the support of increased energy efficiency through insulation, especially of the many older dwellings in Tasmania, would also decrease energy consumption and thus emissions.

It has been recognised for decades that reducing demand for energy is possible by encouraging and supporting energy efficiency in homes and small/medium businesses.

This was clearly set out by Peter Thompson in 1982 (Power in Tasmania p. 109) *“The cheapest and most socially advantageous means of meeting Tasmania’s energy needs would be a strategy of encouraging maximum on-site generation of electricity in industry and implementation of a comprehensive program of energy conservation.”* He cites examples of cities such as Seattle, in the 1970s, when widespread advertisement of the advantages of energy conservation resulted in significant reduction in energy use. Now, more than 40 years on, and with technological advances, the measures required to conserve energy and provide on-site generation for both industry and domestic use are much more effective and easier to implement. These measures should be adopted immediately. No further research is needed before energy efficiency is made a priority by the State Government.

Energy - Electricity generation

In the Minister's Foreword to the Climate Change Action Plan there is a statement that "we are self-sufficient in renewable electricity" and the government also claims (p.12) that Tasmania has been "able to generate 100 per cent of its electricity needs from renewable sources since 2020, two years earlier than committed."

On p.33 the Action Plan proposes, without a genuine timeline, that:

"An Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan (ERRP) will be developed (for each of these sectors). However, due to the significance of the energy sector in Tasmania, this sector will be disaggregated into two sub-sectors:

- *energy (comprising electricity generation and direct combustion)*
- *transport.*

Emissions from electricity generation are included in the energy industries sub-sector in the STGGI. Emissions are produced by the combustion of fuels to generate electricity that is supplied to the electricity grid for domestic and commercial use.

*This sub-sector covers emissions resulting from electricity that is generated in Tasmania, some of which is exported for consumption in the National Electricity Market (NEM) via Basslink. **Emissions from electricity imported via Basslink from other states in the NEM are accounted for in the emissions inventory for the generating state.***

The government claims that we are self-sufficient in renewable electricity and Tasmania is "able to generate 100 per cent of its electricity needs from renewable sources since 2020, two years earlier than committed". This implies that all the electricity that we use in Tasmania is generated from renewable sources (hydro, wind and domestic solar).

It appears that a significant amount of electricity generated using fossil fuels is imported via Basslink from mainland states.

Most people are not aware that the emissions from fossil-fuel generated electricity imported via Basslink are not included in the emissions of Tasmania, but are accounted for in the state in which the electricity is generated.

What proportion of the electricity that Tasmanians use is from renewable sources and how much is generated from fossil fuels on the mainland and imported via Basslink without taking into account their emissions because the electricity was produced on the mainland?

Will this situation be clarified so that Tasmanians are informed about the actual GHG emissions of their electricity consumption in order to encourage conservation of electricity to reduce emissions on a national scale?

There must be absolute transparency on this when promoting the extremely expensive Marinus link which may cost Tasmanians a great deal more than the benefits it provides. Will the climate change implications of the Marinus project, including the emissions from its construction must be included in further reports?

Transport

The government is to be congratulated on the establishment of a fast-charging network to encourage use of electric vehicles and it is to be hoped that this will encourage car hire firms to have EVs available for visitors to the state.

Is the Government negotiating with the hire car businesses to encourage/support their investment in EVs?

Tasmania has a much less well-developed public transport system than the ACT due to the dispersed population in Tasmania and lack of forward planning.

A considerable proportion of fossil fuels used for transport is due to buses. This is very concerning given the low occupancy levels of buses in rural areas due to poor services and the cost of public transport. Modern demand responsive transport (DRT) must be introduced throughout Tasmania as a matter of urgency. The technology is available “off the shelf” and Tasmania must move with the times and embrace DRT, for improvements to personal mobility, reduction in costs to residents, decreased congestion and provision of parking.

Does the \$6 million being allocated to Metro Tasmania include introduction of demand responsive transport (DRT) to enable provision of electric minibuses to link residents to existing bus routes and settlements in rural areas?

It is widely accepted that electric public transport using minibuses can reduce use of private ICE cars and thus transport emissions.

Will the importance of passenger transport using demand responsive minibuses be recognised in climate change action planning as a means of reducing transport emissions in rural areas, as well as enabling mobility for those without use of a private car?

The timeline for the release of the transport ERRP in November 2023 is relatively short. It is therefore urgent that the principles on which the

government's action on climate change is based are applied to development of this ERRP.

What is the appropriate process to identify interested and relevant members of the community to be engaged in the development of the Transport ERRP?

What substantive actions on innovative public transport are proposed?

Environment

Minimum damage to the natural environment is required to mitigate climate change, but gets little attention in the government's climate change action plan. Preservation of our oceans and waterways is an essential requirement for stabilising the composition of the atmosphere.

Tasmania, as an island, has great responsibility and the State Government must take action to protect, at least the coastal waters, to minimise the effects of climate change. In recent decades the quality of Tasmania's once pristine waterways in the south of the state has been drastically reduced by salmon aquaculture which has resulted in pollution and degradation of the aquatic environment and lower yields of wild native fish.

Will the fin-fish aquaculture industry be allowed to continue to grow despite the damage it causes to the environment and the potential effects on the climate?

As one of the largest industries in Tasmania is the aquaculture industry required to fully account for its emissions as well as the pollution it generates?

Will changes in management of the marine environment and waterways be included when considering the next climate change action plan for Tasmania?

Conclusion

There are many more issues to be addressed and many precedents based on existing actions in other places, so Tasmania must not be held back by the perceived need for develop of a further action plan that will reduce human impacts of the planet's climate and environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

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