



Environmental Defenders Office

5 August 2022

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email to: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee,

Inquiry into the Climate Change Bill 2022 and the Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022

Environmental Defenders Office (**EDO**) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into the Climate Change Bill 2022 and the Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022.

EDO welcomes the introduction of the Bills that will establish greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets in law. We note that the Bills propose to enshrine targets of reducing Australia's net greenhouse gas emissions to 43% below 2005 levels by 2030, and to net zero by 2050. In addition, the Bills include requirements for annual statements by the Minister for Climate Change to Parliament on progress towards targets, and a role for the Climate Change Authority in providing advice to the Minister on annual statements, future targets and updated Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

EDO has long called for science-based enforceable emissions reduction targets to be established in law, and this Bill is an important first step.

However, the critical task of tackling climate change may begin, but does not end, with legislating targets. The targets are a starting point that will need to be strengthened in line with the science, and be designed to galvanise the range of necessary reforms needed to reduce the risks and impacts of a changing climate, set us on a path to sustainability, ensure a just transition for communities, and give our iconic environmental assets like the Great Barrier Reef a fighting chance of survival.

The Bills before the Senate are an important first step and should be supported. However, the Australian Government and Parliament **must clarify the next steps that will be taken to ensure that the targets are sufficient, meaningful and will be effectively achieved**. Action and timeframes for achieving net zero must be linked to the temperature goal of limiting increase to 1.5°C. This means establishing science-based enforceable targets, strengthened emissions reduction mechanisms, specific duties and accountability in law. This requires clear processes for the targets to be increased in line with the best available science in a timeframe that will limit warming to 1.5°C. Updated analysis indicates that to save assets such as the Great Barrier Reef,

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Australia needs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by **74% of 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2035**.

Australia currently has over 80 pieces of legislation relating to energy and various elements of climate policy, however the sum of these parts does not equal an effective legal framework. It is time for a national Climate Act to set the path to real net zero, define responsibilities, galvanise transition and incentivise innovation in meeting our targets to stay within a carbon budget that will limit warming to 1.5°C. Achieving targets will require a range of coordinated law and policy reforms.

The Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022 makes consequential amendments to include reference to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and/or the Paris Agreement in 14 pieces of legislation. This is an important first step and should be supported. EDO recommends further and more specific integration of climate considerations and specific requirements into a broader range of legislation - for example, the *Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* - to ensure an effective and comprehensive whole of government/whole of economy approach to meeting targets.

There are many innovative and necessary solutions to the climate crisis and establishing strong national climate law is the foundation for success. EDO has developed a **Roadmap for Climate Reform** that identifies **5 opportunities** for Australia and makes **58 recommendations** for the reform of Australian climate law. These recommendations are designed to be acted upon in the first term of the new Australian parliament - the next three critical years.

Opportunity 1: Climate Act now

Opportunity 2: Provide clarity and certainty for business and community by charting a path to real net zero

Opportunity 3: Define leadership and responsibility for meeting targets

Opportunity 4: Incentivise innovation and galvanise our energy transition

Opportunity 5: Plan for and measure success

To assist the Committee, we **attach** the Roadmap and Recommendations Summary as our submission to this Inquiry.

For further information regarding the recommendations for climate law reform set out in our Roadmap, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Environmental Defenders Office

[REDACTED]
Rachel Walmsley

Head of Policy & Law Reform

Attachment 1: EDO Roadmap for Climate Reform – Recommendations Summary

Attachment 2: EDO Roadmap for Climate Reform