

#CLIMATE ACTNOW



Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020

Climate change is real for Australia, with immediate and deepening risks to our natural environment, economy and way of life. Last summer's unprecedented bushfires are a mark of the worst of those risks, and how they will affect some communities more than others. But there are also opportunities to prosper, given our enormous natural, human and financial wealth.

This Act would ensure Australia has a clear and positive national response to the challenges of climate change. That is what a large and growing majority of Australians call for, and what Australia needs.

It will ensure that Australia has:

- **A Net Zero emissions target by 2050**, getting there through emissions reduction plans and emissions budgets
- **Risk assessments and adaptation plans**, so that the different parts of our continent and economy know the risks of climate change and can prepare for them
- **Technology readiness assessment**, so that we know the existing and emerging ways we can reduce emissions, with the least risk and cost
- **An independent advisory commission (IAC)**, that can advise the Government, transparently and independently, on our national needs and plans.

In putting this law in place, Australia will be amongst several other countries with effective climate laws in place, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and New Zealand.

1. Net zero emissions by 2050

We need to limit global warming to as close to 1.5 degrees as possible. To do this, science tells us that we must reduce our emissions to 'Net Zero' by no later than 2050. Net Zero does not mean no emissions. It means we need to balance the carbon we put into the atmosphere with what we draw down through tree planting and soils - just like balancing a budget.

The Climate Act will help Australia by setting that target and helping us get there. It will:

- Set Net Zero emissions by 2050 in law
- Establish a process to review the Net Zero target every 5 years as things change
- Require five-year emissions budgets to reduce emissions smoothly through to Net Zero
- Require five-year emissions reduction plans to ensure that Australia meets those emissions budgets, and
- Establish principles of fairness and equity to guide those budgets and plans.

2. National risk assessments and adaptation plans

Australia is starting to experience more severe and frequent bushfires, droughts, floods and heatwaves. While we cannot avoid their impacts, we can better prepare for them.

The Climate Act would:

- Require an annual National Climate Change Risk Assessment from the IAC, reviewing risks to Australia's economy, society and environment, and
- Require five-year plans to adapt to those risks, both nationally and for regional and economic sectors (such as agriculture, biodiversity, national parks, marine parks, health, energy, transport, services, education, planning, construction, infrastructure etc).

3. Technology assessments

To succeed with these plans, Australia will need every technology that can help reduce our emissions. Australia may also benefit by exporting technologies to other countries to help the globe get to Net Zero.

To do this, the Climate Act adopts the Government's annual Low Emissions Technology Statements. These would:

- Provide an update of global technology developments
- Publicise existing and potential technologies that can help reduce our emissions, and
- Demonstrate the economics of substituting low-emission for high-emission technologies.

Example technologies are hydrogen, pumped hydro energy storage, 'virtual power plants' that link smaller batteries and rooftop solar panels into a single energy resource, electric and alternative fuel vehicles, waste recycling plants, and low-emission cement.

4. An independent advisory commission

The Climate Act introduces the Independent Advisory Commission as an independent body to assess risks and technologies, advise Government and monitor climate change actions and impacts.

The IAC will work with the Government in a transparent and accountable way:

- The IAC will assess climate risks, new technologies, and recommend adaptation plans and emissions budgets that are fair and equitable across generations, regions and industries
- The Government will present plans and budgets to Parliament, with reasons for any variation from the IAC recommendations, and
- The IAC will report annually on progress against Australia's emissions targets, technology goals and adaptation and emissions reduction plans.

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The Act will enable Australia to make an immediate, positive and nationally supported response to the risks, challenges and opportunities of climate change.