



30 April 2018

Port Phillip EcoCentre submission re: Victorian Climate change targets 2021-2030

Dear Dr Whetton, Mr Combet, and Dr Stephenson,

The Port Phillip EcoCentre (the EcoCentre) welcomes the Independent Expert Panel's investigation into Victoria's interim Emissions Reduction Targets for 2025 and 2030. Our state has an opportunity to show leadership on climate change by setting demonstrably achievable, science-based targets.

The EcoCentre is an award-winning, not-for-profit environmental hub that fosters community action and cross-sector solutions for a sustainable future. Our vision is *an empowered and engaged community, actively cultivating long-term social and environmental well-being* which we achieve through Education, Community Action, Research, and Partnerships. We have 25 community org Affiliates and work with 279 partners including 143 schools and Early Learning Centres. We engage 20,000 people per year and contribute over 11,000 environmental volunteer hours per annum.

Climate change increasingly threatens the well-being of the wildlife, waterways and communities with whom we work on-ground. Emissions Reduction Targets and the speed of the reductions trajectory form principal levers to generate numerous 'downstream' benefits. Prompt transition delivers greater cost savings and risk avoidance in the long-term than protracted trajectories.

Therefore the EcoCentre supports an accelerated Victorian Net Zero Emissions Target timeline of 2035, which has been proven viable¹ with current technology and while continuing economic prosperity.

The scientists, teachers and community networks of Port Phillip EcoCentre are committed to empowering personal and collective action toward a low-emissions Victoria, however the speed and extent of transformation for economic, ecological and human health demands parallel and bold commitments by government.

Engage Questions

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/climate-change-targets-2021-2030>

1a. Should Victoria's interim emissions reduction targets relate to a national reference point?

1b. If yes, what is the most relevant reference point?

There is currently no Commonwealth goal aligned to scientific risk and evidence-based recommendations, and Victoria should not be restrained from taking necessary steps to ensure citizen health, clean water, food security and the numerous downstream benefits of climate stability. Currently, federal targets overshoot the Climate Institute's suggested

¹ Beyond Zero Emissions, sector-based reports via 'Zero Carbon Australia Plan' <http://bze.org.au/publications-list/>

carbon budget limits and thus must not be used as reference points, lest our country and region experience “unmanageable risks and costs to human health, natural systems, infrastructure and economies.”

2. What would you recommend Victoria’s emissions reduction targets be for 2021-25 and 2026-30, and why?

We encourage strong Victorian legislative commitment to stimulate a reduction of:

- 60% by 2025
- 75% by 2030 (achieved via a transition to 100% renewable energy)
- 100% by 2035.

This is more rapid than Victoria’s current committed trajectory, however arguably more moderate than what risk demands and what has been proven viable with current technology and within modeling for a thriving economy. These targets consider:

- i. The Climate Change Authority’s recommendation for Australia to cut emissions by up to 65 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.
- ii. Beyond Zero Emissions’ road map proving that within one decade it is possible to rapidly achieve emissions reduction of 60% by 2025 and 100% by 2030.

3a. Do you think a Victorian emissions budget should be used as a tool in the Panel’s analysis?

3b. If yes, what global temperature outcome should a Victorian emissions budget be consistent with?

Australia has higher emissions per capita than most countries, and has the wealth and technology to reduce emissions swiftly and with innovation. Any ‘carbon budget’ must contain global warming to 1.5C from pre-industrial temperatures, in following of Australia’s commitment to the Paris Agreement.

4. What do you see as the relative advantages and disadvantages of early versus late action to reduce Victoria’s emissions to reach net zero by 2050?

Early action corresponds to long-term cost efficiency and saving lives².

13a. Should international and/or interstate carbon offsets be used to meet Victoria’s interim targets?

No. Victoria should protect and enhance carbon offsets to its own boundaries, for accountability and lest “outsourced” carbon offsets be double counted toward local goals and thus slow the cumulative global reduction trajectory. This also enables our state to accurately capture the economic and employment benefits of carbon offset schemes.

We note that protecting Victoria’s carbon-dense, habitat rich, water-filtering, beautiful and job-generating forests *must* be included in carbon sink planning.

14. What potential impacts and benefits of interim emissions reduction targets should the Panel consider?

² Cutting carbon emissions sooner could save 153 million lives (March 2018) https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-03/du-cce031618.php

Climate change increasingly threatens the well-being of the wildlife, waterways and communities with whom we work. Emissions Reduction Targets and the speed of the reductions trajectory form principal levers to generate numerous 'downstream' benefits. The government will likely see co-benefits and cost offsets in management portfolios such as Emergency Management, health, and water.

Strong interim emissions reduction targets may proactively protect the economy. Climate change threatens the strong economy that famously makes Victoria liveable. Lloyd's City Risk Index shows the share of national GDP at risk³ from climate change exceeds \$1.5 trillion in the 301 major cities around the world. (For Melbourne this includes over 35% of GDP risk attributed to climate-related probabilities.)

16. Please provide any additional comments below.

- For accurate accounting, Victoria must include aviation and shipping emissions. As at December 2017, transport emissions were at record high levels.⁴
- Many of our members and students live in rental properties. We strongly support mandatory disclosure of energy efficiency ratings on rental properties, for emissions reduction as well as to protect vulnerable populations during extreme heat (Australia's most deadly climate-related danger).
- Victoria will need to model positive messaging around reduced consumption (with waste management co-benefits) and lower-meat diets (with health co-benefits).
- Few countries have such advantages as Australia in this transition, in terms of wealth, skills, renewable resources and Victoria's action-oriented majority.⁵

Summary of key points in this submission

1. Ambitious, science-driven Emissions Reductions Targets are essential; Victorian goals should not be constrained by insufficient Commonwealth targets that discount scientific advice.
2. Efforts of community organisations working for environment and community health will be inadequate without strong, complementary, systemic Victorian commitment to a rapid and socially inclusive decarbonisation.
3. Investment in earlier action lowers the long-term costs of inaction and risk management.
4. We encourage an accelerated Victorian Net Zero Emissions Target of 2035 (from 2050) given that it is proven possible with current technology, within a growing economy.
5. Offsets must be located in Victoria.
6. Victorian carbon accounting must not exclude aviation and shipping.

Yours sincerely,



April Seymore
Executive Officer

³ <https://www.lloyds.com/cityriskindex/files/8771-City-Risk-Executive-summary-AW.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/dec/11/australias-transport-emissions-in-past-year-the-highest-on-record>

⁵ <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/About-Us/Research/Victorians-perceptions-of-climate-change>