

Submission  
No 9

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY  
ZONES (REZ) ON RURAL AND REGIONAL  
COMMUNITIES AND INDUSTRIES IN NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
Confidential

The build of renewable energy through REZs is a once in a generation opportunity to transform rural and regional communities in NSW for the better through economic community benefits, the ability to diversify industry and income streams for farmers, and increased nature restoration and protection opportunities.

Climate change poses the biggest risk to nature, through impacts including drought, bushfires, storms, ocean acidification, sea level rise and global warming. Many plants and animals cannot adapt to the effects of climate change. NSW has 1000 plant and animal species and ecological communities that are at risk of extinction due primarily to climate change and habitat destruction.

The bushfires and floods over the last few years gave us a taste of what is to come if we don't take action to prevent climate change. The Paris accord states that to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees and prevent catastrophic climate events and mass extinction we must reduce emissions by 43% by 2030.

The NSW Net Zero Commission's 2024 annual report concerningly outlined how, under current trajectories, the most recent projections for NSW's emissions reductions show that the targets for 2030 and 2035 will not be reached. Significant decarbonisation in the electricity and energy sector is central to reaching net zero by 2050.

NSW's continued reliance on coal-fired power is resulting in an energy system that is increasingly unreliable and increasingly expensive for consumers. For example, heatwaves across Sydney in late November 2024 led to sudden soaring demand of electricity as households and workplaces increased air-conditioning use to manage the almost 40- degree days. Out of the 12 coal power-generation units across the state, 4 were offline for maintenance or breakdowns, 2 of which were unplanned, leading to risk of blackouts. Ageing coal-fired power is unable to meet NSW's electricity demands.

We need to build renewable energy in a timely manner to reach our emissions reductions targets, minimise the impacts of climate change on our environment, provide reliable energy for our state, and bring down energy prices to alleviate cost of living pressures.

The REZ system has been established by the previous NSW government to deliver the vast amount of utility-scale renewable energy needed and the build is well on the way – nationally there is almost 40% renewable energy capacity and in NSW there is 53%. The focus of the NSW government should be to continue rolling out renewable energy developments in a timely manner in REZs. To ensure the best outcomes for communities and the environment, improvements to the current REZ structure should be made where necessary but this should not come at the cost of slowing down the build of renewable energy.

We must not make any further delays. We need to decarbonise and provide a more just and equitable future through renewable energy. Renewables (whether residential or large scale) provide a fairer distribution of wealth and economic development benefits, not to mention the importance of behaviour change - managing your relationship with / use of your own energy supply is ONLY a good thing.

On a final note - we face a green green dilemma as we build out clean energy infrastructure. Therefore, the state of NSW and the whole country, **MUST STOP NATIVE FOREST LOGGING**. In the face of climate change and catastrophic fires, older forests are worth **FAR MORE** standing - this is a scientifically proven **FACT**.