



CLIMATE
CHANGE
AUTHORITY

2023 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

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A. Appendix – Purpose and context

Statutory Reporting Requirements of the Climate Change Authority

The Climate Change Authority is an independent statutory agency, established under the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011* to provide expert, evidence-based advice to the Government on Australia's climate change targets, policies and progress. The authority is made up of a Chair, the Chief Scientist and seven other members appointed for their substantial experience or knowledge and significant standing in fields that contribute to responding to the climate challenge.

Independent Advice to Government on the Preparation of the Annual Climate Statement

Following the commencement of the *Climate Change Act 2022* the authority's functions were expanded, including to provide advice to the Minister for Climate Change in preparation for the annual climate change statement. The annual climate change statement addresses progress towards achieving Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, international developments, climate change policies (including their effectiveness in contributing to targets and their impact on rural and regional Australia), and risks to Australia from climate change impacts. The authority has opted to provide this advice in the form of its Annual Progress Report, with the First Annual Progress Report published in November 2022.

The authority's functions have been further expanded following the commencement of the *Safeguard Mechanism (Crediting) Amendment Act 2023* on 11 April 2023. These Safeguard Reforms have been implemented through amendments to legislation and legislative instruments including the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007*, the *Climate Change Act 2022* and the Safeguard Rules.

These reforms require the annual climate change statement to address whether emissions from the operation of facilities under the Safeguard Mechanism are declining consistently with these outcomes. It also requires the Minister for the Environment and Water, after having approved an action under the EPBC Act that is relevant to the Safeguard Mechanism, to provide any relevant estimates of emissions to the authority.

As a result, the authority is now required to include within its advice, relating to the annual climate change statements, an assessment on whether emissions of designated large facilities under the Safeguard Mechanism are declining consistently with the updated outcomes. This advice must take into account the impact of new or expanded facilities for current and future years, as well as any emissions estimates provided to the authority by the Minister for the Environment and Water (for projects approved under the EPBC Act). The authority would look to the necessity of amendments to the Safeguard Rule if there was a risk to the achievement of the Safeguard outcomes, taking into consideration whether policy changes outside of the Safeguard Rules are more suitable and whether the risk is due to temporary factors. As these Safeguard Reforms came into effect during 1 July 2023 (DCCEEW, 2023I), this assessment is not included within this year's advice however it will be included from next year.

Legislative Reviews

The *Climate Change Authority Act 2011* requires the authority to undertake periodic reviews of the legislation underpinning the Emissions Reduction Fund (the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011* (CFI Act)) and the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007* (NGER Act). This year the authority has been conducting concurrent reviews of both pieces of legislation.

The NGER Act establishes the NGER Scheme and the Safeguard Mechanism. This year the authority's review will cover all aspects of the NGER Act but will focus on the NGER scheme, recognising the Safeguard Mechanism has just gone through a significant consultation and reform process. As part of the review of the NGER scheme, the authority has been asked to review methane measurement, reporting and

verification (MRV). Methane is one of the gases companies must report under the NGER scheme. The NGER Act and the instruments under the Act provide methods for companies to calculate their methane emissions. The authority will consider these methods in the context of recent international developments in methane MRV, including the work of the Oil and Gas Methane Partnership 2.0 and the Metcoal Methane Partnership. The authority's review of the NGER Act will be completed by December 2023.

The authority's review of the CFI Act will build on the recent Independent Review of ACCUs (the Chubb Review), including consideration of the merit of a mechanism to provide further assurance of additionality and conservativeness of the CFI Act, and issues raised through the authority's consultation process. Supporting integrity and transparency remain key issues for the CFI Act. This review is also due to be completed by December 2023.

Advice on Australia's Current and Future Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and sectoral pathways

Section 15 of the *Climate Change Act 2022* also separately requires the authority to 'advise the Minister on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets to be included in a new or adjusted nationally determined contribution' or 'NDC'. Australia's next NDC is due in 2025.

The authority's advice will take account of how sectors, communities, governments and individuals can work together to prosper in the face of the decarbonisation challenge. The advice will consider consultation outcomes across all elements of its development, including social, employment and economic impacts, and opportunities that arise from the recommended targets and associated policies for Australia, including for rural and regional areas.

The Australian Parliament has also requested that the Climate Change Authority review the potential technology transition and emissions pathways that best support Australia's transition to net zero by 2050 for the following sectors:

- Electricity and energy
- Transport
- Industry and waste
- Agriculture and land
- Resources
- Built environment.

The authority must identify opportunities, technologies, barriers, workforce matters, information gaps, and the role of public and private finance in its review of sectoral pathways.

The review was requested under Section 59 of the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011* and will be delivered by 1 August 2024.

Future Work

The Government has committed to undertake a review of the Safeguard Mechanism in 2026–27 to assess initial reform impacts and ensure policy settings are appropriately calibrated. As part of the review, the authority will advise Government on the extent to which on-site abatement is being driven by the reforms, and whether any additional incentives are required.

About this report

The report is guided, at a minimum, by the requirements for the annual climate change statements in Section 12 of the *Climate Change Act 2022*, as well as Section 12 of the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011*, which sets out principles to which the authority must have regard in performing its functions.

Framework underpinning the authority's advice

To understand how Australia is progressing towards net zero, the authority has developed its methodology for preparing its advice, including data collection, consultation and analysis, guided by the framework set out in Figure A.1. It shows how the Annual Progress Report addresses each of the components the Minister must report on in the annual climate change statement, as described in Section 12 of the *Climate Change Act 2022*. The methodology includes assessments and analysis across four core elements: wellbeing, emissions, policies and context.

Figure A.1: Framework for tracking progress

	Climate Change Act 2022				
WELLBEING	s 12(e), s 12(1)f	Progress towards a just transition and resilient nation			
		Economic impacts and opportunities	Physical impacts and adaptation	First Nations	Regional and rural Australia
EMISSIONS	s 12(1)a	Progress towards national greenhouse emissions reduction targets			
		Leading indicators of change	Point target compliance	Emissions budget tracking	Emissions sectoral trends
POLICIES	s 12(1)c, s 12(1)d	Progress in implementing policies			
		Mitigation and adaptation policy stocktake	Policy gap analysis	Indicators of direct effectiveness	Indicators of indirect effectiveness
CONTEXT	s 12(1)b	Developments in the broader operating environment			
		Climate science and global impacts	Geopolitics	International ambition and policies	Voluntary corporate action

Wellbeing:

The impacts of climate change and climate-related policies affect the wellbeing of Australians in different ways. Climate-related wellbeing in turn affects social licence to proceed with policies to guide the changes Australians need to make. The authority assesses social, environmental and economic impacts, positive and negative, through the concept of wellbeing. This includes considering the impacts in Australia of the response to climate change – policies and decisions implemented here and abroad – as well as the physical impacts of climate change.

Emissions:

The authority uses indicators to assess progress towards Australia's emissions targets, realising opportunities and managing risks. Indicators are data about the actions and outcomes necessary to achieve objectives, such as skills and jobs, secure supply chains, and investment needed for the transition. Leading indicators are useful to anticipate how the economy and its emissions intensity are likely to change, including early notice of the sectors and regions on track for economic growth or decline. A single leading

indicator often lacks predictive power. However, when taken together and used in conjunction with other sources of information, leading indicators provide a picture of progress and future developments.

Policies:

The annual climate change statement advice must canvass 'climate change policy'. Climate change requires a whole-of-economy transition. Fundamental to the task of considering Australia's progress towards achieving its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets is understanding the cumulative effectiveness of its policies. The authority considers assessing effectiveness goes beyond just considering actual emissions reductions achieved in one year but must also consider the qualitative impacts associated with policies, both positive and negative. The authority considers effectiveness can be categorised as direct or indirect. A primary measure for establishing direct effectiveness is how many tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂-e) have been mitigated, that is, reduced, or removed due to a particular policy. As Australia's emissions reduction targets are a mix of both point targets and emissions budgets, this report considers both the quantity of emissions abated in one particular year, cumulative abatement over time, and likelihood of future abatement in assessing the effectiveness of climate policies.

It is also important to consider the broader impacts and benefits climate change policies have on the economy, the environment, and society, which the authority broadly considers indirect effectiveness. Assessing indirect effectiveness involves a range of data including environmental valuation, financing, innovation, supply chain, demand, workforce and co-benefits, among others.

Context:

There are factors that affect Australia's progress but are largely beyond the direct control of Australian governments and citizens, such as geopolitics, the science and global impacts of climate change, decisions of other nations, and voluntary corporate action. The authority's advice will be developed with an understanding of the context in which outcomes are to be delivered, as set out in the second core element of the framework, as well as opportunities to influence the context (e.g. through international engagement).

Consultation

The authority committed to consult on its progress framework in its 2022 Annual Progress Report. The authority presented this framework in its Issues Paper titled *Setting, Tracking and Achieving Australia's Emission Reduction Targets*, and separately undertook targeted First Nations and regional consultation processes. The authority recognises that the consultation processes the authority undertook are not comprehensive of all viewpoints across Australia, and targeted consultation groups were not large enough to be statically significant. The authority asks readers to be mindful of this when reading consultation content but recognises the contribution responders have provided to the authority's growing base of information.

The authority will consider the feedback it received in evolving the framework for future reports.

B. Climate Policy Tracker and effectiveness analysis

Policy stock take and tracker

The Climate Change Authority has undertaken a stock take of the Australian Government's climate-related policies and published a new Climate Policy Tracker on its [website](#). The authority intends to update this Climate Policy Tracker and expand it to include state and territory government policies in the future.

Reporting

Regular reporting and progress-tracking helps ensure governments are held accountable for the climate action they commit to. The Australian Government has several publicly available reporting activities on climate change including but not limited to:

- Annual Climate Change Statements under the *Climate Change Act 2022*
- quarterly updates of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- annual National Inventory Reports to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- annual emissions projections reports
- National Communications on Climate Change and Biennial reports to the UNFCCC.

These reports contribute to the authority's assessment of climate policy effectiveness (outlined below).

The government has also committed to strengthening reporting activities, including by:

- improving transparency on corporations' reporting on climate transition plans and emissions through implementing standardised internationally aligned requirements for disclosing climate-related financial risks and opportunities in Australia
- improving reporting on climate risks following the National Climate Risk Assessment and through the Commonwealth Climate Risk and Opportunity Management Program.

While these mechanisms show Australia's commitment to transparent reporting on our progress, further information could be publicly available, including:

- progress in implementing each measure (e.g. expenditure, contracting)
- the contribution of each measure to Australia's progress towards net zero and the goals of the Paris Agreement (e.g. abatement, clean economy jobs, clean exports)
- barriers in implementing policy measures
- availability and transparency of climate information and datasets, including disclosing and tracking scope 3 emissions.

The authority will further consider transparency and data availability in other reviews in 2023 and 2024.

Policy effectiveness analysis

Method

As part of assessing progress, the authority provides an evaluation of how various sectors and their key measures support Australia's emissions reductions targets and where possible, wellbeing and adaptation.

The authority referred to sectoral strategies and/or key policies and their cumulative effect on supporting the sector transition to net zero.

The authority developed a new policy effectiveness analysis approach for this report, borrowing from our earlier work on *Prospering in a Low Emissions World* (CCA, 2020) and the OECD framework on policy effectiveness analysis (OECD, 2021). The policy effectiveness tables contained in this report each include six key criteria against which measures were analysed to provide insight on the sector's progress in decarbonising. The policy effectiveness assessment has six key criteria against which measures were assessed to determine overall progress for each sector.

- **Scope** - the coverage of the measure.
- **Impact** - the impact of the measure on achieving emissions reductions and alignment with Australia's national targets. Other considerations including the policy certainty of the measure and the authority's principles in section 12 of *the Climate Change Authority Act 2011*.
- **Efficiency** - how well the measure is being operationalised. It considers the use of resources (time and money) and whether sufficient governance, including compliance, measures are in place.
- **Relevance** - how well the policy is achieving the intention/objectives it was designed to solve. It considers how credible the measure is and what gaps remain.
- **Coherence** - refers to how well the measure fits the policy problem of climate change by considering the scalability and flexibility of the measure. It considered whether this measure is the right one for the policy problem at large (climate change).
- **Sustainability** - the durability of the measure. It also considers any potential adverse impacts of the measure.

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**All legislation cited in this report is Commonwealth legislation unless otherwise indicated.
Commonwealth legislation can be found on the Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au**

For more information about the work of the Climate Change Authority, visit our website at <https://www.climatechangeauthority.gov.au/>.

You can also contact us at: <mailto:enquiries@climatechangeauthority.gov.au>