

21 May 2024

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2024 Issues Paper - Targets, Pathways and Progress

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *2024 Issues Paper - Targets, Pathways and Progress* and the Climate Change Authority (CCA)'s development of advice on Australia's 2035 emissions reduction target.

The Australian Local Government Association is the national voice of local governments, representing seven jurisdictional local government associations and the interests of 537 local governments across the country. Collectively Australia's councils employ more than 196,000 people and manage infrastructure worth approximately \$460 billion.

Managing the impacts of climate change is a pressing issue for local government, and ALGA welcomes a science-based target to achieve Australia's international obligations under the Paris Agreement. A 2035 target must drive progress towards deep and sustained emissions reductions to limit dangerous climate change. Our communities and local governments' ability to adapt will be in doubt if we do not. We are already facing severe impacts from climate change, with our local communities increasingly affected by bushfires, floods and storms.

The [2021 Australian Local Government Climate Review](#) demonstrated the scope of climate action already undertaken by local governments and their communities. Notably:

- 73% of responding councils have set or are planning ambitious corporate or operational emissions reduction targets; and
- 80% of responding councils have set or are investigating developing community-wide emissions reductions targets.

Further research ([100% Renewables](#)) shows that more than 1-in-6 councils across Australia have adopted a net zero target, and 10 have already gone carbon neutral.

Setting clear and transparent national 2035 targets will support more councils to develop and implement their own local targets and plans, which will make a significant contribution to reducing our emissions at a national level.

At an operational level, many councils are already investing in new technologies to reduce emissions, supporting local businesses to innovate and adapt, and creating new jobs in their communities.

This includes introducing energy efficient LED streetlights, installing electric vehicle charging stations, using recycled road construction materials, and increasing tree canopy coverage.

Councils have a role in land use planning and building certification. Appropriate precinct design for active transport, as well as footpath and cycle infrastructure can reduce transport emissions. Existing residential housing makes up most of our communities and is challenging to upgrade. Retrofitting buildings to improve resilience and efficiency is more costly than including the same measure in a new building. This is why it's important that building codes use future climate scenarios for new builds and alterations as well as introducing further resilience measures to ensure ongoing occupant safety over the life of the building.

Many local governments are already working with their communities to support the energy transition through encouraging efficiency upgrades, rooftop solar and batteries in homes and businesses and active transport programs. Some councils offer education, advice, incentives, and finance options to reduce the community's emissions.

Working in partnership with other levels of government, councils can deliver highly effective climate change projects that can mitigate against the production of greenhouse gas emissions, and assist our communities to be better prepared and better able to adapt to future climatic conditions.

Councils across Australia are asking the Federal Government for continued support to local government to deliver emissions reduction initiatives at a local level that will contribute to Australia's emissions reduction targets.

Councils are committed to reducing Australia's emissions, but with a dedicated federal funding stream, such as an ongoing Community Energy Upgrades Fund, could do even more, delivering local solutions to this national challenge.

Please contact ALGA's Director Environment Denise Anderson (denisea@alga.asn.au) if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Crawford'.

Amy Crawford
Chief Executive Officer