

# Joint Standing Committee on Net Zero Future, NSW

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Witness hearings for **2024 Annual Report of the Net Zero Commission**

## Witnesses 21 Feb 2025:

**Howard Witt** BE, MESci. Director of *Citizens Climate Lobby Australia*. Howard is a retired engineer and proud grandfather to 4 kids. He progressed to a senior engineer position at ANSTO and following early retirement, he started a consulting company providing risk and reliability services and training for another 10 years. Howard was a founding member of CCL Australia Inc. and a board member for much its 8-year life. His involvement in climate advocacy and promotion of carbon fee and dividend was initially motivated by reading Dr James Hansens “Storms of My Grandchildren”. With inadequate effective actions to drive the transition to low emission technologies and the continuing rise of atmospheric and ocean greenhouse gas concentrations he supports the view of all scientific academies that the future for humanity is dire. He is acutely aware of the low level of public awareness of the urgency of effective action and the need for more effective information campaigns to build the political will needed for decisive and rapid action.

**Richard Weller** BE, MIEAust, CPEng. Member of *Citizens Climate Lobby Australia* (7 years). Richard is a retired Structural Engineer. For 2 decades of his professional career, he was involved in the Australian Standards covering the design of structures for extreme events to achieve safety. These legislated Standards allow engineers to safely apply the outcome of scientific study to the real world. Richard understands the science of extreme events, how we characterize and measure them, what their impacts are and how our built structures are affected by them. He has been studying Climate Science for more than 20 years and has a thorough understanding of the physical risks that extremes pose.

## Introductory statement:

We appreciate that political candidates need to differentiate themselves and extoll their and their party’s virtues for elections, but the need for rapid transition to low emission technology is far too important for it to become a political football. We wish to acknowledge and appreciate that within the NSW context, bipartisanship on this issue has been much more applicable than in most other locations.

We commend our submission prepared by Dr Angove to the committee.

Today, we wish to emphasise the need for far greater public awareness to drive the transition. Public consultation is important but without a government driven information campaign, especially to the regions, the view provided by citizens will only be a reflection of media cometary, a forum to express gripes, and an excuse for wishful thinking on impacts.

Nobody wants to think that our children and grandchildren’s futures are to become increasingly dire because of our generation’s collective inaction. We are a fortunate community that likes to build on more of the same great progress. Who wants to be the wet blanket, sad sack, profit of doom spoiling the party?

However, there is an onus on those in authority to exercise responsibility and make it quite clear to the citizens the consequences of humanity’s collective procrastination in the transition to clean energy and transport.

Implementation of carbon pollution pricing, as CCL advocates, is vital to effectively driving the transition. This is not politically achievable without a greatly increased public awareness of the consequences of not having such a powerful economy wide driver in place.

Please maintain and extend a multi-party wide approach and implement creative approaches to improve public awareness of the consequences of delayed action. Improved public awareness is the driver for political imperatives and thus effective government policies and programs.

An effective approach would be the NSW government to combine the explanation of the range of likely climate impacts with the benefits of carbon pricing and direct adaptation training broadly across our State. NSW citizens need this support as does the rest of Australia.

NSW cannot solve the climate crisis alone, but any further dragging of our feet will be deadly. The world desperately needs more examples of successes in rapidly implementing the climate transition and impact abatement so that others may follow.