

Dear Sir/Ma'am:

I am responding to the request for feedback on the draft *Climate Change (State Action) Amendment Bill 2021* (the draft Bill).

I have read copies of:

- the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008,
- the draft Amendment Bill (2021), as well as
- the *Tasmanian Government Response 2021* document, which refers to the Jacobs Group four-yearly statutory independent review of Tasmania's Climate Change (State Action) Act (the Act).

In my view, a number of the provisions of the draft Amendment Bill are not sufficiently strong to respond to the extreme urgency of the climate crisis and require re-drafting.

In its current form, the draft Bill does not go far enough in protecting the interests and rights of future generations through a serious and commensurate response to the climate emergency. All Tasmanians as citizens of Australia have **an absolute obligation** to protect those rights of future generations, rather than allowing ourselves to continue actions and policies which consume far more than our share of existing resources built up over millennia in the ecosystem.

The Tasmanian government acknowledges the climate crisis. In its *Response 2021* document, the government states that "*there is now overwhelming scientific evidence that the climate is changing as a result of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities*" (p. 5). That government document also recognises that the Deloitte 2017 report (*Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer Communities*) stated that the current total economic cost to Tasmania from natural disasters was \$200 million per year and was forecasted to increase to \$600 million per year by 2050.

However, the government's response as demonstrated by the provisions of the draft Bill is not in keeping with the magnitude of the crisis or the speed with which irreversible ecosystem damage is occurring.

Like many Tasmanians, I do not agree with the government's refusal to accept the independent review's key "Recommendation 7" to amend the Act to include the completion of sector-based Decarbonisation (emissions reduction) and Resilience Plans.

In responding to the review, the government has stated that **it does not support** legislating a requirement for sector-based emissions reduction targets, saying that "*business and industry need sufficient time and support to plan to adapt and transition to a low emissions economy*" (p. 17).

As a director of two Australian professional services companies over the past 30 years, I know that every responsible business and industry across Tasmania and Australia has been fully aware of the details of the climate crisis for decades. The past ten years in particular have been filled with daily detailed reports on the science of the disaster which has progressively overtaken all of us. It is beyond time now for the Tasmanian government **to lead the emergency process** in this state of setting binding sectoral decarbonisation requirements and facilitating the replacement of unsustainable practices with sustainable practices, achieving this by means of necessary incentives combined with regulation and penalties.

The key Objects of the Act to which the government is committed in the draft Bill (see part 4.(d) on pp. 5 – 6) include the requirement to “**facilitate Tasmania’s contribution to international, national and local government emissions reduction and climate change adaptation measures to support the transition to a low emissions future**”.

Last week on 2 November 2021 at the Glasgow COP26 climate talks, Australia and 123 other countries signed an agreement promising to end deforestation by 2030. The signatories committed to “...working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation”. The signed declaration recognises how crucial forest loss is to addressing climate change, biodiversity decline and sustainable development.

Surely the content of the Act’s Object 4.(d) stated above requires the Tasmanian government to re-draft and realign the provisions of the draft Bill to be explicitly in accord with this international agreement signed by Australia and so many other nations.

In my view, an essential part of the re-drafting of the Amendment Bill to require strong sector-based emissions reduction targets to be in place by 2030 should be the requirement to end native forest logging and clear-felling in this state.

The crucial importance of existing native forests as carbon sinks is well-established. Research Fellow Kate Dooley at the Climate & Energy College of The University of Melbourne stated in an article published online 5 days ago that:

a vast body of research shows planting new trees as a climate action pales in comparison to protecting existing forests. ...Once intact forests are gone, we can’t regain the carbon lost. It is known as ‘irrecoverable carbon’. So protecting existing forests is the top priority, especially given the critical time frame we are in now to keep climate change under the 1.5 degree C or even 2 degree thresholds.

...As a global land clearing hotspot, Australia will need to enact rapid policy change to bring its current practices in line with what it has signed on to. Australia remains the only developed nation on the list of global deforestation fronts.

*...As a signatory to this new declaration, Australia must strengthen land clearing laws, end native forest logging, and restore degraded ecosystems—just planting new trees will not get us there. Australia has the potential to restore large areas of degraded land. Experts have proposed how this could be done for relatively little investment (article reprinted in *Landscape Australia* [online edition], 8 November 2021, pp. 4 – 5).*

Like many Tasmanians able to do so, my partner and I have adopted as many sustainable practices in our life as possible, including designing and constructing a passive solar house, installing 32 grid-connected solar panels, and driving an electric car. To do so has required us to make conscious choices not to continue with the knee-jerk financial and cultural expectations of past generations.

In turn, I expect the Tasmanian government, faced with the scale of the approaching ecosystem disaster, **to provide extraordinary leadership and take decisive action** through revising the draft Bill to do far more than changing the date for achieving net zero within Tasmania’s emissions reduction target and revising policy and planning settings.

I urge the revision of the draft Act to include specific requirements for sector-based emission reductions targets, including (but not limited to) the termination of native forest logging in Tasmania and the orderly transition of this industry to plantation timber (with financial subsidies if required), thereby valuing and preserving an essential part of Australia's existing carbon sink.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft Bill.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamille Berg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

M. Pamille Berg AO