



Statement of support for an amendment to insert principles in the Climate Change Bill 2022

We are a broad coalition of community, business, environment, and research sector organisations calling on parliament to support the inclusion of economic, employment, social and engagement principles in the Climate Change Bill 2022. Inclusion of these principles will guide the development of policies, programs and processes to achieve emission reduction targets.

We welcome the introduction of the Climate Change Bill 2022 and the Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022 as substantial and positive steps towards Australia’s contribution to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Bill 2022 sets out Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, provides for annual climate change statements, confers advisory functions on the Climate Change Authority, and takes steps for related purposes. The Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022 requires a range of agencies to have regard to the emissions reduction targets set out in the Climate Change Bill.

However, neither bill includes consideration of economic, employment, social, human rights and engagement principles when developing policies, programs and processes to achieve the emission reduction targets. This is a problem because without these, there could be unintended consequences, such as increasing inequality, inefficient investment or poor employment transition. Greater guidance in the legislation will assist all relevant arms of government make better decisions and implement those decisions more fairly and effectively.

A simple and effective solution is to insert a new clause into the objectives of the Climate Change Bill 2022 to include these principles. We propose using principles previously consulted on and considered by parliament. We urge the parliament to support the inclusion of the below amendment to the Climate Change Bill 2022 and amend the Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022 to refer to the objectives.

Insert after section 3 Objectives:

(1) This Act recognises:

- (a) that climate change is a serious challenge to Australia's prosperity and security, and the rights, health and wellbeing of people, communities and the environment. This requires a planned and fair transition towards a net zero emissions economy and the implementation of adaptation measures to protect lives, people's health and wellbeing, livelihoods, business and the environment; and
- (b) that decisions under this Act should be consistent with Australia doing its fair share to limit the increase in global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;
- (c) that in developing policies, programs or processes to achieve Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, the following principles must also be taken into account:
 - (i) effective, efficient, equitable and early action, including:
 - (A) effective in reducing or adapting to climate change impacts and in supporting an effective global response to climate change;
 - (B) efficient in doing so consistently with Australia's financial, economic, social, health, environmental, industry, community, human rights and foreign policy objectives;
 - (C) equitable in regard to Australia's current and future households, business, workers, communities and rural and regional Australia, taking into account intergenerational equity and social, cultural and economic differences; including that people who are socially or financially disadvantaged are not worse off, and ideally, are better off;
 - (D) taking early action to prioritise urgent and deep emissions reductions to reduce risks and future costs, and enable more ambitious targets as circumstances change, including climate science, technology advancement and community expectations.
 - (ii) informed decision making, community engagement and self-determination, including:
 - (A) the best available academic peer reviewed research, public reports and international best practice with respect to causes, potential impacts adaptation and mitigation responses to climate change;
 - (B) providing appropriate information to members of affected communities, especially First Nations, vulnerable or marginalised communities; and
 - (C) enabling those communities to participate in policy design and implementation, with adequate public consultation; and
 - (D) seeking from those communities free, prior and informed consent; and
 - (E) undertaking any other type of consultation that is considered necessary.
 - (iii) risk-based, integrated decision-making, including
 - (A) assessing the long-term, medium-term and short-term environmental, economic and community consequences relating to climate change; and
 - (B) explicitly addressing the relevant climate change risks; and
 - (C) applying the precautionary principle to prevent likely serious or irreversible loss; and
 - (D) coordinating and aligning adaptation and mitigation actions to the greatest extent possible
 - (iv) fiscal responsibility to maintain economic prosperity and public finances over the long-term, including with respect to:
 - (A) the direct costs of climate change including damage to property and infrastructure, the disruption of telecommunications, essential services and business supply chains, reduced agricultural and tourism revenue, and increased health, migration and security costs; and

- (B) the impact of those costs on weakened asset values, corporate profitability, national productivity and public finances; and
 - (C) the high likelihood that those costs are substantially greater than the costs of mitigating climate change; and
 - (D) the high likelihood that the costs of early action to mitigate climate change are substantially lower than the costs of later action; and
 - (E) the growing burden of debt upon future generations which, in failing to act early, will grow significantly.
- (v) fair employment transition for any industry or geographic region where employment is affected by relevant decisions, including:
- (A) applying the principle of community engagement to any affected communities; and
 - (B) pursuing sustainable economic, social and ecological solutions for those communities;
 - (C) prioritising employment transition opportunities to new or existing industries within those communities;
 - (D) offering appropriate education and training for those opportunities;
 - (E) allowing reasonable time for implementation of transition solutions for those communities;
 - (F) for those unable to pursue transition opportunities—without undermining the incentives for transition, providing a mechanism for compensated redundancy or voluntary redeployment of workers to other sites where the workers wish to continue working;
 - (G) maximising economic co-benefits for regional development in Australia.

For further information please contact

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