



Australian Government
Climate Change Authority

CLIMATE CHANGE AUTHORITY

CORPORATE PLAN 2017-18

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CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
Purpose.....	5
Objective and role.....	5
Functions	5
The Authority's core principles and values.....	6
Period of corporate plan	6
Authority members.....	6
Environment	6
Performance	8
Outcomes and performance information.....	8
Performance measurement and assessment	10
Capability	13
Staffing	13
Knowledge management	13
Shared services arrangements	13
Risk oversight and management	14
Good governance.....	14
Risks.....	14

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to introduce the fourth corporate plan for the Climate Change Authority.

The Climate Change Authority *Corporate Plan 2017–18* has been prepared to meet the requirements of paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and Division 8 of the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011*. The plan covers the periods 2017–18 to 2020–21.

The Authority's role is to provide independent, relevant and insightful advice to the Minister for the Environment and Energy, and the Australian Parliament, on climate change policy by undertaking reviews and other research tasks.

This is the Authority's fifth year of operation and once again, it has been a year of significant achievement.

In August 2016, the Authority delivered its third and final report of the Special Review on Australia's climate goals and policies as requested by the then Minister for the Environment. This report was the culmination of nearly 18 months of research and analysis. It built on previous reports released in 2015, which examined the targets that Australia should adopt for the Paris Agreement and options for the policies that could be used to meet these goals. The Authority also released modelling and analysis of policies to reduce emissions from the electricity generation sector.

The final Special Review report recommended some avenues for future research including an examination of the multiple benefits for the broader environment and on-farm profitability that could flow from well-coordinated policy to reduce emissions on the land. Following public consultation, the Authority will finalise this research in 2017-18.

In 2016-17, the Authority also worked with the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) to prepare a joint report on policies to enhance power system security and to reduce electricity prices consistent with Australia's emissions reduction targets in the Paris Agreement. This joint report was provided to the Minister for Environment and Energy in June 2017.

The Authority will complete its second review of the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative Act) 2011* by 31 December 2017. The CFI Act provides the legislative basis for the Emissions Reduction Fund. Looking further ahead, the Authority is required to complete a review of the *National Greenhouse and Reporting Act 2007* by the end of the 2018 calendar year.

In all of its work, the Authority seeks to embody its core principles and values of independence, broad stakeholder engagement, excellence in research and analysis, transparency, good governance and accountability. These core principles and values are set out in more detail in this plan.

The Authority is supported by an expert secretariat. The team includes a number of new staff following the Authority's move from Melbourne to Canberra in 2016. The new team quickly got up to speed on the intricacies of climate policy. I thank them for their hard work, good humour and commitment to excellence.

Shayleen Thompson
Acting Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE

OBJECTIVE AND ROLE

The Climate Change Authority's objective is to provide rigorous, independent and balanced advice to the Minister for the Environment and Energy, and the Australian Parliament, on climate change policy, in order to improve the quality of life for all Australians.

The Authority does this by conducting regular and specifically commissioned reviews, and by undertaking climate change research.

FUNCTIONS

The Authority's functions are set out in its enabling legislation, the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011*. These include:

- conducting reviews and making recommendations on the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) and National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) scheme—these review requirements are established in legislation
- conducting reviews and making recommendations on other matters as requested by the Minister for the Environment and Energy, or the Australian Parliament
- undertaking its own independent research and analysis into climate change and other matters relevant to its functions.

The Authority is a non-corporate statutory body located in the Environment portfolio.

The Authority is an advisory body only. It does not administer government programs or regulation.

The Authority's purpose will be pursued through:

- policy, research and analysis that is high-quality and fit-for-purpose
- effective secretariat support to the Authority's Chair and members
- sound corporate governance and financial management.



THE AUTHORITY'S CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The Authority has identified the following organisational principles and values, which guide how it conducts its business.

INDEPENDENCE

The Authority is an independent statutory authority. To build and maintain credibility as the provider of rigorous climate policy analysis and recommendations on future directions, it demonstrates independence and balance in thinking and action.

BROAD AND POSITIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

New and divergent ideas contribute to healthy debate. The Authority will take account of all available inputs by engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and other contributors with an interest in climate change policy and related matters.

The Authority will consult the public on every review, consistent with the requirements of its legislation.

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

The credibility of the Authority relies on the quality of its research, analysis and reporting. The Authority will undertake thorough research and analysis through detailed planning and applying highly skilled resources to the task.

The Authority has a skilled workforce with a broad range of experience and established links to relevant expert local and international organisations.

TRANSPARENCY

The Authority will share its knowledge and operate in an open and transparent way.

The Authority has an obligation to publish its reports under the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011*. Those reports are a result of reviewing and synthesising existing materials, engaging stakeholders and undertaking research to generate original reporting, analysis and advice.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Good governance is an essential element of all successful organisations. The Authority is subject to the *Public Governance, Performance and Reporting Act 2013* and the *Public Service Act 1999*, and has specific additional governance requirements under the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011*.

The Authority maintains the highest standards of accountability and governance.

BUILD STAFF CAPACITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Staff is the Authority's most valuable resource. For the Authority to succeed, the staff must also develop.

The Authority will provide all staff with the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge through formal training and other development opportunities.

PERIOD OF CORPORATE PLAN

This corporate plan covers the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2021. As noted below in the *Environment* section, government policy is that the Authority be wound up within the life of the current Parliament. This plan therefore focuses mainly on the 2017–18 and 2018–19 financial years, as it is difficult to plan for the remainder of the corporate plan's time horizon given this uncertainty.

In 2017–18, the Authority will finalise its second review of the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011*, by 31 December 2017.

The third and final report of the Special Review: *Towards a climate policy toolkit: Special Review on Australia's climate goals and policy*, recommended an examination of the multiple benefits for the broader environment and on-farm profitability that could flow from well-coordinated policies to reduce emissions on the land. Following public consultation, the Authority will finalise its research report - *Action on the Land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability* in early 2018.

In 2017–18, the Authority will begin its review of the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007*, to be completed by 31 December 2018.

In 2018–19, the Authority will begin work on its third review of the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011*. That review will be due to be completed by 31 December 2020.

The Authority is yet to develop other aspects of its work plan for 2020–21.

Further information on the Authority's work plan can be found under *Performance*.

AUTHORITY MEMBERS

The Climate Change Authority is an independent statutory authority comprising a Chair, the Chief Scientist and up to seven members appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Energy.

The members of the Authority are:

- Chair: Dr Wendy Craik AM
- Chief Scientist: Dr Alan Finkel
- Mr Stuart Allinson
- Ms Kate Carnell AO
- The Hon John Sharp

Four Authority member positions are currently vacant.

Details of Authority members' qualifications and expertise can be found on the Authority's website at www.climatechangeauthority.gov.au.

The Authority is supported by the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Ms Shayleen Thompson, and secretariat staff.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment in which the Authority is operating has shifted significantly since its establishment in 2012 and it continues to change.

The Authority is funded until the end of the 2017-18 financial year. Government policy is to wind up the Authority during the life of the current parliament. This would require changes to the Authority's enabling legislation and it is unclear when this would occur. The Government has said it will consider funding for the Authority on an annual basis.

The Authority is therefore operating in an environment of some uncertainty. Some of the implications of this uncertainty are outlined in the *Capability* and *Risk* sections below.

The Authority secretariat moved its premises from Melbourne to Canberra in September 2016. Most of the existing staff elected not to move to Canberra with the Authority and the secretariat has recruited a new team of Canberra-based staff.

Being located in Canberra allows the Authority to access shared service arrangements provided by other departments (like payroll, security and ICT) more easily. As a result the Authority secretariat has down-sized its in-house corporate support team.

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The Authority supports the Department of the Environment and Energy in reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by providing independent climate change mitigation advice to the Government, including in relation to the energy sector (Linked program, Outcome 1, Portfolio Budget Statement, p198).

The Authority maintains its independence while drawing on the expertise of other agencies in the conduct of its reviews and research projects.

In 2017-18, the Authority and particularly its secretariat is working with the Departments of the Environment and Energy, Agriculture and Water, Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, all of which deliver programs or policy related to the Authority's work program.

The move to Canberra has allowed the Authority to engage more closely with Canberra based agencies particularly the Department of the Environment and Energy and the Clean Energy Regulator (CER). The CER administers the CFI Act and the NGER Act, both of which are subject to reviews by the Authority in the next two reporting periods. Being physically closer to the CER is helping the Authority conduct its legislative review work.

TABLE 1: FACTORS WITHIN THE CLIMATE CHANGE AUTHORITY'S CONTROL

FACTORS – GREATER INFLUENCE	FACTORS - PARTIAL INFLUENCE	FACTORS - LITTLE INFLUENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the Authority members with sound advice on which to make decisions • Preparing research reports that are clear, evidence based and well-constructed • Conduct of research • Meeting deadlines for legislative reviews • Consulting effectively with stakeholders • Working with other Commonwealth agencies • Recruiting and managing staff • Effective governance including audit • Effective measures to address risk and fraud • Authority business operations including shared services arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget allocations • Influence of reviews and research on governments and other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests from Minister or Parliament to undertake Special Review reports • Appointments of members to the Authority • Timing of winding up the Authority

PERFORMANCE

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

OUTCOME DESCRIPTION

The Authority's outcome is to:

Provide expert advice to the Australian Government on climate change mitigation initiatives, including through conducting regular and specifically commissioned reviews and through undertaking climate change research.



Activity 1 Complete the second review of the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011* by 31 December 2017.

- The Carbon Farming Initiative legislation underpins the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF), which is a key element of the Government's emissions reduction policy. The ERF purchases emissions offsets through auctions for activities that reduce or store greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Authority released its first review of the CFI on 22 December 2014. The Authority will complete its second review of the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011* by 31 December 2017.

Activity 2: Self-generated research: Land based emissions reduction policies

- The Authority's legislation allows for the Authority to pursue its own research on climate change matters.
- The Special Review final report recommended further work on emissions reduction policies on the land that deliver broader environmental outcomes and improved on-farm profitability. The Authority will complete a research report: *Action on the Land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability* in early 2018.
- The Authority may decide to undertake other pieces of self-generated research during the life of this corporate plan.

Activity 3: Commence work on the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007* review

- The *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007* (NGER Act) established a single national reporting framework for greenhouse gas emissions and companies' energy consumption and production. The NGER Act also underpins the ERF safeguard mechanism, which sets limits on the emissions of some businesses.
- The Authority will commence planning and preliminary work on the review of the NGER Act and safeguard mechanism in late 2017-18. The review is due for completion by 31 December 2018.

Activity 4: Other reviews requested by the Government or Parliament

- In 2016-17, the Government requested the Authority undertake a joint research project with the Australian Energy Market Commission on the electricity sector.
- In 2017-18 and for the remaining three work periods, the Authority may be asked to perform other Special Reviews by the Government.

OUTCOME STRATEGY

The Authority will deliver influential, independent and expert advice by:

- engaging stakeholders to gather information and debate policy options
- undertaking extensive and rigorous research and analysis
- presenting insightful and practical reports
- operating within a strong governance and accountability framework.

In undertaking its reviews, the Authority must take the following principles into account:

- economic efficiency
- environmental effectiveness
- equity
- the public interest
- the impact on households, business, workers and communities
- support the development of an effective global response to climate change
- Australian foreign policy and trade objectives.

The Authority must also consult publicly when conducting its reviews and publish its reports on its website.

DELIVERY STRATEGIES

The Authority will deliver on its legislative obligations by preparing timely, high-quality reviews by:

- undertaking thorough policy development and analysis, including desktop research and analysis into relevant issues
- in-depth analysis into relevant sectors and contemporary research
- commissioning other analytical work (for example, economic modelling) where required
- conducting meaningful and transparent consultation with experts and stakeholders, including business, industry, environment and other community groups
- monitoring developments in climate change policy by reviewing publicly available resources and building networks with expert, local and international organisations.

The secretariat will facilitate the Authority's decision-making by:

- arranging regular meetings of the Authority
- providing briefing, reports and other supporting documentation that are fit-for-purpose and of a high quality.

Indicators of performance include: the Authority's research and review reports being viewed by stakeholders as high quality and referenced in public policy forums, meeting timelines set by the Authority members or in legislation and the use of open and transparent processes. The Authority relies mainly on qualitative indicators given the nature of its work.



PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT

TABLE 2: PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

YEAR	ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGET	ASSESSMENT
2017-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise CFI legislation review Finalise research report <i>Action on the land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability</i> Commence work on NGER review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CFI review report is of a high quality, well-received by stakeholders and used in public policy forums and discussions Public consultation processes on the CFI review are transparent, accessible and highly regarded by stakeholders Public consultation processes on the <i>Action on the land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability</i> research report are transparent, accessible and highly regarded by stakeholders The research report <i>Action on the land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability</i> is of a high quality, well-received by stakeholders, and used in public policy forums and discussions Scoping and methodology for the NGER review are planned and put in train; research work commences The Authority secretariat's work supports effective decision making by the Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CFI legislative review is completed by 31 December 2017 The research report <i>Action on the land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability</i>, is completed Planning for NGER review completed; research commences Authority members express satisfaction with secretariat's work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of feedback from stakeholders in public forums and submissions on CFI review Analysis of feedback from stakeholders in public forums and submissions on research report, <i>Action on the land: reducing emissions, conserving natural capital and improving farm profitability</i> Issues and consultation papers, public submissions, research and review reports are accessible on the Authority's website Authority meeting minutes assessed for feedback on secretariat's work
2018-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise NGER review Research reports on emissions reduction policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NGER review report is of a high quality, well-received by stakeholders and used in public policy forums and discussions Public consultation processes on the NGER review are transparent, accessible and highly regarded by stakeholders Research reports are of a high quality, well-received by stakeholders, and used in public policy forums and discussions Public consultation processes on the research reports are transparent, accessible and highly regarded by stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise report of NGER review by 31 December 2018 Research reports completed in timeframe set by Authority members Authority members express satisfaction with secretariat's work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of feedback on NGER review from stakeholders in public forums and submissions Authority members satisfied with progress Analysis of feedback on research reports from stakeholders in public forums and submissions Authority meeting minutes assessed for feedback on secretariat's work

YEAR	ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGET	ASSESSMENT
2019-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence work on CFI review Research reports on emissions reduction policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping and methodology for CFI review are planned and put in train; research work commences Research reports are of a high quality, well-received by stakeholders, and used in public policy forums and discussions Public consultation processes on research reports are transparent, accessible and highly regarded by stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for CFI review completed; research commences Research reports completed in timeframe set by Authority members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of feedback from stakeholders in public forums and submissions on research reports.
2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise CFI review Research reports on emissions reduction policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CFI review report is of a high quality, well-received by stakeholders, and used in public policy forums and discussions Public consultation processes on the CFI review report are transparent, accessible and highly regarded by stakeholders Research reports are of a high quality, well-received by stakeholders, and used in public policy forums and discussions Public consultation processes on research reports are transparent, accessible and highly regarded by stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise report of CFI review by 31 December 2020 Research reports completed in timeframe set by Authority members Authority members express satisfaction with secretariat's work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of feedback on CFI review report from stakeholders in public forums and submissions Authority members satisfied with progress Analysis of feedback from stakeholders in public forums and submissions on research reports Authority meeting minutes assessed for feedback on secretariat's work

As noted in the *Environment* section, government policy is that the Authority be wound up. The performance information in this plan therefore focuses mainly on the 2017–18 and 2018–19 financial years, as it is difficult to forecast and plan for the remaining reporting periods given this uncertainty.

If the Authority is not wound up during 2017-18, it will finalise its review of the CFI legislation and commence work on its review of the NGER legislation in 2017–18.

The next scheduled review of the CFI legislation after 2017 would need to be completed by 31 December 2020. The next review of the NGER legislation is not due to conclude until the end of 2023 and is beyond the scope of this plan.

The Authority intends to continue to use the following high-level performance indicators as the basis for its performance reporting in future years. Detailed performance information for later reporting periods will be provided in subsequent corporate plans:

- Reviews and reports from research conducted by the Authority are of a high quality, well-received by stakeholders, and used in public policy forums and discussions.
- Public consultation processes are transparent, accessible and highly regarded by stakeholders.
- Authority members are satisfied with the level of secretariat support.



CAPABILITY

The Authority's talented and capable staff are its core asset. There is a risk that uncertainty will affect the Authority's ability to retain staff and deliver its work plan.

As a small agency, the Authority partners with other Commonwealth agencies to deliver its payroll, ICT, finance payable and receivable, security and legal services in a cost-effective manner.

The Authority undertakes its work within a strong governance framework, including meeting governance requirements under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

STAFFING

The Authority relies on its staff to undertake the research and analysis that supports its reviews and reports. Their expertise and professionalism is critical to both the production of high-quality reports, and building and maintaining good stakeholder relationships.

The Authority secretariat currently consists of an acting CEO leading 8 staff. Some of this workforce is employed on a non-ongoing or temporary basis.

The Authority encourages employees to undertake learning and development to build up competencies relevant to their roles. The Authority has a study assistance policy that sets out the assistance provided to staff for learning and development opportunities. The policy provides financial and leave assistance to its staff enrolled in study or training that is relevant to the operational needs of the agency. Each staff member has the opportunity to identify and access appropriate training through the Authority's Performance and Development Program.

The Authority also provides one-on-one coaching to address particular development needs and extensive on-the-job training.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The relocation to Canberra from Melbourne placed a premium on effective knowledge management. The Authority managed this by employing the following strategies:

- effective electronic document storage and migration
- 'handover' sessions between individual current and incoming staff
- 'lessons learnt' policy discussion sessions between current and incoming staff.

These strategies have served the Authority well, and will continue to be employed by staff to maintain effective knowledge management.

SHARED SERVICES ARRANGEMENTS

The Authority has shared services arrangements in place through memoranda of understanding to meet payroll, ICT, accounts payable and receivable, legal and security needs. Following the Authority's relocation to Canberra from Melbourne in September 2016, service agreements with both the Department of the Environment and Energy and Department of Industry and Science are being negotiated for corporate services that provide economies of scale and value for money.



RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

The Authority employs effective risk management as a key element of effective governance.

The Authority has a Risk Management Framework to drive a positive risk management culture. The framework complies with the requirements of the *Commonwealth Risk Management Policy 1 July 2014* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Authority has a strong governance framework. To ensure it complies with governance requirements under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, the Authority will continue to:

- ensure that delegations for human resources and finances are appropriate
- ensure there is effective control and oversight to deal with fraud and risk
- maintain an effective Audit Committee
- educate its staff to apply APS Code of Conduct and Values on a day-to-day basis
- educate new staff on the Authority's governance practices
- maintain governance issues as standing agenda items on regular senior management meetings.

RISKS

The Authority maintains a risk management framework and policy, which are updated regularly and reviewed by its Audit Committee.

Table 2 sets out the Authority's high-level strategic risks for the reporting period, along with risk ratings and mitigation strategies. Risk treatments and treatment owners are outlined in the Authority's risk register, which is updated regularly. Individual work initiatives such as major procurements also have targeted risk strategies.

TABLE 3: CLIMATE CHANGE AUTHORITY STRATEGIC RISKS

RISK TYPE	RISK DESCRIPTION	LIKELIHOOD, CONSEQUENCE AND RATING	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
Managing financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty about the Authority's future and funding compromises delivery of work program Minister for the Environment and Energy or Parliament requests a Special Review putting pressure on resources 	Unlikely; moderate; medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEO and the business manager monitor budget expenditure closely Funding priorities planned to align with key priorities and closely monitored by CEO and business manager Self-generated research projects managed flexibly, in line with available resources Funding priorities and constraints communicated to Authority members
Managing people resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to retain staff in circumstances of operational uncertainty compromises delivery of work program Minister for the Environment and Energy or Parliament requests a Special Review putting pressure on resources 	Unlikely; moderate; medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff kept informed about developments in the operational environment and supported with effective change management and resilience strategies, including through the Employee Assistance Program Self-generated research projects managed flexibly, in line with available resources
Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient number of skilled staff leads to gaps in skillsets required to deliver outcomes. There are insufficient staff for proper oversight and management of reviews or segregation of duties 	Unlikely; moderate; medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate delegation of powers, robust information sharing processes including on lessons learned, transparent decision-making processes Engage independent consultants where appropriate Oversight by Audit Committee Maintenance of fraud plans

RISK TYPE	RISK DESCRIPTION	LIKELIHOOD, CONSEQUENCE AND RATING	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CFI review and NGER review and other research reports contain significant factual errors or fail to meet delivery deadlines • Stakeholders think that the Authority does not have the expertise to advise the Government effectively • Appointment of new members and bringing them up to speed causes delays in finalising reviews 	Unlikely; moderate; medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority maintains quality assurance processes to minimise the chance of factual error • The Authority scopes its work carefully and monitors review time frames • The Authority consults with a wide range of stakeholders to be informed by a broad spectrum of views and evidence • The Authority explicitly considers stakeholder views and other relevant information sources when taking decisions on its reports and other products • Member handbook kept up to date and induction sessions able to be rolled out quickly

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