

Private climate bill deserves serious consideration



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A private member's bill on climate change introduced by the Federal Member for Warringah, Zali Steggall MP, deserves careful and serious consideration, the Australian Energy Council said today.

The Bill proposes an economy-wide, net zero emissions by 2050 target with sector budgets to achieve it.

The AEC's Chief Executive, Sarah McNamara, said the Council's members, along with other peak business bodies who are members of the Australian Climate Roundtable, have endorsed the same net zero target by 2050.

"This Bill offers the potential for much-needed certainty and a clear path forward, not just for the energy industry, but across the Australian economy," Ms McNamara said.

"Electricity generators have long recognised they are major carbon emitters with an important role in reducing Australia's emissions.

"That's why we have seen greenhouse gas emissions in the National Electricity Market fall by around 20 per cent over the past decade. We anticipate emissions will continue to fall as we continue the transition.

"But it is important that we reduce emissions across the board and cover sectors that may not yet have reached peak levels of emissions.

"The best first step to reducing carbon emissions broadly is finding agreement on a long-term target which can act as the starting point for constructive consensus.

"The AEC sees merit in the proposal for an independent process to determine separate budgets for sectors and independent reporting on performance as proposed in the Bill.

"The Bill will no doubt undergo vigorous debate and may not pass Parliament in its current form. Regardless, its introduction should be seen as constructive and it will at least encourage genuine discussion of the best ways forward in government policy," Ms McNamara said.

About the Australian Energy Council

The Council represents 21 major electricity and downstream natural gas businesses operating in the competitive wholesale and retail energy markets. These businesses collectively generate the overwhelming majority of electricity in Australia, sell gas and electricity to over 10 million homes and businesses, and are major investors in renewable energy generation.

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