

Submission – Net Zero Economy Authority Bill 2024 and Net Zero Economy Authority (Transitional Provisions) Bill 2024

Written to the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

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Introduction

This submission is written with respect to the establishment of the Net Zero Economy Authority (the Authority) as a standalone statutory body, and the subsequent investigation of this process by your committee.

While I can understand why this inquiry is needed given the billions of Australian dollars spent^{1,2} on Net Zero in the past five to ten years and planned in the next six to twenty-six years (for the 2030 and 2050 target dates) I cannot agree with the formation of an independent authority.

This submission takes the position that this Authority is not needed as there are many question marks over the existence of climate change as an existential threat that Australia is (at least partially) responsible for solving or mitigating. In addition, the Authority is at risk of becoming an untouchable, unaccountable think-tank whose recommendations and conclusions are beyond question.

In this submission I address the reasons why I believe this to be so.

The Science is not Settled

Many who support the establishment of Net Zero targets, and associated infrastructure, government agencies and vast amounts of expenditure have neglected a basic tenet of science: that it is never settled. As soon as science is declared to be settled, established or resolved, it ceases to become science. Thus, committing billions of Australian taxpayer dollars on this basis alone is sheer folly.

Global warming is real. It has been occurring for several hundred or so years³. In fact, if the climate was not changing, we should be concerned.^{4,5} Analyses of tree rings and ice-cores have shown that we are currently living in one of the coldest time periods in history, going back tens of thousands of years or even more⁶. Over that time, the average surface temperature on Earth has varied considerably⁷, and we can categorically say that humans were not producing CO² back then. In fact, CO² production by human activity has only really occurred in significant levels in the past one hundred years or so.⁸

CO² is plant food⁹, especially for crops which form a significant part of our global food needs.^{10,11} Greenhouses often deliberately pump carbon dioxide into their contained atmospheres, so that the small amount of plants growing inside them are more abundant and, sometimes literally, more fruitful. Increases in CO², therefore, should produce better outcomes at least in terms of our food supply and the greening of the planet. In addition to this, the jury is still out as to whether or not CO² precedes or follows increases or decreases in global temperatures.^{12,13}

To say that future Earth temperature rises will be catastrophic, dangerous and life threatening is also misleading. A recent Greenland study has shown that, during an inter-glacial period roughly 115,000 years ago, the average Earth surface temperature was eight degrees higher than it is now, yet the evidence in this study shows that the Greenland ice sheet stayed largely intact¹⁴, and we also know that polar bears continued to survive through that period and didn't go extinct¹⁵.

My intent with these paragraphs is to convey the necessity to understand what these reports and data are saying, and to conduct research from a zetetic perspective, not aiming to arrive at a predetermined outcome. In other words, we shouldn't be aiming to label rises in Carbon Dioxide and Average Temperature as "bad" before we start and then set out to prove why this is the case. We need to understand what is actually happening to us as a species and if our food-bowls and ecosystems are sustainable for us into the future.

There is enough doubt regarding the anthropogenic climate change argument to at least require prudence before we spend exorbitant amounts of money on a phenomenon that, so far according to all visible evidence that the average person can see on a day-to-day and year-to-year basis, has had very little impact on our lives. In other words, the burden of proof remains on those who claim that a disaster is imminent to show strong evidence that our lives are already being impacted in severe or even moderate ways – let alone to disaster level – and that future and current expenditure will have a measurably positive impact on our lives. Thus far, none of this evidence has been provided.

Why Australia does not need this Authority

The first point to make with the establishment of this *external* authority is the lack of accountability and oversight that we might expect, especially over time as the Authority becomes comfortable with its remit. There is a possibility that the Authority will eventually become a think tank of experts, not to be questioned by any lay person, and thus their conclusions and recommendations from any reports they create are likely to be beyond public or even governmental scrutiny. This has very much been the case with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC's

recommendations and reports are often flawed^{16,17}, yet are taken as “gospel” by those who advocate for climate action.

This is all the more concerning when the doubts around anthropogenic climate change that I have previously described are presented. There are further problems to be explored as well. The government, through these bills, wants Australia to become a “renewable energy superpower”, or words to that effect. As it is, “renewable energy superpower” is a highly subjective term. However, the problem is that to achieve this nebulous status, Australia will need to scale up so-called “clean” technologies by a factor of twenty.¹⁸

Is this even possible? Can we attract enough investment capital to achieve almost total renewable power in this country? There are already problems in this area^{19,20} What of the NIMBY factor? Most people simply do not want wind and solar farms in their communities.^{21,22}

No doubt this will be one of the tasks of the new Authority – to research, deal with and provide counter-arguments to such problems. This is clearly described or at least inferred within the documentation accompanying these two bills.

Yet there are two problems that have yet to be addressed during any discourse so far in Australia on Climate Change and Net Zero:

1. What if Australia does not meet its renewable targets in 2030 and 2050? It’s looking exceedingly likely that this isn’t going to happen.²³
2. How will the effectiveness of the Authority’s work be measured in the short and long term? In other words, how will the Authority’s work be assessed for efficacy?

Presumably there will be Key Performance Indicators of some sort, and deadlines to be met. Even if Australia **does** meet its targets through the establishment of the Authority in terms of power production and initiatives such as electric vehicles, global temperatures may **still** remain on a trajectory that matches well established trends stretching back through many thousands if not millions of years of history, regardless of the levels of atmospheric CO². There is enough research out there to suggest that this is a possible scenario.

It is then that we must ask ourselves if all the effort and the billions – perhaps trillions by 2050²⁴ – were worth it. The problem is: those making the decisions at present are perhaps not going to be around in 2050 and won’t have to answer for the decisions they make now. Thus, we have to get this right, for the sake of our children and our grandchildren.

- ¹ [Australian Budget Commits \\$2.5 Billion to Clean Energy and Renewables Projects | Global Australia](#)
- ² [Budget 2023–24](#)
- ³ [Parker, D.E., Legg, T.P. and Folland, C.K. \(1992\) A New Daily Central England Temperature Series, 1772-1991. International Journal of Climatology, 12, 317-342. - References - Scientific Research Publishing \(scirp.org\)](#)
- ⁴ [Reevaluating the Concern of Climate Change - Archive Digital \(ditdo.in\)](#)
- ⁵ [The Global Warming Debate: A Review of the State of Science | Pure and Applied Geophysics \(springer.com\)](#)
- ⁶ [Past climate changes. From Scotese, C.R., 2002. Global Climate History... | Download Scientific Diagram \(researchgate.net\)](#)
- ⁷ [Ice Core | National Centers for Environmental Information \(NCEI\) \(noaa.gov\)](#)
- ⁸ [Boden, T.A., Marland, G. and Andres, R.J. \(2016\) Global, Regional, and National Fossil-Fuel CO2 Emissions, Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. - References - Scientific Research Publishing \(scirp.org\)](#)
- ⁹ [CO2 utilisation in agricultural greenhouses: A novel 'plant to plant' approach driven by bioenergy with carbon capture systems within the energy, water and food Nexus - ScienceDirect](#)
- ¹⁰ [Frontiers | Ensuring Nutritious Food Under Elevated CO2 Conditions: A Case for Improved C4 Crops \(frontiersin.org\)](#)
- ¹¹ [13-10-21 Craig Idso-The positive externalities of carbon dioxide monetary benefits on food production.pdf \(coordinationrurale.fr\)](#)
- ¹² [Climate myths: Ice cores show CO2 increases lag behind temperature rises, disproving the link to global warming | New Scientist](#)
- ¹³ [CO2 lags temperature - what does it mean? \(skepticalscience.com\)](#)
- ¹⁴ [Eemian interglacial reconstructed from a Greenland folded ice core | Nature](#)
- ¹⁵ [Polar bears - older past, same future? \(nrdc.org\)](#)
- ¹⁶ <https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/IPCCmistakes.htm>
- ¹⁷ https://www.carbonbrief.org/scientists-challenge-flawed-communication-of-study-claiming-1-5c-warming-breach/874c49_fe4de26cf3634959af29d1fb2675a993.pdf (usrfiles.com)
- ¹⁸ [Investment in new Australian wind and solar farms stalls amid 'raft of barriers', report finds | Energy | The Guardian](#)
- ¹⁹ [Clean Energy Council: Investment in renewable energy slumps 80pc as 2030 climate target fades \(afr.com\)](#)
- ²⁰ [Victoria wind farm proposed by Fera is opposed by hobby farmers \(afr.com\)](#)
- ²¹ [Energy Minister Chris Bowen has been warned that the hunter offshore wind project cannot proceed by Port Stephens residents. | The Australian](#)
- ²² [The hints have been coming for a while, but now it's official: Australia isn't on track to meet its climate targets - ABC News](#)
- ²³ [Energy transition Australia: Chris Bowen's Capacity Investment Scheme falls far short of a \\$5 trillion task \(afr.com\)](#)