



# Climate Change Bill 2022 and Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022

## CAHA Submission

18 August 2022

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### Introduction

The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications on the Climate Change Bill 2022 and the Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022.

CAHA is a national charity and the peak body on climate change and health in Australia. CAHA is an alliance of organisations within the health sector working together to raise awareness about the health risks of climate change and the health benefits of emissions reductions.

The membership of CAHA includes a broad cross-section of health sector stakeholders with nearly 100 member organisations, representing healthcare professionals from a range of disciplines, as well as healthcare service providers, institutions, academics, researchers, and consumers.

CAHA welcomes the progress that is being made with the Climate Change Bill 2022 - and the opportunity to provide input - after nearly a decade of climate inaction in Australia.

The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that Australia is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which pose immediate and long-term risks to population health in Australia. Yet Australia's climate risks are exacerbated by inadequate and fragmented governance, growing vulnerabilities, and insufficient investment in mitigation and adaptation efforts. Australia's climate policies are currently inconsistent with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit. The development and implementation of far-reaching, coordinated policies is urgently needed to address these risks.

CAHA appreciates the progress in Australian climate policy represented in the Climate Change Bill 2022 and the Climate Change (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2022.

The key areas outlined in the Bills represent a significant step forward, and would allow Australia to: (i) enshrine its 2030 and net zero emissions reduction targets in legislation; (ii) give new advisory functions to the Climate Change Authority; and (iii) commit to an annual climate change statement to Parliament. CAHA's recommendations, as outlined below, aim to maximise the Bill's three main objectives, in the understanding that additional policy and legislation will follow to ensure a whole-of-government response to the climate crisis.

## Recommendations

### Signal the intention to exceed the emissions reduction target

An emissions reduction of 43% by 2030, based on 2005 levels, was an ALP election promise, and the Government has made clear it will be the target that will be enshrined in law at this stage. It has subsequently also included language in the Bill to ensure the 43% target will be treated as a floor, not a ceiling.

**Recommendation:** *CAHA recommends further strengthening of this language, in light of the target's inconsistency with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit, and the fact that many state and territory governments, government departments, and businesses have already committed to more ambitious targets. It is crucial that the Bill explicitly states that 43% is a floor, and that there is a clear intention of **exceeding** the 43% by 2030 target. Additional language to this extent could be added to clause 5 and would give relevant statutory authorities a clear mandate to seek to exceed those reductions.*

## **Ensure subsequent NDCs are reflected back into the Bill**

Under the Paris Agreement, the Australian government is expected to submit enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) - including enhanced emissions reduction targets - every five years. However, the Bill currently does not provide a mechanism to reflect updated NDCs and targets back into the Bill and its provisions. For example, in the current language of the Bill, the annual climate change statements will remain connected to the legislated target, not the (updated) NDC.

For the majority of countries, including Australia, NDCs also include more than just emission reduction targets. They can include provisions on adaptation and resilience, means of implementation such as capacity building and climate finance, and measures to address loss and damage.

**Recommendation:** *CAHA recommends that Australia's current and future NDCs are reflected back into the Bill so that all of the provisions in the Bill remain connected to Australia's Paris Agreement targets. CAHA also recommends that the Bill reflects the entirety of Australia's NDC, including any adaptation or climate finance measures that might be included in current or future NDCs. To maintain Parliamentary scrutiny this could be done via legislative instrument, or by updating the current Bill to have this effect.*

## **Add reporting requirements to the Annual Climate Change Statement to fully capture progress on climate policy and maximise public health benefits**

The annual climate change statement is intended to be a transparent progress report, which will be tabled in Parliament and will deliver accountability in achieving Australia's emission reduction targets.

The Bill outlines that this Statement will cover: (i) the progress made during the year towards achieving the targets; (ii) international developments during the year that are relevant to addressing climate change; (iii) climate change policy; and (iv) the effectiveness of the Commonwealth's climate change policies in contributing to the achievement of the targets.

The annual statement is currently not intended to cover how Australia is progressing on the mitigation of scope 3 emissions.

As one of the largest fossil fuel exporters in the world, Australia's scope 3 emissions are globally significant. Australia has a global responsibility - and an enormous economic opportunity - to transition its polluting exports to clean options.

The annual climate change statement provides an opportunity to begin tracking the progression of this transition from dirty to clean exports, and Australia's contribution to the global decarbonisation of energy and other sectors

**Recommendation:** *CAHA recommends the Annual Statement to include a progress report on emissions reductions for all scopes (clause 12.a).*

Similarly, it is currently not clear to what extent the annual statement will provide a progress update on issues beyond emissions, such as Australia's adaptation and resilience efforts and climate finance provisions.

Australia is already experiencing increasing impacts and vulnerability, and climate change impacts pose immediate and long-term risks to population health in Australia. The development and implementation of far-reaching, coordinated policies is urgently needed to address these risks.

**Recommendation:** *CAHA recommends the Annual Statement to include a progress report on all climate change policy, including adaptation and resilience efforts, and climate finance pledges (clause 12.1.c).*

### **Reporting on progress of the national strategy on climate, health and wellbeing for Australia**

Well-designed and ambitious climate policies can help address growing climate risks, while rapidly reducing emissions and maximising economic and public health benefits.

The government has, on several occasions, pledged that it will develop a national strategy on climate, health and well-being. This would allow the Commonwealth to maximise synergies between climate policies and public health policies, and would ensure all climate policies are designed in a way that they contribute to the prosperity, health and wellbeing of current and future generations.

The annual climate change statement would be a valuable process in monitoring the implementation of the national strategy on climate, health and well-being. The annual climate change statement could help take stock of the public health and economic benefits that Australia's climate policies are bringing to people living in Australia and the region. The annual assessment could allow for timely re-adjustments in cases where the synergies between climate policies and public health policies are not maximised.

**Recommendations:** *CAHA recommends for the Annual Statement's reporting on the effectiveness of the Commonwealth's climate change policies (clause 12.d) to clarify how policies are ensuring the prosperity, health and wellbeing of current and future generations.*

*CAHA recommends for the Annual Statement's reporting on climate policies to include an additional clause (clause 12.1.f) to require the Annual Statement to include an update on achievement of the objectives and targets of the national strategy on climate, health and well-being.*

### **Ensure the Climate Change Authority provides advice on how to maximise synergies between climate policy and public health policy**

The Bill already establishes that the Climate Change Authority (CCA) must undertake reviews in accordance with the principles set out in section 12; including that measures to respond to climate change should be economically efficient, environmentally effective, equitable, and should 'take account of the impact on households, business, workers and communities'.

In addition, any measure to respond to climate change should also maximise synergies between climate policies and public health policies, and should ensure all climate policies are designed in a way that they contribute to the prosperity, health and wellbeing of current and future generations. The Climate Change Authority is well-placed to report on potential synergies and trade-offs.

**Recommendation:** *CAHA recommends provisions be added that ensure the CCA's regular reviews include assessments of the synergies between climate policies and public health policies, as well as the effectiveness of the Commonwealth's climate change policies in ensuring the prosperity, health and wellbeing of current and future generations.*

### **For more information, please contact:**

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# Appendix: Climate and Health Alliance Members

## CAHA membership as of August 2022.

Abilita  
Arriba Group  
Asthma Australia  
Australasian College of Health Service Management  
Australasian College of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine  
Australasian Epidemiological Association  
Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine  
Australian Association of Gerontology  
Australian Association of Social Workers  
Australian Chiropractors Association  
Australian College of Nursing  
Australian Council of Social Service  
Australian Federation of Medical Women  
Australian Health Promotion Association  
Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association  
Australian Indigenous Doctors Association  
Australian Institute of Health Innovation  
Australian Lesbian Medical Association  
Australian Medical Students' Association  
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Federal)  
Australian Physiotherapy Association  
Australian Podiatry Association  
Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association  
Australian Psychological Society  
Australian Women's Health Network  
Brooke Shelton  
Cairns Hand Clinic  
Central Australia Rural Practitioners Association  
Children's Healthcare Australasia  
Climatewise Design  
Codesain  
CoHealth  
ConNetica Consulting  
Consumers Health Forum of Australia  
Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation  
CRANaplus  
Cultivate Impact  
Dietitians Australia  
Doctors for Nutrition  
Doctors Reform Society

Enliven Victoria  
Enriching Lives Psychology  
Environmental Health Australia  
Faculty of Health, University of Technology Sydney  
Food for Thought Consulting  
Friends of CAHA  
Health Care Consumers' Association ACT  
Health Issues Centre  
Health Nature and Sustainability Research Group  
Health Services Union  
Healthy Food Systems Australia  
Healthy Futures  
Indigenous Allied Health Australia  
Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS)  
Kooweerup Regional Health Service  
Lowitja Institute  
Medical Association for Prevention of War Australia  
Medical Scientists Association of Victoria  
Metta Health & Psychology  
MinterEllison  
Motion Energy Group  
Mott MacDonald  
National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners  
National Rural Health Alliance  
Naturopaths and Herbalists Association of Australia  
NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association  
Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria  
Nutrition Australia  
Optometry Australia  
OraTaiao: New Zealand Climate and Health Council  
Orygen  
Pharmacists for the Environment Australia  
Psychology for a Safe Climate  
Public Health Association of Australia  
Pura Vida Behavioural Nutrition  
Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union  
Royal Australasian College of Physicians  
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists  
Rural Doctors Association of Victoria  
SANE Australia  
School of Public Health, University of Sydney  
School of Public Health & Social Work, Queensland University of Technology  
Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health  
Second Chance Psychology  
Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand  
University of Queensland Mental Health in Climate Change Transdisciplinary Research  
Network

Veterinarians for Climate Action  
Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association  
Vote Earth Now  
Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research  
Weenthunga Health Network  
WHO Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health Impact Assessment  
Women's Health East  
Women's Health Goulburn North East  
Women's Health in the North  
Women's Healthcare Australasia