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Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy
House of Representatives
Parliament House
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Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020 and Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020

The Climate Change Authority welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy on its the inquiry into the *Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020* and *Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020* (hereafter referred to as 'the Bills').

The Bills as presented would have the effect of ceasing the operations of the Climate Change Authority, through repeal of the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011*, and replacing it with a new Climate Change Commission. To assist the Committee's consideration of the Bills, I set out below some general information on the Authority and its recent activities.

Structure and functions

The Climate Change Authority is a non-corporate, statutory body established under the *Climate Change Authority Act 2011* to provide advice on climate change matters. It consists of a Chair, the Chief Scientist and up to seven other members. The members are supported by a Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Authority, and staff engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

The Authority's work takes three main forms:

- regular reviews of legislation, as required under different Acts—currently the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011* and the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007*;
- special reviews on matters relating to climate change requested by either the Minister responsible for climate change or by the Parliament (requiring a resolution agreed by both Houses of the Parliament); and
- self-initiated research on climate change matters.

Prior to amendments made by the Parliament in 2015, the Authority was also required to review:

- greenhouse gas emission caps, any indicative national emissions trajectory and national carbon budget;



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- progress being made to reduce Australia's emissions to meet national targets; and
- the emissions trading scheme and the Renewable Energy Target.

Membership

The Authority currently comprises seven members: Chair Dr Wendy Craik AM, Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel AO, Mr Stuart Allinson, Ms Kate Carnell AO, Mr Mark Lewis, Dr Russell Reichgelt and the Hon John Sharp AM.

Dr Scott Power (until recently with the Bureau of Meteorology) is engaged by the Authority to provide expert advice on climate science and attends Authority meetings.

Funding and staffing levels

For 2020-21 the available funding for the Authority is \$2.6 million. The Authority's funding continues at similar levels over the forward estimates period.

The Authority operates with an average staffing level of nine, including the Chief Executive Officer.

Recent and future work program

The Authority has published a total of 23 reviews and reports since it was established in 2012. These include, in 2020, two self-initiated reports and one statutory review, all incorporating significant stakeholder input:

- *Prospering in a low-emissions world: An updated climate policy toolkit for Australia* (March 2020), a research report that explores how Australia can reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet not only its 2030 Paris Agreement target but also subsequent, more ambitious targets, and prosper in a world transitioning to net zero emissions
- *Economic recovery, resilience and prosperity after the coronavirus* (July 2020), a research report which identifies measures previously proposed by the Authority that could contribute to an economic stimulus package in response to the economic impacts of COVID-19
- the statutory *Review of the Emissions Reduction Fund* (October 2020), which seeks to build on several Government initiatives already announced to boost outcomes under the Emissions Reduction Fund.

As set out in the Authority's Corporate Plan and in line with its legislated functions, the Authority intends to undertake the following activities over the four years from 2020–21 to 2023–24:

- statutory reviews of the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting legislation by December 2023 and the Emissions Reduction Fund (Carbon Credits) legislation by December 2023
- any special reviews as requested by the Minister responsible for climate change or the Parliament
- self-initiated research on matters related to climate change.




As part of its 2020-21 work program the Authority plans to undertake research examining how Australia can position itself to take advantage of a world transitioning to net zero emissions. The Authority intends this work to be complementary with the Government's Technology Investment Roadmap and Low-Emissions Technology Statement, and the development of the Government's Long-Term Emissions Reduction Strategy in the lead-up to the UNFCCC's 26th Conference of the Parties (COP), which is now to be held in Glasgow in November 2021.

Further information on the Authority and all of its reports can be found at our website:

<https://www.climatechangeauthority.gov.au/>

Yours sincerely,



Brad Archer
Chief Executive Officer
2 December 2020

