



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
Environment and Communications References
Committee report:

Current and future impacts of climate change on
housing, buildings and infrastructure

MAY 2024

Response

Recommendation 1 (Greens)

That the Australian Government commit to a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions for Australia by 2040 and the actions necessary to achieve this target.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 2 (Greens)

That the Australian Government fund the preparation of a National Climate Change Risk Assessment that includes assessments of extreme risks and worst-case scenarios for Australia's built environment. This assessment should be updated regularly, such as every five years.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 3 (Greens)

That the Australian Government commission and fund Infrastructure Australia to lead a national audit of at-risk infrastructure including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- road and rail networks;
- ports and airports;
- water, stormwater and irrigation infrastructure;
- electricity generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure;
- telecommunications infrastructure;
- housing and building infrastructure, including the policies and standards underpinning the planning, development and construction of buildings and communities; and
- coastal defences.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 4 (Greens)

That the Australian Government provide:

- ongoing funding to support the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility; and
- additional funding to CSIRO and other relevant Commonwealth agencies to support further research into climate extremes.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 5 (Greens)

That the Australian Government lead the development of nationally consistent benchmarks and guidelines on climate risks, particularly sea level rise, for use as part of state and local government planning decisions. The benchmarks and guidelines should be based on comprehensive scientific assessments and include consideration of worst-case scenarios and climate extremes.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 6 (Greens)

That an overarching objective regarding the need to effectively plan for climate change be included in all state and territory planning legislation.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 7 (Greens)

- a. That the Australian Government commission research to enhance the information available to policymakers regarding the full range of social and economic costs associated with heat stress.
- b. In particular, the Australian Government should commission research to estimate the potential health system savings and other economic benefits that could be realised by taking measures to reduce the severity of the urban heat island effect.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 8 (Greens)

That the Australian Government request state and territory governments to ensure effective coastal retreat strategies are developed in their jurisdictions. To inform the development of these strategies, the Australian Government should ensure that the state and territory governments have ready access to expert advice from relevant Australian Government departments and agencies.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 9 (Greens)

- a. That the Australian Government request that the Australian Building Codes Board develop minimum requirements for the National Construction Code that are specifically designed to address heat stress risks associated with internal temperatures.
- b. To facilitate the development of amendments to the National Construction Code, it is further recommended that the Australian Government provide funding for research into:
 - how overheating in highly rated energy efficient dwellings can be created where there can be inadequate ventilation; and
 - the behaviour of building occupants during heatwave periods.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 10 (Greens)

As part of the research into the full range of social and economic costs associated with heat stress called for in recommendation 7, estimates should be developed of the potential health system savings and other benefits that could be realised through enhanced building standards. In particular, the research should consider the benefits associated with retrofitting low efficiency dwellings to keep internal temperatures within safe ranges during extreme heat events.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 11 (Greens)

That all state and territory governments develop educational resources and introduce or expand existing financial incentive programs designed to encourage homeowners to undertake cost-effective retrofitting of existing dwellings.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 12 (Greens)

That all state and territory governments legislate to require that an energy rating measuring passive energy performance must be disclosed to prospective buyers and tenants when a residential property is offered for sale or is available to rent.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 13 (Greens)

That state and territory governments consider whether to set a deadline by which all residential properties for sale or rent in their jurisdiction must meet a prescribed energy rating.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 14 (Greens)

That the Australian, state and territory governments require that new office space used in the public sector meet high standards of climate resilience and sustainability, including higher energy efficiency standards than the minimum required under the National Built Environment Rating System.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 15 (Greens)

That state and territory governments invest in measures to improve energy efficiency and to reduce heat stress risk in public housing.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 16 (Greens)

That the Australian Government work with organisations representing the built environment sector to identify options for ensuring that robust postproject reviews of infrastructure projects are conducted.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 17 (Greens)

That the Australian Government develop a national plan for passenger and freight transport that:

- outlines a transition to net zero emissions transport; and
- ensures decision-making and planning processes for transportation infrastructure projects are appropriate in the face of climate change.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 18 (Greens)

That state and territory governments:

- require the design of new water supply, sewerage, sewage treatment and stormwater assets to be informed by reliable climate projections as well as historical data; and
- ensure state-owned water corporations and local governments have the resources and support necessary to undertake effective maintenance of water supply, sewerage, sewage treatment and stormwater assets.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 19 (Greens)

That the Australian Government support state governments to ensure that water sector assets are climate resilient by offering ongoing access to advice from Commonwealth scientific agencies on relevant climate risks.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 20 (Greens)

That the Australian Government pursue, through the Council of Australian Governments Energy Council, amending the National Electricity Objective to require the electricity sector to reach net zero emissions by 2030.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 21 (Greens)

That the Australian Government develop a comprehensive energy transition plan that includes:

- reform of the National Electricity Market rules and revised tariffs to support the growth of renewable energy and ensure networks are prepared to efficiently respond to changes in the energy market;
- a mechanism for the orderly retirement of coal fired power stations; and
- innovative approaches to enable peer-to-peer energy trading.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 22 (Greens)

That the Australian Government:

- continue and expand the Renewable Energy Target beyond 2020 and consider adopting renewable energy reverse auctions, such as those adopted by the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria, to bring more new generation into the National Electricity Market;
- adopt a National Energy Storage Target of 20 gigawatts of multi-hour storage by 2030;
- ensure regulatory arrangements support the continuing deployment of grid level battery storage and household solar and battery storage technologies; and
- commit to not providing any direct funding, subsidies or other support for the construction of new coal fired power stations in Australia.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 23 (Greens)

That the Australian Government work with the state and territory governments to develop a national climate change and health strategy.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 24 (Greens)

- a. That state and territory governments require proposals for new health and education facilities to be subject to rigorous assessment of climate-related risks, including the risks associated with the proposed location and building design.
- b. It is further recommended that state and territory governments commence planning to ensure that facilities in high-risk locations that are nearing the end of their useful life are replaced with new facilities in more suitable locations.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 25 (Greens)

That:

- the Victorian Government's Healthy Homes Program be expanded to cover all of Victoria; and
- other state governments introduce programs similar to the Healthy Homes Program to reduce the climate-related health risks faced by lowincome individuals with complex healthcare needs.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 26 (Greens)

That state and territory governments work with local governments and water authorities to increase the use of rainwater, stormwater, recycled water and other water sources to maintain the green infrastructure used for public recreation.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 27 (Greens)

- a. That the Australian Government replace the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy with a comprehensive and ambitious national climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy.
- b. This new whole-of-government strategy should contain sector-based national targets and timeframes for emissions reductions against which performance can be measured. The strategy should also incorporate strategies relating to transport (recommendation 17), energy (recommendation 21) and health (recommendation 23).

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 28 (Greens)

- A. That, in addition to recommendation 6 on state and territory planning legislation, the Australian, state and territory governments review all environmental legislation to ensure that adequate consideration of the effects of climate change is expressly required as part of assessment and decision-making processes.
- b. In particular, the introduction of a greenhouse trigger should be a key issue for consideration as part of the upcoming independent review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 29 (Greens)

That the Australian Government pursue the creation of a COAG Climate Change Council.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 30 (Greens)

That the Australian Government establish an independent statutory authority to:

- provide Australians with an independent and reliable source of information about climate change science; and
- assist stakeholders to understand and implement effective adaptation techniques, including by acting as a 'one stop shop' that can direct stakeholders to relevant Commonwealth departments and agencies.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 31 (Greens)

That the Australian Government's National Resilience Taskforce develop recommendations for the Government to consider that would facilitate more frequent betterment of assets that need to be reconstructed or repaired following natural hazards.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 32 (Greens)

That state governments provide local governments with exemption from liability for decisions made in good faith relating to the use of land that is subject to climate change risks, such as flooding, coastal hazards and bushfires.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 33 (Greens)

That the Australian Government provide specific purpose payments to the states to assist local governments to improve the resilience of infrastructure assets most at risk to climate change.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 1 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government commit to a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions for Australia by 2050 and the actions necessary to achieve this target.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 2 (ALP)

- a. Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government consider funding the preparation of a NCCRA that includes assessments of extreme risks and worst-case scenarios for Australia's built environment.
- b. Labor Senators recommend that an assessment such as the NCCRA should be updated regularly, such as every five years.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 3 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government consider commissioning and funding Infrastructure Australia to lead a national audit of at-risk infrastructure including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- road and rail networks;
- ports and airports;
- water, stormwater and irrigation infrastructure;
- electricity generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure;
- telecommunications infrastructure;
- housing and building infrastructure, including the policies and standards underpinning the planning, development and construction of buildings and communities; and
- coastal defences.

Response

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The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 4 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government consider providing:

- ongoing funding to support the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility; and
- additional funding to CSIRO and other relevant Commonwealth agencies to support further research into climate extremes and impacts.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 5 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government lead the development of nationally consistent benchmarks and guidelines on climate risks, particularly sea level rise, for use as part of state and local government planning decisions. The benchmarks and guidelines should be based on comprehensive scientific assessments and include consideration of worst-case scenarios and climate extremes.

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Recommendation 7 (ALP)

- a. Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government consider commissioning research to enhance the information available to policymakers regarding the full range of social and economic costs associated with heat stress.
- b. Labor Senators also recommend that the Australian Government consider commissioning research to estimate the potential health system savings and other economic benefits that could be realised by taking measures to reduce the severity of the urban heat island effect.

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Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government request state and territory governments ensure effective coastal retreat strategies are developed in their jurisdictions. To inform the development of these strategies, the Australian Government should ensure that the state and territory governments have ready access to expert advice from relevant Australian Government departments and agencies.

Response

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The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 9 (ALP)

a. Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government request that the Australian Building Codes Board develop minimum requirements for the National Construction Code that are specifically designed to address heat stress risks associated with internal temperatures.

b. To facilitate the development of amendments to the National Construction Code, Labor Senators further recommend that the Australian Government consider providing funding for research into:

- how overheating in highly rated energy efficient dwellings can be created where there can be inadequate ventilation; and
- the behaviour of building occupants during heatwave periods.

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Labor Senators recommend that estimates be developed of the potential health system savings and other benefits that could be realised through enhanced building standards. In particular, the research should consider the benefits associated with retrofitting low efficiency dwellings to keep internal temperatures within safe ranges during extreme heat events.

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Response

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Recommendation 16 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government work with organisations representing the built environment sector to identify options for ensuring that robust post-project reviews of infrastructure projects are conducted.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 17 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government develop a national plan for passenger and freight transport that:

- outlines a transition to net zero emissions transport; and
- ensures decision-making and planning processes for transportation infrastructure projects are appropriate in the face of climate change.

Response

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The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 18 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that state and territory governments:

- require the design of new water supply, sewerage, sewage treatment and stormwater assets to be informed by reliable climate projections as well as historical data; and
- ensure state-owned water corporations and local governments have the resources and support necessary to undertake effective maintenance of water supply, sewerage, sewage treatment and stormwater assets.

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The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 19 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government support state governments to ensure that water sector assets are climate resilient by offering ongoing access to advice from Commonwealth scientific agencies on relevant climate risks.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 20 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government pursue, through the Council of Australian Governments Energy Council, amending the National Electricity Objective to include decarbonisation of the electricity sector.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 21 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government develop a comprehensive energy transition plan that includes:

- reform of the National Electricity Market rules to support the growth of renewable energy, new energy technologies, and ensure networks are prepared to efficiently respond to changes in the energy market;
- a mandated notice period for the retirement of coal fired power stations as well as a detailed plan for a just transition for coal fired power station workers and their communities; and
- innovative approaches to enable peer-to-peer energy trading as well as other innovative models such as community renewable projects.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 22 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government:

- implement a national electricity investment mechanism that supports the continued transition to renewable energy, consistent with expert advice on the electricity decarbonisation needed to meet Australia's obligations under the Paris Accords;
- adopt policies to support investment in electricity storage to support continued growth in renewable energy;
- ensure regulatory arrangements support the continuing deployment of grid level battery storage and household solar and battery storage technologies; and
- commit to not providing any direct funding, subsidies or other support for the construction of new coal fired power stations in Australia.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 23 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government work with the state and territory governments to develop a national climate change and health strategy.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 24 (ALP)

- a. Labor Senators recommend that state and territory governments require proposals for new health and education facilities to be subject to rigorous assessment of climate-related risks, including the risks associated with the proposed location and building design.
- b. Labor Senators also recommend that state and territory governments commence planning to ensure that facilities in high-risk locations that are nearing the end of their useful life are replaced with new facilities in more suitable locations.

Response

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Recommendation 25 (ALP)

- a. Labor Senators recommend that the Victorian Government's Healthy Homes Program be expanded to cover all of Victoria.
- B. Labor Senators further recommend that other state governments introduce programs similar to the Healthy Homes Program to reduce the climate-related health risks faced by low-income individuals with complex healthcare needs.

Response

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The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 27 (ALP)

- a. Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government replace the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy with a comprehensive national climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy.
- b. This whole-of-government strategy should contain sector-based national targets and timeframes for emissions reductions against which performance can be measured.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 28 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian, state and territory governments review all environmental legislation to ensure that adequate consideration of the effects of climate change is expressly required as part of future assessment and decision-making processes.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 29 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government investigate the creation of a COAG Climate Change Council.

Response

NOTED

The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 30 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend that the Australian Government's National Resilience Taskforce develop recommendations for the Government to consider that would facilitate more frequent betterment of assets that need to be reconstructed or repaired following natural hazards.

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The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 31 (ALP)

Labor Senators recommend state governments consider providing local governments with exemption from liability for decisions made in good faith relating to the use of land that is subject to climate change risks, such as flooding, coastal hazards and bushfires.

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The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Recommendation 32 (ALP)

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Response

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