

The Honourable Mark McGowan MLA

Premier; Minister for Public Sector Management; State Development, Jobs and Trade;
Federal-State Relations

A Zero Carbon Act for Western Australia

22 November 2019

By email: wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au

Cc: Hon. Roger Hugh Cook MLA, Hon. Suzanne Mary Ellery MLC, Hon. Stephen Noel Dawson MLC, Hon. Michelle Hopkins Roberts MLA, Hon. Alannah Joan Geraldine MacTiernan MLC, Hon. Francis Michael Logan MLA, Hon. David Alan Templeman MLA, Hon. John Robert Quigley MLA, Hon. Michael Philip Murray MLA, Hon. Benjamin Sana Wyatt MLA, Hon. Paul Papalia CSC, MLA, Hon. William Joseph Johnston MLA, Hon. Rita Saffioti MLA, Hon. Peter Charles Tinley AM, MLA, Hon. Simone Frances McGurk MLA, Hon. David Joseph Kelly MLA, Ms Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Mr John Newton Carey MLA, Hon. Alanna Therese Clohesy MLC, Mr Christopher John Tallentire MLA, Hon. Samantha Helen Rowe MLC, Hon. Darren Legh West MLC, Mr Reece Raymond Whitby MLA; Hon. Liza Mary Harvey MLA; Mr Dean Cambell Nalder MLA; Hon. Dr Steven Caldwell Thomas MLC; Hon. Mia Jane Davies MLA; Hon. Timothy James Clifford MLC; Hon. Charles Leonard Smith MLC; Hon. Aaron Stonehouse MLC; Hon. Robin David Scott MLC; Hon. Ricky John Mazza MLC; Hon. Angus Taylor MP

Dear Premier,

Western Australia needs a Zero Carbon Act to establish a binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions in Western Australia by 2050 and to implement shorter-term 'carbon budgets' for the State. It's time for Parliament to lead and to act.

Three factors compel this action.

The first is the reality of a warming world. For Western Australians, that reality includes hotter temperatures, less rainfall, more severe droughts and bushfire seasons, more marine and atmospheric heatwaves, rising sea levels and loss of unique and treasured animal and plant species.

The second is a clear economic rationale for a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy. Western Australia has a competitive advantage for globally in-demand resources (eg lithium, renewable hydrogen); renewable energy sources (sun, wind, wave); and landscapes suitable for use as carbon sinks.

Western Australia is also well-positioned to demonstrate global leadership in the transition to infrastructures based on the sharing of energy, knowledge, and goods and services.

The third is that we will only achieve a less-warm future if we act in concert with all major economies to achieve it. Western Australia can do this by legislating to implement the Paris

Agreement targets of keeping global warming under 2°C, preferably to no more than 1.5°C.

We can join other nations and regions that have already legislated for net zero carbon by 2050 (or earlier), such as: Norway (2016), Sweden (2017), Victoria (2017), California (2018), France and the United Kingdom (June 2019), Scotland (September 2019), and New Zealand (November 2019).

Good faith, fairness, and a shared sense of responsibility and commitment are at the core of the Paris Agreement's reliance on the ambition of governments to achieve emission reductions.

These same sentiments also hold for the Australian federation. Currently, however, Western Australia practices its own carbon exceptionalism, in which the State's greenhouse gas emissions have continued to increase significantly since 2005, while emissions in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia have fallen since 2005.

Meeting Australian and global emissions budgets is a shared enterprise, to which Western Australia must contribute in fair measure.

By implementing a Zero Carbon Act, Western Australia will support collective national and international action on climate change, and support a transition to a productive low-carbon economy, to the greater benefit of present and future Western Australians.

Yours faithfully,

Signatories:

Professor Rob Adams

Dr Martin Anda

Professor Emeritus Bruce Armstrong

Professor Emeritus John Bailey

Associate Professor Roberta Bencini

Professor Emeritus Don Bradshaw

Dr Danielle Brady

Dr Helen Brown

Dr Jane Chambers

Dr Adam Cross

Professor Jenny Davis

Doctors for the Environment Australia, as notified by Dr Richard Yin

Associate Professor Jenny Downs

Associate Professor Katy Evans

Dr Brad Farrant

Professor Jane Heyworth

Professor Richard Hobbs

Professor Emeritus Roy Jones

Dr Jatin Kala

Professor Jon Kellett

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Contact Information

We welcome the opportunity to provide clarification or to discuss a Zero Carbon Act in greater detail, and may be contacted through Hugh Finn, by phone at (08) 9266 4553 or by email at h.finn@curtin.edu.au.

Further information to support the State's development of climate change policy and legislation is available at the website for the *Climate Change Symposium 2019*, which was held at the University of Western Australia on 11 November 2019: <https://ccs19.com.au/>