

DRAFT BLUEPRINT FRAMEWORK: FAIR, FAST AND INCLUSIVE CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

OCTOBER 2023



The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) is developing the second phase of its **Fair, Fast and Inclusive Climate Change Action campaign**. The campaign identifies principles, policies and actions to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while actively improving the lives of people and communities experiencing poverty and disadvantage and reducing inequality.

A **Blueprint Framework** for the campaign is being developed, alongside supporting resources and a website that will be available to ACOSS members and allies to support their joint and individual policy development and advocacy on climate change responses.

ACOSS has already consulted widely with a range of community sector and climate movement organisations, other allies and people with lived experience of disadvantage to develop this initial version of the **draft Blueprint Framework**. We are now seeking your final written feedback prior to finalising it.

ACOSS invites its members, allies and people with lived experience of disadvantage to provide written comments on the draft Blueprint Framework, via:

<https://forms.gle/w4kXc4hBTtUEorY77> by **COB Monday 13 November 2023**.

Once written feedback has been received and incorporated, ACOSS will publicly launch the finalised Blueprint Framework and make it available on a Fair, Fast and Inclusive Climate Change Action website.

If you have any questions about contributing to this process, please contact **Rochelle Braaf** on rochelle@acoss.org.au.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS DRIVING MORE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Rapidly worsening climate change is already creating more extreme temperatures, severe weather events and sea level rise, affecting communities worldwide.¹

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns² that without swift, dramatic global action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we will not meet goals to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, let alone limit warming to 1.5°C, as set out in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.³ The eight years to 2022 were the warmest on record,⁴ with 2023 likely to be the hottest year yet.⁵ This trend is simply unsustainable for life on our planet.

Climate change directly threatens people's rights to food and water security, health, safe and adequate housing, energy, secure employment, sustainable environments, self-determination and expression of culture. It may displace whole communities in Australia and internationally.

Climate change impacts people experiencing financial and social disadvantage first, worst and longest because they have fewer resources to cope, adapt and recover, and because they already experience barriers to services and support. It is driving greater poverty and inequality.

This includes for people on low income, multicultural communities (including people on temporary visas), people with disability, older adults, women, and regional and remote communities. Climate change poses particular threats to First Nations people, who have strong social, cultural and economic ties to their traditional lands and waters, to our Pacific Island neighbours and to the future of our young people.

We need a **fast** transition to a clean economy to limit the impacts of climate change and avoid worsening inequality. Every fraction of a degree matters to those on the frontline. But fast is not enough. People with the least will still be worse off if the transition is not **fair** and **inclusive**. This is because those on low incomes pay disproportionately more of their incomes on essentials and have fewer options to reduce their costs.

Poorly targeted and inequitable policies to reduce emissions end up benefiting people with wealth, choice and control. This leaves people experiencing disadvantage paying disproportionately more towards the cost of the transition to net zero and missing out on the benefits created by having more energy efficient, electrified homes, rooftop solar, batteries, electric vehicles, or potential new jobs.

With powerful interest groups dominating climate change policy, those with the most to lose are not being heard and opportunities to simultaneously address climate change and poverty and inequality are being missed. We must put people and communities experiencing financial and social disadvantage at the centre of policy making and embed fairness and inclusion in plans for rapid transition.

¹ International Panel on Climate Change 2023, [AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023](#)

² [IPCC Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C](#); IPCC 2023, "[Summary for Policymakers](#)", *AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023*

³ [Paris Agreement](#)

⁴ World Meteorological Organization 2023, [State of the Global Climate 2022](#), WMO, Geneva

⁵ Housfather, Z 2023, [State of the Climate: 2023 now likely hottest year on record after extreme summer](#)



FAIR, FAST AND INCLUSIVE CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION WILL BENEFIT PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

If we get the policy settings right, we can reduce emissions fast and improve equity and resilience for people with the least or who are most marginalized.

We can cut emissions and empower **First Nations** people to access and manage renewable energy and batteries; make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community housing more energy efficient and healthier; manage carbon offset projects as a source of revenue; access sustainable jobs on Country; and support First Nations people to exert sovereignty, self-determination and veto rights in the extraction, production and use of resources on their lands and territories.

We can cut emissions and relieve the suffering of millions of people on low income through **upgrading sub-standard housing** to be electric, energy efficient and powered by rooftop solar, which would reduce energy hardship and create jobs.

We can cut emissions and **end transport inequality** through greater investment in accessible public transport and active transit (e.g. walking, cycling and rolling), and targeted programs to access electric vehicles.

We can cut emissions and reduce inequality **in the regions** through investment in distributed renewable energy, housing retrofits, accessible clean transport options, diversified economies and sustainable jobs.

We can cut emissions by phasing out \$11.6 billion dollars of public funds per annum for **polluting fossil fuels** and invest the revenue saved to support people experiencing disadvantage to benefit from the energy transition.

If everyone benefits from the transition to a clean economy, communities will get behind a faster transition.

INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

The Paris Agreement⁶ and the IPCC⁷ explicitly call on nations to take decisive climate change action, to pursue climate justice that eradicates inequity and poverty, promote equity and provide increased support to those most vulnerable to climate hazards. Australia is a signatory to the Paris Agreement and to the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which commit to reducing poverty.

Australia has passed its *Climate Change Act 2022*, setting emission reduction targets and requiring federal government departments and agencies to account for emissions reduction goals when developing policy, measures and processes. However, the *Act* does not require policies, measures and processes to be fair, equitable or inclusive, or to reduce poverty.

⁶ [Paris Agreement](#)

⁷ See D2 of the [IPCC Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C](#); IPCC 2023, "[Summary for Policymakers](#)", AR6 Synthesis Report: *Climate Change 2023*

WHAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN DO

Australia has no federal policy framework to plan for and equitably manage the impact of climate change or the transition to net zero emissions. Recognising the urgency to act, ACOSS has developed this **draft Blueprint Framework** for *Fair, Fast, and Inclusive Climate Change Action*.

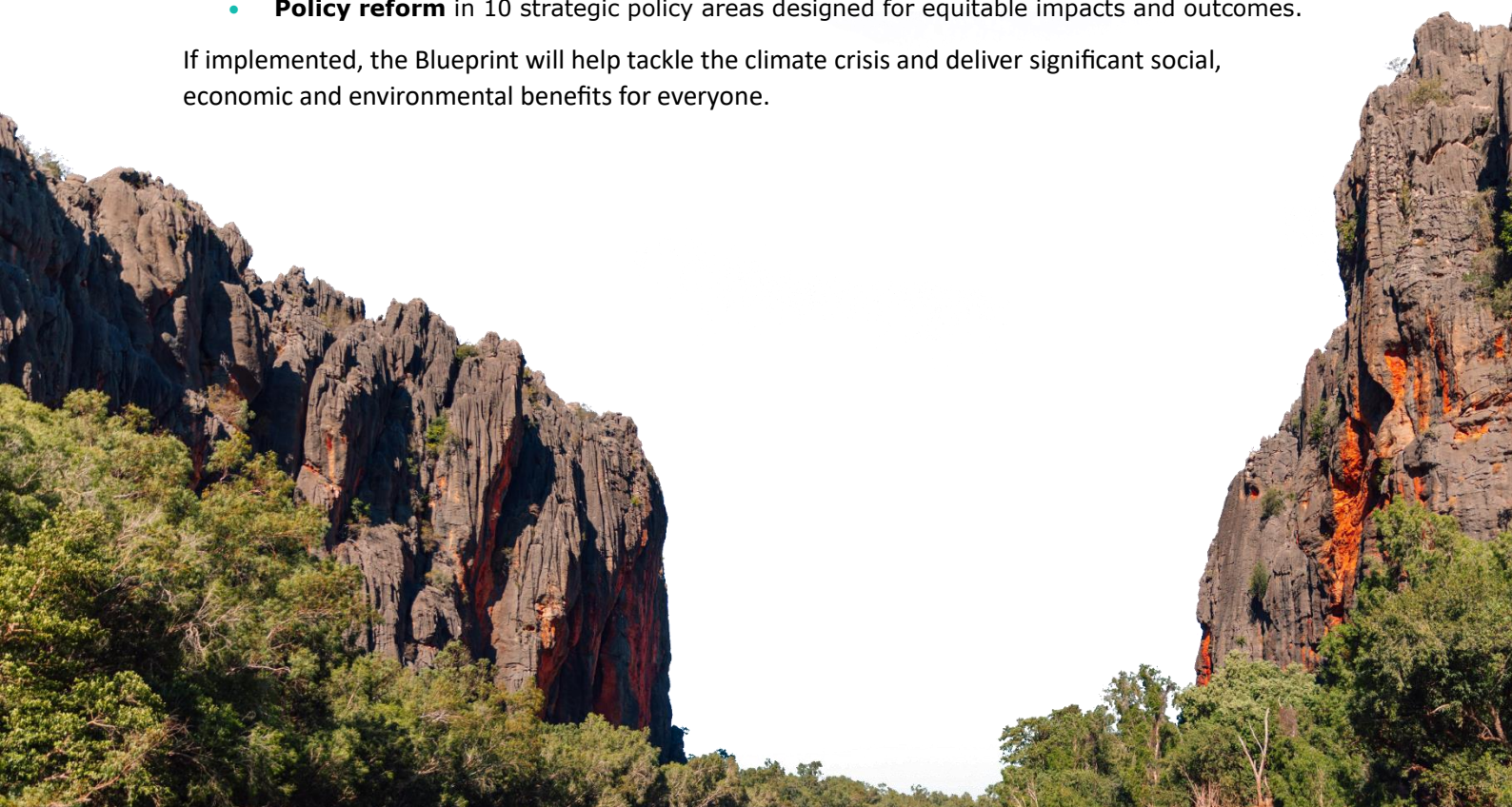
It provides the Federal Government, working in cooperation with state, territory and local governments, civil society and other stakeholders, with a framework to ensure that people and communities experiencing disadvantage benefit from the transition to net zero emissions, are better protected from climate change harms and benefit from actions taken.

The Blueprint was developed through engagement with a wide range of community sector organisations, advocates in the climate change movement, researchers and people with lived experience of disadvantage.

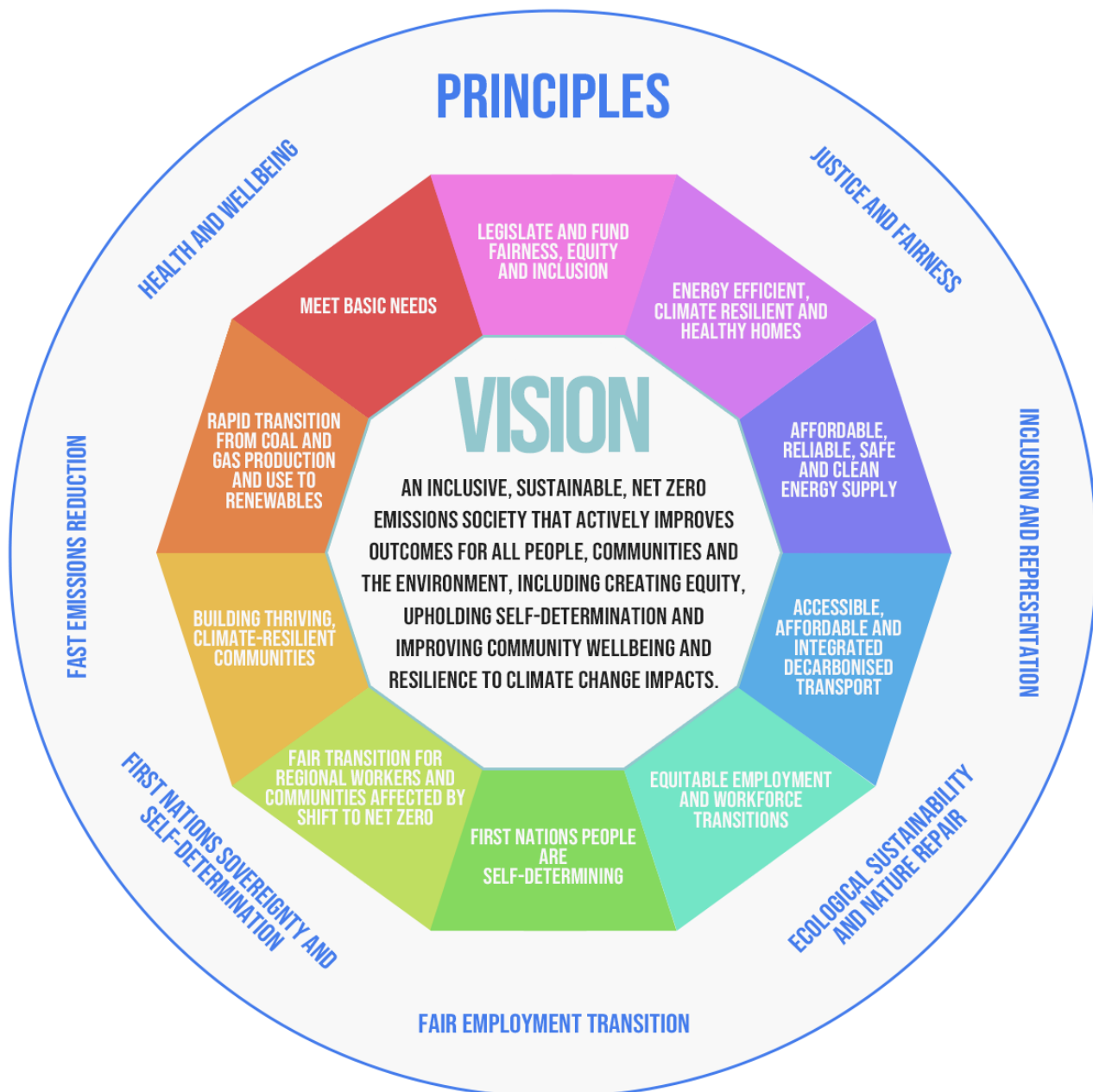
THE BLUEPRINT FRAMEWORK CALLS FOR:

- A **vision** for climate change action in Australia that is more equitable, inclusive, sustainable and resilient to climate change impacts.
- **Amendments to the *Climate Change Act 2022*** to include an objective, principles and processes to guide a fair, equitable and inclusive transition to net zero emissions.
- Dedicated and place-based avenues for **mechanisms for affected people and communities, and their advocates**, to be involved in decision-making, prioritising those experiencing disadvantage.
- Australia's **national emissions reduction target** to be aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5°C.
- **Policy reform** in 10 strategic policy areas designed for equitable impacts and outcomes.

If implemented, the Blueprint will help tackle the climate crisis and deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits for everyone.



BLUEPRINT FRAMEWORK FOR FAIR, FAST AND INCLUSIVE CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION



PRINCIPLES

The following seven principles provide the value base for the Blueprint's proposed policy reforms and recommendations and should guide its implementation.

FAST EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Current science says to preserve a habitable world for this and future generations, global warming cannot exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial records. According to experts,⁸ to do our fair share and meet our international obligations under the Paris Agreement, Australia must strengthen its current national emissions reduction targets (i.e. currently 43% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050) to be 75% below 2005 levels by 2030 and be net zero by 2035.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Extremes of temperature, severe weather, disasters, shifting disease patterns and declining food and water security resulting from climate change directly threaten human health and impact disproportionately on people experiencing disadvantage. Climate change actions must aim to improve health and wellbeing, prioritising people experiencing disadvantage. Responses should account for social and other determinants of health, seek to maximise the health co-benefits of certain actions, and aim to remove barriers to health and health services.

JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

Climate change justice and fairness are grounded in a human rights approach. These principles recognise that not everyone contributes equally to or is impacted equally by climate change or the transition to a net zero economy. Policy should seek to ensure that the burdens of climate change impacts and responsibility for mitigation actions are shared fairly.

⁸ [Australia's Paris Agreement pathways: updating the climate change authority's 2014 emissions reduction targets](#)

INCLUSION AND REPRESENTATION

Climate change disproportionately affects low-income, vulnerable and minority groups and regional and remote communities, including First Nations' communities.⁹ These groups have valuable knowledge and understanding of their own situations and their lived experience must inform policymaking to ensure that actions are fair, equitable and appropriate. This requires dedicated and place-based mechanisms for affected people and communities to be directly involved in decision-making, prioritising those experiencing disadvantage. Strategies need to overcome barriers to inclusion and representation, facilitating avenues for participation and leadership. Information should be accessible and culturally appropriate, and disseminated through relevant channels, so communities can be self-determining.

FIRST NATIONS' SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have rights to sovereignty and self-determination over their lands, resources, communities and cultures. Governments must recognize the benefit of including their deep knowledge of Country to address climate change and have them lead policymaking that affects them by equipping individuals and communities with the resources and capacity to be self-determining, including redistributive justice measures.

FAIR EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION

The transition to a decarbonized economy must be fair, equitable and inclusive of affected workers and communities, including people experiencing poverty and social disadvantage, and those experiencing barriers to employment. This will require discontinuing exploitive employment practices and promoting accessible education and training opportunities, worker protections and other strategies to facilitate access to quality secure paid jobs for those who want them.

ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY AND NATURE REPAIR

As healthy, functioning, natural environments are the foundation for a liveable planet, pursuing ecological sustainability, including biodiversity protection and nature repair, must be central to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Communities which are most vulnerable to climate change impacts should be prioritised for environmental protection and restoration, including ensuring water and food quality and security. First Nations people have a central role to play in environmental management and should be supported to lead strategies.



STRATEGIC POLICY AREAS FOR ACTION

This Blueprint covers 10 strategic policy areas for action. Based on extensive consultations with the community sector, allies in the climate movement and people with lived experience of disadvantage, these have been identified as areas where emissions are high, impacts are felt more keenly by marginalised and disadvantaged groups, where the Federal Government has a high degree of influence and where interventions can reduce community risk, build resilience and may have co-benefits, like improving health. There are other policy areas not included here as they do not meet some or all of these criteria (e.g. urban planning, health, agriculture), but we recognize that they are also important areas to be addressed.

This Blueprint Framework will be complemented by a more detailed policy paper in relation to each of the 10 strategic areas.

LEGISLATE AND FUND FAIRNESS, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Impact: The Federal Government demonstrates leadership and commitment to a fair, fast and inclusive transition to net zero emissions, that is coordinated, inclusively planned and sufficiently funded to meet its goals and community needs.

Outcomes: The Federal Government introduces legislation to insert fairness, equity and inclusion objectives and principles in climate change policy and actions. The Federal Government strengthens the national emissions reduction target to be net zero by 2035. It leads the coordination of policy across federal, state/territory and local levels of government, and works with civil society, business and unions, to develop and achieve climate change goals, with dedicated and place-based avenues for affected people and communities, and their advocates, to be involved in decision-making. Synergy is achieved across relevant policies and frameworks, including Closing the Gap targets, Australia's Disability Strategy, the National Health and Climate Strategy and migration policy. The Federal Government encourages similar coordination mechanisms to be implemented at state/territory and local levels. The Federal Government works with state, territory and local governments to commit to long-term funding, sufficient to deliver on its goals and meet community needs.

HOMES THAT ARE HEALTHY, ENERGY EFFICIENT, CLIMATE RESILIENT AND AFFORDABLE TO RUN

Impact: Everyone can live in an energy efficient, climate-resilient home, which improves their health and wellbeing, and reduces poverty and emissions.

Outcome: The Federal Government collaborates with states and territories to invest in and introduce standards and policies that generate new and retrofitted homes with high energy performance that are climate resilient, affordable to run and healthier to live in, prioritizing homes for people on low incomes.

ENERGY SUPPLY THAT IS AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SAFE AND CLEAN

Impact: Everyone has affordable and reliable access to a safe and clean energy supply that is sufficient to meet their basic needs.

Outcomes: The Federal Government collaborates with states, territories and Aboriginal Land Councils to manage and invest in the delivery of essential services and establish strong consumer protections and inclusive engagement strategies (prioritising people experiencing disadvantage), so everyone can access affordable, reliable and clean energy, promoting climate resilience.

DECARBONISED TRANSPORT SYSTEMS THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE AND INTEGRATED

Impact: Everyone can access accessible, affordable and decarbonized transport that provides them with reasonable connections to people, places, goods and services.

Outcomes: The Federal Government collaborates with states, territories and local governments to plan integrated transport systems that offer accessible, affordable and decarbonised transport options, prioritising public, active and shared transit modes. Transport plans are co-designed with people experiencing financial and social disadvantage, to maximise their equitable access to transport options, including access to electric vehicles.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE TRANSITIONS ARE EQUITABLY PLANNED FOR A NET ZERO EMISSIONS ECONOMY

Impact: The zero emissions employment and workforce transition (including education, skilling up and re-skilling) is planned and managed to promote full employment so that people seeking paid jobs or more hours can find them.

Outcomes: The Federal Government commits to full employment and conducts workforce planning with states and territories that centres people experiencing disadvantage, removes barriers to employment and invests in skills and training to prepare the workforce now and in the future for a net zero emissions economy. Workforce planning facilitates access to quality paid jobs or more hours for those who want them, guards against new industries creating unintended negative consequences for groups experiencing disadvantage and avoids replicating in new industries, the barriers to employment in traditional industries.

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE ARE ADEQUATELY RESOURCED TO BE SELF-DETERMINING IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Impact: First Nations people lead and are adequately resourced to mitigate, adapt and respond to climate change, resulting in improved health and wellbeing and climate resilience, in keeping with Closing the Gap policies and targets.

Outcomes: The Federal Government resources and empowers First Nations people to exert sovereignty and self-determination rights to manage their territories, resources, communities and cultures, including rights to exert free, prior and informed consent over development projects affecting their Country and communities. First Nations communities (especially in regional and remote areas) have improved access to affordable, energy efficient and climate-resilient housing; affordable, reliable and clean energy; adequate and safe food and water supplies; and employment opportunities. First Nations people are supported to engage in and lead development and implementation of climate change responses, drawing on their deep knowledge of Country.

FAIR TRANSITION FOR REGIONAL WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY SHIFT TO NET ZERO EMISSIONS

Impact: Affected workers and communities co-design a fair, inclusive and orderly transition process to promote regional development with diversified economies, equitable and healthy communities, and sustainable environments.

Outcomes: Regional development plans are co-designed with affected workers and communities, including people experiencing disadvantage. Regional development prioritises worker employability, protection and training, including for those experiencing employment barriers, and aligns with migration, disability and First Nations employment programs. Regional planning invests in equitable economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes.



BUILDING THRIVING, CLIMATE-RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Impact: People, communities and community services have greater resilience to climate change. Disaster responses are better coordinated, and impacts minimized. Recovery is faster. People more vulnerable to climate impacts are prioritised.

Outcomes: The Federal Government empowers communities, including First Nations Communities, to build their resilience and manage recovery by investing in local community resilience hubs, joint planning, and access to tools and data to identify need. People impacted by disasters can respond and recover quicker because of affordable insurance, access to communications, adequate financial support, housing, food, and other essential supports. Community sector organisations are adequately resourced to support people and communities respond, recover and build resilience to disasters. People more vulnerable to climate impacts are at the center of planning, preparedness, response, and recovery.

RAPID TRANSITION FROM COAL AND GAS PRODUCTION AND USE, TO RENEWABLES

Impact: Coal and gas extraction, production and use are rapidly phased out at a pace consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C, accompanied by increased planning and investment in renewable energy production and transmission infrastructure.

Outcomes: The Federal Government plans for rapid phase out of existing coal and gas projects, bans new and expanded coal and gas projects, ends subsidies for fossil fuel extraction, production and use, and accelerates clean energy investment. Respect for First Nations land and water rights is exemplified by requiring their free, prior and informed consent for industry development on their territories and by federal support for states and territories to have regulations that ensure sustainable management of water resources (as per the National Water Initiative).

MEET BASIC NEEDS

Impact: Everyone can cover basic living costs and access the benefits of transitioning to net zero emissions, improving their resilience to climate change impacts, and reducing poverty and inequality.

Outcome: The Federal Government adequately invests in essential services, housing and social safety nets (including by substantially boosting income support payments), so that people can meet their basic needs, including the costs associated with climate change impacts. The Federal Government adopts a Poverty Reduction Target, as part of its Wellbeing Framework and agrees to a national definition of poverty.



GLOSSARY

ADAPTATION (TO CLIMATE CHANGE) A process of adjustment to actual or expected climate change and its effects that aims to moderate or avoid harm, or to exploit beneficial opportunities. Multiple outcomes may result from climate adaptation processes, including unintended consequences.

CO-BENEFITS The positive effects that a policy or measure aimed at one objective might have on other objectives, thereby increasing the total benefits for society or the environment. Co-benefits can be uncertain and depend on local circumstances and implementation practices, or other factors.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY A dynamic process guaranteeing the persistence of natural and human systems. It relies on the consumption of natural resources not exceeding their replenishment, and generation of pollution not exceeding nature's maintenance of thriving environmental systems and habitats.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE Relative energy efficiency of a building, building equipment or building components, as measured by the amount of energy required for the building to function and provide usual services.

EQUITY A process of identifying and removing barriers that create disparities in access to power, economic resources, opportunities, goods and services, to promote a just, fair and equal society.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES Services that are essential to life, such as access to energy, water or sanitation. This definition could be extended to housing, transport and other services necessary for modern Australian life.

FAIR Fairness in climate action is used to mean reasonable and equitable treatment or distribution of benefits and burdens across society, so that no one person or group receives unreasonable or unfair gains or losses as a result of climate policies.

FAST Fast action on climate change reflects the need for urgency to keep global warming within liveable limits, but action is also strategic and considered, aiming for equitable outcomes and co-benefits.

INCLUSION The process of improving participation in society, planning or decision-making, especially by people experiencing disadvantage, through removing barriers to participation, facilitating opportunities and providing resources to participate, and listening to their voices. Inclusivity recognizes and commits to dismantling barriers to participation, and recognizes the benefits to be gained from including diverse individuals and groups, and allowing them to lead.

INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY A concept of equity recognising that decisions taken today on climate change and related policies will affect future generations and, consequently, that decisions should balance the short-term needs and quality of life of today's generations with the longer-term needs of future generations.

JUST TRANSITION A process where communities, workers and individuals can reasonably expect or have a right to fair and equitable outcomes of the transition to net zero emissions, such as accessing decent work opportunities, affordable housing and essential services.

MITIGATION (OF CLIMATE CHANGE) Human interventions aimed at limiting or preventing greenhouse gas emissions across a range of sources and sectors, and/or removing these from the atmosphere to prevent global warming.

NET ZERO EMISSIONS A state where emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by removals of emissions over a specified period. For multiple greenhouse gases, the quantification of net zero emissions depends on the climate metric chosen to compare different gases.

RESILIENCE The capacity to prepare for, respond to and cope with hazardous climate change events or trends in timely and efficient ways to minimize risk to communities. Resilience actions may be policy, infrastructure, services, planning, education and communication. Strengthening resilience does not detract from the need to mitigate emissions and contributions to climate change.

WELLBEING Combines a person's physical, mental, and social health factors, rather than just the absence of disease or infirmity, and is strongly linked to a person's happiness and life satisfaction, their capacity to realize aspirations and satisfy needs, and to cope with their environment.