

2025 consultation

Submission type	Upload
Submitter	Climate Action Network
Response ID	267907

Disclaimer

This document is a submission to the Net Zero Commission’s 2025 consultation. As part of the consultation process, the commission has committed to publishing the submissions it receives. Submissions do not represent the views of the commission.

Submission to Net Zero Commission.

The following ideas and comments are submitted by Climate Action Newcastle

(CAN). 

CAN is a not-for-profit, non-aligned community group working to address climate change through education, empowerment, and advocacy. We focus on promoting and supporting tried and tested climate action solutions.

Q1: The impacts of climate change are becoming more widespread and having an increased impact on our society. The recent devastating floods in coastal New South Wales are just one example. Just prior to these widespread floods, Newcastle itself experienced flooding of our city from heavy downpours. Drenching rain and flash flooding at the end of April this year (2025) caused widespread disruption, at least 140 incidents and four rescues. This is simply the latest in damage and disruption in the area from flooding and storm surges.

Flooding can affect up to one third of all properties in Newcastle (source: City of Newcastle).

Our beaches are more often being impacted by storm surges.

Bush fires are also a threat in the warmer months. So far, the area has escaped the worst of recent fires but climate change makes them a constant threat.

Further west of Newcastle, regions are having to deal with more frequent and severe droughts.

All these weather variations are thought to be the result of climate change.

Q2: CAN is willing to support any initiatives by the Commission to increase community awareness through workshops and other community engagement activities.

Our experience is that most people are aware of climate change and its impact but do not feel it is something they can, or want to, personally influence – for various reasons. A lot more needs to be done to engage people in the issues and possible actions.

CAN is keen to work in this area but being a relatively small volunteer group, it has limited resources.

The community's role in addressing climate change cannot be overstated. Building resilience to climate-related hazards, such as floods and bushfires, requires not only institutional efforts but also active participation from individuals and local organizations. Collaborative programs designed to educate and empower residents can foster a sense of collective responsibility and spur tangible action toward mitigation and adaptation strategies. Moreover, exploring partnerships with larger agencies could help smaller volunteer groups like CAN amplify their impact.

Q3 – Q4, Q8: This is not an area of CAN expertise so we have not addressed these questions.

Q5: In assessing progress towards NSW's targets for reducing green house gas (GHG) emissions, the levels of methane need to be monitored.

Methane is a vastly more powerful warming agent than carbon dioxide but is not considered in the NSW assessment process.

Various studies indicate that methane emissions are likely to be double the amount reported by coal companies and it would seem that no-one is checking the coal company figures.

In addition, there needs to be greater scrutiny of the approval process for new mines and expansion of existing mines. NSW can never reach its targets while ever it continues to approve increased production of coal.

Q6: Most reports highlight the need for faster rollout of infrastructure to distribute renewable energy. This will only happen faster with substantially more government investment.

Q7: The answer to whether the measures are sufficient is "No". Much of the community is still not engaged. People are putting solar panels on their roofs but they are mainly driven by wanting to save on their electricity bills rather than community engagement or benefit sharing.

Q9: The challenges you've documented with regard to freight and passenger transport are certainly there and we are aware that work is being done on freight transport. How to accelerate it, is indeed a challenge. However, the obstacle for many people is the belief that the charging network is inadequate once you leave the city precincts. That the distances in Australia do not yet lend themselves to stress-free EV travel.

Q 10 – 15: Beyond CAN's expertise.

Q16 – 18: Emissions from the Resources Sector. The measures the governments have put in place are steps in the right direction but appear to be simply band-aids while ever new or expanded coal mines are being approved. As your paper states, "emissions from coal mining make up 97% of the direct emissions of the resources sector". There is only one real solution to that and that is to reduce coal mining.

Q19: Banning use of gas in all domestic dwellings, rather than just relying on people's goodwill and conscience should be seriously considered in NSW. Other States have done it. Why not NSW? Building codes should outlaw gas connections on all new buildings and renovations. Government funding would need to be made available to allow existing dwellings to transition off gas. This cost has been considered for at least one region by the group Rewiring Australia (Dr Saul Griffith) and offset against the cost of doing nothing.

Q20 - 21: The same approach applies to refrigerants. A natural decline in their use will not achieve goals fast enough. Government needs to intervene and speed the process up. An example was the phasing out of leaded petrol. It could no longer be purchased


even if you still had a car that used it. Government didn't wait till every last leaded fuel car had disappeared from our roads.

Q 22- 27: Our governments are behaving as though a slow transition will achieve its targets and relieve them of the need to take unpopular decisions. Experts have been saying for at least two decades that the world is in crisis and yet, we are not behaving with the urgency that requires.

While these are not suggestions on what more could be done, our recommendation overall is that the government agencies treat the whole issue as urgent and use their powers to bring about rapid change with as little disruption as possible but to try and do it without any disruption will be too slow and will not allow us to achieve our stated targets.

In trying to balance up economic considerations with environmental ones, the time has come (or maybe passed) when environmental matters have to be given far more weight.

Governments also need to make it easier for renewable projects (including offshore wind) to be approved.


Climate Action Newcastle
315 Darby Street
Bar Beach NSW

27 May 2025