

Submission  
No 30

**INQUIRY INTO 2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NET  
ZERO COMMISSION**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I am a working geologist who has had a career in coal, apart from other industry sectors. When in the coal industry i was heavily involved in exploration and in gas management. At the time, gas management was a matter of not exceeding safe levels in the mine air and ensuring that the gas drainage holes were open so the gas could escape, plenty more was in the roof rocks that would more slowly escape after coal extraction. We also drilled a hole to vent CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> rich gas to the atmosphere through a high stack. I have been aware of climate change since 1969 when i met the first professional, in the plantation forestry industry who said that climate change was reducing the viability of forestry in the Bombala region.

I am certain that in most circumstances gas emissions are grossly underreported. Gas in the seams is relatively well known and is the issue the mines deal with, the gas in the roof strata are not dealt with and will escape through the numerous fractures that are formed by underground extraction by longwall mines and also present in the overburden in many areas where open pit mines are present or contemplated.

Given the very detailed knowledge on the effects of fossil fuel burning and the fugitive gas emissions from fossil fuel sites, including coal mines in NSW, it is very important that the NSW Government should request a very specific report on the risks of coal and gas current operations and proposed expansions pose to emissions reduction targets and the obvious failures to meet any of the targets on the current trajectories of emissions.

The very detailed knowledge has been known to fossil fuel companies and to insurance companies from the 1980's of longer who conducted detailed and surprisingly accurate predictions on the effects and rates of climate change, which we all suffer from now.

Its time that the long term interests of all NSW residents be taken into account and a pause or cessation of fossil fuel expansions or new operations be put in place by the NSW Government if a report by the NZC on the fossil fuels emissions suggests that emissions from that industry are a major contributor to failing to meet net zero targets. An acceleration of efforts to meet targets is clearly necessary and the declaration of the Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) is a major step forward by Government but effects will be negated by having unabated coal and gas extraction expansions.

The Federal Government has fought hard to deny it has a duty of care to future generations to protect their health and well being, however, there is no reason that leadership by the NSW Government, guided by the NZC, couldnt be demonstrated by taking the following actions:

1. The NSW Government should request a specific, dedicated report from the NZC on the risks that coal and gas expansions pose to NSW climate targets, to be completed by June 2025. This should include advice on a coal and gas sector target to reduce emissions from these sectors.
2. Approvals of new coal expansions should be paused until such advice has been provided by the NZC
3. The Net Zero Commission should be asked to provide specific advice and make recommendations on all proposed major coal mine expansions in NSW, as per s15 (3) of the NSW Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023 .
4. A Regulation should be created under the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023 to place a duty on key planning decision-makers to meet the 2030 and 2035 climate change targets and restrict downstream emissions. The failure so far to curb emissions and have minimal chance of meeting the 203, 2035 and 2050 targets, when Australia is already experiencing 1.5 degrees of warming, means that excess deaths from heatwaves will no doubt rise significantly in the next decade. millions are already dying prematurely in heatwaves in Asia. The failure to curb emissions in a meaningful way will only serve to encourage coal and gas extraction and the strength of the fossil fuel industry lobbyists, the industry the Government currently serves.

I am currently working on a project that provides resources essential for the renewables industry in NSW, an Industry that privately says they tend to ignore Government due to the lack of policy to assist renewables development. However, the economics dictate that renewable energy will continue to be built despite Government and not because of Government assistance.

It is time that Government got very specific advice on how to meet the 2030, 2035 and 2050 targets from the NZC so my children and grandchildren have a better future than the one that seems likely at the moment.