

Subject: Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020 and Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020

To the House Standing Committee on the Energy and Environment regarding the Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020 and Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020

Dear Committee Secretariat,

We have prepared this submission as the elected council and senior members of the Royal Society of South Australia (RSSA). With its origins in 1834, The Royal Society of South Australia was established in 1880 and is a membership based learned society dedicated to the promotion and advancement of science. The society has held two seminars addressing climate change, the first in 1993 and twenty years later in 2013. From this we have published two climate change special issues of our peer reviewed journal *The Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia* (Volumes 118:1 and 139:1).

The RSSA regards climate change to be one of South Australia's greatest challenges (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03721426.2017.1294552>). However, this is a global problem, and we support Australia playing an increasing role in addressing it. This action should be supported by the Australian parliament passing legislation to transition Australia to net zero emissions by 2050 and implement the necessary adaptation measures needed to protect livelihoods, business, and the environment. Such legislation is needed as it will not only address this most serious of issues but also provide certainty for all levels of government, the private sector and non-government organisations in transitioning to a net zero emissions economy. We have reviewed the Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020 and Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020 and believe that it will have this desired effect. We offer detailed comments below:

Part 1 - Introduction

..Division 1 – Preliminary

Section ^3 Objects of this Act

Article (1b) We support the objective of decisions under the Act limiting the increase in global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as these objectives are scientifically based (www.ipcc.ch/sr15/).

Article (2a) As above we support this article as the scientific evidence shows the imperative of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 (www.ipcc.ch/sr15/).

However, regarding both points above, the best scientific modelling suggests that if we are to limit warming to below 2°C, then not only must we achieve net zero emissions by 2050, we must also halve our 2010 level of emissions by 2030 (www.ipcc.ch/sr15/). This need to halve emissions should be included in the bill.

Division 2 – Guiding Principles

Section ^11 Principle of informed decision making

We endorse the principle of informed decision making when addressing climate change. Article (2) lists nine sources of information from which the best available academic peer-reviewed research and public reports must take precedence over other sources of information. This list does not include peer-reviewed publications from Australian Universities and collaborators. We suggest that peer-reviewed research from Australian Universities and their collaborators, including but not limited to those funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC), should be listed among the best available research. Climate change research is a priority of the ARC and thus ARC funded University research should be listed. The inclusion of Australian University research is also important as the organizations providing scientific advice (e.g. CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology) are not independent of Government. We believe that research from independent organisations be considered equally with that from Government agencies.

Section ^16 Principle of national and international cooperation

Article (c) states that Australia will undertake its ‘fair share’ of international action. We believe that this could be easily be misinterpreted and needs to be properly defined.

Part 2 – National climate change risk assessment

Section ^18 Factors to be taken into account

Article (f) should, as detailed above, list Australian Universities and collaborators.

Part 3 – National adaptation plan

Section ^19 Minister must prepare national adaptation plan

We suggest the addition of an article stating that the adaptation plan must be evidence based and derived from the best available science.

Part 4 – Emissions reduction target

Section ^22 The Target

In line with IPCC recommendations and to meet the objective of the Act - of pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C - an additional target of halving the 2010 level of emissions by 2030 is needed.

Section ^24 Recommendations to amend the Target

Article (2ii) should refer back to Section ^11 Article (2)’s definition of academic peer reviewed research or public reports.

Part 5 – Setting emissions budgets etc.

Section ^28 Matters relevant to emissions budgets

Under Article (2) *The Commission and Minister must:*, a clause that addresses the need for transparent and robust mechanisms for reporting on carbon budgets is required. We recommend that these reporting mechanisms be closely aligned with relevant IPCC guidelines.

Part 6 – Climate Change Commission

Division 1-Establishment, functions and powers

We support the establishment of Climate Change Commission to assess risk and guide Australia’s path to net zero emissions.

Section ^33 Functions of the Commission

The Commission's role – to prepare and monitor emissions budgets, prepare national climate change risk assessments and low emission technology statements, and report on the implementation of national adaptation plans - is well defined in the Bill. This is an improvement on the broadly defined role of the current Climate Change Authority. The independence of the Commission from Government is also an important feature.

Division 2 – Membership of the Commission etc

Section 37 Appointment of members of the Commission

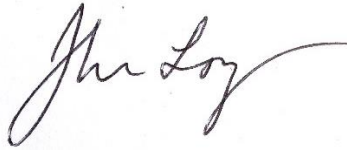
Given the impact of climate change on Australia's natural systems we recommend that under Article (2) that the Commission also have members with experience in, or knowledge of, biodiversity and the environment.

As the elected council and senior members of the RSSA we trust that our submission will assist the House Standing Committee on the Energy and Environment's inquiry into the Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020. On behalf of the membership of the RSSA we endorse the Bill and recommend that after minor modification and debate it be passed by Parliament.

Yours Sincerely,



Prof Sabine Dittmann
(President 2019-Present)



Prof John A. Long
(President 2016-2019, Past President)



Assoc. Prof. Craig R. Williams
(President 2012-2014)



Dr Nicholas John Souter
(President 2010-2012, Councillor)



Prof Robert W. Fitzpatrick
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