

Appendix 1: Background information

1 Recent extreme weather events

This year has shown us the widespread extreme weather events that climate science has been telling us to expect. We have seen:

- heat waves in Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Canada, the United States, and Japan, with many new highest ever temperatures being recorded, including a premium marker of greenhouse warming, the highest daily minimum temperature ever recorded anywhere, 42.6 °C in Oman on 28 June 2018 – a full degree higher than the highest-ever Hobart maximum;
- severe flooding in Japan, Kerala (India) and the United States (warmer air holds more moisture leading to more intense rainfall);
- record bushfires in Scandinavia (including some north of the Arctic Circle), Greece, Portugal, California, and British Columbia;
- a devastating drought in NSW and parts of Queensland and Victoria made worse by consistently higher than expected temperatures;
- winter bushfires in NSW and Queensland, and a winter-time start to the new fire season in Victoria, the ACT and much of NSW.

In addition, a recent scientific publication (sometimes referred to as the “hothouse earth” report) has argued that even at the Paris agreement “safe” warming limit of 2°C there is a risk that planetary feedback process will drive further warming that will be out of humanity’s control.

2 Review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008

Section 18 of the Act requires that its operation be independently reviewed every four years. Details of the most recent review can be found [here](#)*. The Government, whose response can be found [here](#)*, intends to introduce amendments to the Act sometime in the next few months, but no details of proposed amendments have yet been published.

* See emailed digital text

3 What is the Energy Transition?

The Energy Transition is the process in which fossil fuels (coal, all petroleum fuels, natural gas, LPG) are phased out and replaced by zero emissions alternatives. By committing Tasmania to 100% renewable electricity by 2022, the Tasmanian Government has made a good start on our Transition. However, Tasmania’s use of fossil fuels in other areas, including transport, has continued to grow, and it is all those uses that need to be phased out.

4 Can the Energy Transition be done without disruption?

No. Any major change in something fundamental to our economy, such as energy, is likely to be disruptive. However, making the most of the time available (by starting as soon as possible) and planning to minimise disruption along the way can ease the impact of disruption. Tasmania should be seeking a *just transition*, which means that in phasing out fossil fuels, potential adverse impacts on people, communities and organisations are identified and minimised.

Using fossil fuel requires capital equipment such as cars, trucks, tractors, railway locomotives, heaters, boilers, generators, ships and aircraft. Individuals and businesses buying that equipment expect to use it for the full period of its expected service life. Climate Tasmania is concerned that Tasmanian individuals and businesses making purchasing decisions today are assuming that fossil fuel use can continue indefinitely, unaware that addressing climate change means restricting the period in which such equipment can be used.

The longer this situation is allowed to continue, the starker will the choice between allowing the equipment to be used for its expected lifetime (thus abandoning attempts to reduce climate disruption), or

requiring the purchasers of the equipment to take economic losses. Economic losses for equipment owners will likely result in some job losses. This potential for economic disruption must be balanced against the economic disruption that climate disruption will bring.

The best way to minimise both kinds of disruption is to:

- start phasing out fossil fuels as soon as possible;
- fully inform all Tasmanians about this all-of-community undertaking, so that everyone understands the exact nature of the challenge;
- involve as many individuals, businesses and groups as possible to harness our native strength, resilience and creativity; and
- measure and publicly report progress to share learnings, celebrate successes, and identify roadblocks to be removed by targeted action.

Economic losses due to climate change will not be limited to stranded fossil fuel assets. Extreme weather and sea level rise both have the potential to cause large losses, and an amended Act will need to have processes in place for adapting to such changes.

5 Tasmania’s history of policy “churn” on climate change

The story of Tasmania’s policy response to climate change has been one of impermanence, and the steps involved are depressingly familiar:

- a government is formed and policy development is started;
- a substantial way into the term, a policy or an action plan is finalised;
- work on the plan is barely under way when it is time for the next election;
- with the election of a new government, the existing plan is jettisoned;
- policy development is restarted;
- and the cycle goes on.

This climate policy churn has long been a concern to us because it has been the main reason for lack of substantial action. We need a detailed policy response to climate change that remains in place over successive election cycles, which entails the Tasmanian Parliament enacting a detailed, comprehensive Climate Change Act with high levels of transparency and checks and balances. While subsequent Parliaments could amend or repeal such an Act, it would need a majority in both houses to do so.

6 Benefits from action on climate change

Responding to climate change is fundamentally a risk management exercise, and hence the primary benefits come from avoiding or otherwise minimizing the risks. In addition, phasing out fossil fuel use has additional economic benefits, as most of the fossil fuels used in Tasmania come from outside the island. Petroleum fuels are the largest cause of economic leakage from the Tasmanian economy, with \$1.3 billion per year leaving the state to pay for them. The transition from those fuels will almost certainly involve using local resources, such as electricity and biofuels instead. Eliminating that economic leakage will strengthen the Tasmanian economy and increase its resilience.