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To: Senate Committee on Environment and Communications

Submission in response to: Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023

The Committee for Sydney is the city's peak advocacy and urban policy think tank. We work with our 160+ member organisations – who represent industry, government and the cultural and not-for-profit sectors – to produce research and policy recommendations on key issues for Sydney.

The Committee believes that the Commonwealth Government is uniquely placed to ensure we are doing everything in our power to reduce the risk to future generations by accelerating action to reduce carbon emissions. Given the global heating that is already underway, reducing risk through climate adaptation is a parallel priority for current and future generations.

Our position is backed up by research.

Decarbonising Sydney

In August 2022, the Committee for Sydney released [Decarbonising Sydney, a report](#) which details the possible pathways for Sydney to achieve net zero by 2030 and 2050, and recognizes that Greater Sydney is not on track currently to achieve either. We developed the report in partnership with Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy, Dexu Property Group, McKinsey & Company, the Greater Cities Commission, NSW Treasury and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. The report was also peer reviewed by more than 30 organisations, including universities, businesses, not-for-profits, and local government representatives.

Decisions by the Federal Government need to consider current challenges, and solutions should recognise their impact on future generations. The Committee has called for the establishment of an Intergenerational Commissioner to ensure decisions at a State level respect this need. At a commonwealth level, it is the **Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023** that has the potential to deliver on this outcome.

Defending Sydney

On 18 October, 2023 we released a new research report - [Defending Sydney: Adaptive planning for today's floods and tomorrow's climate](#) – which was conducted over the past 9 months in collaboration with over 30 organizations from business, academia, and Local, State and Federal government.

The report highlights that Sydney is at a crossroads. We're facing a housing crisis and climate crisis. The success of solving the housing crisis will be judged on whether more or less people are at risk of the climate crisis and its financial impacts. Without clear structures to manage this increasingly scary risk cocktail, the result will be more and more development in areas exposed to floods and climate change. R



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The urgency for action on mitigating climate change is reinforced by our Defending Sydney report, which finds that:

1. **Climate related risk is getting worse** - Over the next decade, Sydney's population will grow from 5.3 million people today to about 6.1 million people. Over the same period, our climate is projected to warm by an average 0.7°C, increasing the frequency and severity of flooding and other natural hazards.
2. **Costs of disasters are rising** – Households, businesses and government are experiencing more frequent and intense floods, increasing annual insurance and recurring recovery costs. The 2022 East Coast Floods had insured costs of \$6bn, and uninsured costs of \$15bn.
3. **The planning system is being challenged by rapid change.** There is a disconnect between strategic land use planning and disaster risk reduction in NSW. While we do develop hazard and climate risk maps, very little of this informs decision making, pushing more housing into areas of growing risk.
4. **Assets and infrastructure are not designed or funded to withstand future hazard risk.** State and Federal funding frameworks do not match up with the need to prepare critical infrastructure, and their business cases, for the growing impact of climate change.
5. **Current risk transparency and governance arrangement are unfit for a changing climate.** Local Governments and Utilities are financially constrained, while adaptive planning requires trade-offs between housing, cultural values, risk tolerance and competing budgetary constraints.

We urge the parliament to support the **Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023** to avert the worst impacts of climate change.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Kernaghan
Director, Resilience Program
Committee for Sydney

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