

DEFEND WA'S NATURE WITH STRONG CLIMATE LAWS

The WA Government's decision on its Climate Change Bill will determine how our state responds to the climate crisis at a critical time for emissions reductions.

Western Australia has just recorded its hottest and driest summer on record, causing forest collapse in the South West, coral bleaching at Ningaloo and mass deaths of vulnerable species in the Perth metro area.

Every fraction of a degree of global temperature rise will worsen the hazards WA faces, from increased heat-related illnesses to loss of wildlife and more extreme weather events. Declining rainfall, rising temperatures, severe flooding, and more intense bushfires are already impacting nature, our health, and our livelihoods.



If WA was a country, we would be the world's third largest exporter of gas. WA's emissions continue to rise due to expansion of the gas industry, which is holding back national and global action on climate change. To do its part in limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, WA must aim for far greater ambition than simply achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

The WA Climate Change Legislation presents a crucial opportunity for the state to take a leading role in mitigating the climate crisis and demonstrate our commitment to the world. However, the current version of the bill falls short of what is necessary to effectively tackle climate change and doesn't meet the expectations of the WA public.



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The WA Climate Bill must ensure decisive action that meets the scale of the threat that we are facing. We are therefore requesting that the WA government:

1 Legislate science-based and 1.5-degree compatible emissions reduction targets, including an ambitious 2030 target.

WA is the only state in Australia without a 2030 emissions reduction target. While the bill has a provision for an interim target to be set at 2035, the most important milestone should be the 2030 target that is consistent with the framework for reducing emissions under the Paris Agreement. We are in the critical decade for climate action, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stating that “without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, limiting global warming to 1.5°C is beyond reach.” Not including a 2030 target is a major shortfall, and by neglecting to do so, WA will be placing national climate action measures in serious jeopardy. Targets must be fully enforceable to ensure accountability.

2 Establish an independent, science-based climate advisory body

An expert, independent climate change authority with a role in planning, oversight and advice, would strengthen the accountability of the government in reaching 1.5°C aligned targets. WA must accurately represent the Paris Agreement, as crossing the 1.5°C threshold risks unleashing irreversible climate tipping points.

The advisory body will provide the public with greater confidence in the government by enabling transparency, developing evidence-based pathways for sectoral emissions reductions, and establishing greater certainty for business. An independent authority can also play a role in setting appropriate carbon offset limits, and advise on adaptation pathways and strategies.

3 Refer to a Parliamentary Committee

Given the significance of the bill to WA, MPs must support a referral of the bill to a parliamentary committee, and ask for a parliamentary enquiry be held, as well as conduct a consultation process calling for public submissions, and evidence to be presented at a hearing.

These three changes to the bill are key stepping stones in establishing our state as a global leader on climate action, but there is still much more work to be done. As of the end of 2023, WA still has over 20 new fossil fuel projects in the pipeline, whilst local and exported emissions continue to increase.

According to the International Energy Agency, by 2030 we need a tripling of renewable energy capacity; a doubling in energy efficiency; and we can not afford any new fossil fuel projects if the global energy sector is to reach net-zero by 2050. Additionally, current resources dedicated to helping climate change adaptation in WA are inadequate in dealing with the impacts climate change is causing.

At this critical time, the WA government must use its powers to deliver climate action that will benefit people and nature. This requires the above changes to the Climate Change Bill; significantly increased funding and resources for renewable energy development, energy efficiency programs and climate adaptation; and no new fossil fuel projects.