

2025 consultation

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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.

2025 consultation questions

1. What can you tell us about your experience of the impacts of climate change and how can the commission seek to reflect and respond to this in its work?	<p>My experience is someone living in Sydney but from northern Queensland who has witnessed, and felt the impacts of climate change through the increased temperatures and rapidly changing seasons, from the Black Summer bush-fires to the coral bleaching and plant/species mortality of the Great Barrier Reef and the World Heritage tropical rainforests respectively. The Commission should respond to this by recommending, and setting forth whole of society pathways for meaningful, necessary and real mitigation and adaptation strategies. This is currently not happening in Australian society, including across the economy.</p>
2. What actions can the commission take to engage across the community to help drive the shifts needed for the net zero transition and for effective climate change mitigation and adaptation?	<p>To recommend that NSW communities be provided with the resources and power to engage in meaningful, real and necessary mitigation and adaption strategies, including in housing, health and disaster support services that deal with the current reality and forecast changing climate.</p>
3. How should the commission best engage with First Nations people to learn about cultural knowledge and practices to support adaptation, and what information and evidence should it draw on to inform its understanding of these practices?	<p>No comment.</p>
4. What additional mechanisms, support, or incentives can meaningfully empower and enhance First Nations people's involvement in climate mitigation, adaptation and environmental stewardship?	<p>No comment.</p>
5. What additional information and evidence should the commission consider when assessing progress towards NSW's targets for reducing net	<p>Details of the positive action, laws and strategies undertaken in other jurisdictions, particularly foreign jurisdictions such as European countries, which are driving down GHG emissions in different sectors of the economy more successfully than Australia is. The Commission should be considering what has worked, and why and how, in other countries.</p>

greenhouse gas emissions?	
6. The speed of deployment of electricity generation and infrastructure is a key risk to emissions reduction targets. What more could be done to fast-track deployment?	No comment.
7. Are the measures now in place sufficient to ensure community engagement and benefit sharing from the build out of infrastructure for the energy transition?	No the measures are not sufficient. NSW residents who are renters are also restricted in their ability to share benefits, for example restrictions on solar panels and batteries where renters live.
8. Are First Nations communities adequately engaged and included in sharing the benefits of the transition? What more could be done, and by whom?	No comment.
9. What are likely to prove the most effective approaches to accelerate rapid decarbonisation across freight and passenger transport?	<p>Build and implement more rail and other forms of public transport.</p> <p>The Commission should also recommend rapidly expanding and electrifying rail from an environmental and climate change perspective. Expansion of the rail network would require rectification of low speed railway track alignments. There is research and studies that have found that electric rail is the land transport mode with the lowest emissions intensity for both passengers and freight (for example "Impacts of mode shift on well-to-wheel emissions from inter-capital transport - Part 1: Road and Rail transport", and "Impacts of mode shift on well-to-wheel emissions from inter-capital transport - Part 11: Sea and air transport" by R Smit and P Boulter).</p>
10. What specific actions or policies could increase uptake of emissions reduction strategies in agriculture, both in the short and long term?	<p>Far better management of the land both in the short term and long term through reduction of deforestation in NSW, particularly broad scale deforestation, but also ensuring connection of fragmented landscapes, would have the biggest impact in lowering the footprint of agriculture in this state.</p> <p>In the short term research should continue and then policies should be implemented to greatly lower the methane produced by cows and sheep, particularly by cows in the beef and dairy industry.</p> <p>Policies in the short term and long term to encourage the eating plant based diets among consumers, since meat production, and particularly beef, has been comprehensively found on the</p>

	<p>scientific evidence to generate far more GHG emissions than crops.</p> <p>This is a particular concern since cows (and sheep) are a major source of methane, which has been responsible for more than 30 per cent of the increase in temperatures. Methane is 80 times more potent in trapping heat than CO2 over at least the first 20 years.</p>
<p>11. Given the uncertainties in land-sector net emissions, how should NSW incorporate this sector into the states climate policy and emissions profile?</p>	<p>The Commission should recommend comprehensive and long-term monitoring and modelling observatory system to track the evolution of carbon sources and sinks. The Commission should recommend the sourcing high quality data supplementing the National Greenhouse Accounts to support decisions around how to use NSW's natural assets to mitigate climate change.</p>
<p>12. What specific actions could increase carbon storage and resilience of the existing carbon stock in the land sector and meaningfully enhance the application of First Nations people's knowledge and practices?</p>	<p>No comment.</p>
<p>13. What policies or programs at a sectoral level could complement the Safeguard Mechanism to support the accelerated decarbonisation of heavy industry in NSW?</p>	<p>There is little evidence that the Safeguard Mechanism has led to the accelerated decarbonisation of heavy industry in any meaningful way, let alone achieving the reductions that would set NSW on path to net zero by 2050.</p> <p>The policies and programs that would complement the Safeguard mechanism to support the accelerated decarbonisation of heavy heavy in NSW - particularly sectors that are hard to decarbonise - are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A regulatory system that works to prevent major GHG emissions from new coal and gas mines, and expansions. This must necessarily involve new coal and gas mines, and expansions, routinely Not being approved. 2. Further to 1, the scope 3 or downstream emissions of proposed coal and gas mines, and expansions, are not counted or taken into account, when we all share the same atmosphere (and global climate and oceanic systems). These massive emissions should be given full weight and properly taken into account. 3. Strong coal targets for 2030 and 2035 should be set, as well as mandated methane abatement requirements for reduction of emissions from existing mines. <p>The Commission should recommend policies and laws that implement what is set out in 1 to 3 above.</p> <p>The Commission should report on how new and expanded coal mines in particular, but also gas, will undermine</p>

	emissions/climate targets, and the policies needed to deal with this.
14. What measures could accelerate industrial heat electrification in NSW, where technology is viable?	No comment.
15. What short to medium term measures could be prioritised to address the systemic challenges regarding waste generation and resource recovery?	<p>Short and medium term measures that should be prioritised are the regulatory settings and incentives for the creation of a "circular economy".</p> <p>The responsibility for the reduction of plastic waste should be placed on the businesses/companies producing and selling the plastic, including packaging and its inability to recycled, or recycled for a limited number of times.</p>
16. How could transparency of how coal mines meet their Safeguard Mechanism obligations be improved?	There needs to be more accurate and better reporting of coal mine and gas fugitive emissions just in scope 1 emissions. The fugitive emissions are being grossly underestimated. It should be accounted for in company estimates.
17. What measures would lead to coal mines prioritising on-site abatement over offsetting?	<p>Please see my answer to question 16.</p> <p>The Commission should recommend mandate methane abatement requirements for existing (and proposed) coal and gas mines, and expansions.</p>
18. What measures should be considered beyond the Safeguard Mechanism to reduce emissions of the resources sector, particularly methane emissions, to meet NSW's emissions reduction targets?	<p>Please the measures identified in my answers to questions 13, 16 and 17.</p> <p>The Commission should recommend laws and policies which would enable these measures to be implemented as soon as possible.</p>
19. What additional measures could accelerate electrification and increase energy efficiency of new and existing buildings?	<p>The Commission should recommend:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Urgent lifting of energy standards in construction codes, including the national construction code. 2. Minimum energy efficiency standards for rental properties. 3. Comprehensively upgrading existing social housing to improve energy efficiency. 4. Recommending the phase out of gas connections in all new housing. 5. Increase incentives for home energy efficiency improvements.
20. How could social equity be better addressed in the transition to an electrified built environment?	Please see my answer to question 19, particularly numbers 2 and 3.

21. What approaches could NSW consider to eliminate refrigerants with a GWP >10 from buildings?	No comment.
22. What should be included in an emissions monitoring framework for NSW in the context of the transition to net zero, including any specific metrics and indicators?	No comment.
23. The adaptation objective is for NSW to be more resilient to a changing climate. The Act allows for regulations to further define the adaptation objective. What does a more resilient NSW look like to you?	<p>A more resilient NSW is a NSW that has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing, buildings and other infrastructure that is genuinely built and modified for the changing climate due to climate change. 2. A health system that is better adapted to deal with the changing climate, including the impact of increasing temperatures and substantially increasing heat waves and extreme heat. 3. The need for infrastructure, housing and other planning that incorporates and reflects this.
24. What additional information and evidence should the commission consider when assessing progress towards the adaptation objective?	No comment.
25. How can adaptation planning better use the NSW Government's climate change projections (NARClIM)?	No comment.
26. What other information or tools are needed to support decision-makers in NSW?	No comment.
27. What initiatives should the commission consider in assessing NSW's preparation and responses to extreme heat and humidity events in NSW?	No comment.
Are there any other pieces of evidence or feedback you would like to add?	NSW is off track to meet its emissions targets, to meet net zero and to de-carbonize all sectors. Electricity generation is currently doing "the heavy lifting" and reductions in other sectors are poor or not occurring.

Respectfully, measures to reduce emissions in transport and agriculture in particular, but also buildings and heavy industry, is grossly deficient.

NSW's ability to meet its emissions targets - but far more importantly, to reduce GHG emissions in a way that contributes to Australian (and global efforts) to limit global average surface temperature rises to 2 Celsius or less - is being fundamentally undermined by:

1. The approval of new coal and gas mines, including expansions to existing mines and developments.
2. The rates of deforestation, particularly broad scale deforestation, in the state. I include logging of native forests under the term "deforestation". The logging of native forests in NSW is detrimental to efforts to reduce the state's GHG emissions.

The Commission should publish a report/ reports acknowledging the matters in 1 and 2 above, and in particular with recommendations in policy and regulatory changes to address this and change this in the short term and the longer term. The Commission should make these recommendations central to its work.

The Commission should also be recommending strong coal and gas targets for 2030 and 2035 and mandate methane abatement requirements to reduce emissions from existing coal and gas mines.