

**Submission
No 71**

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

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The NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Net Zero Future

According to the 2024 Annual Report of the Net Zero Commission, <https://www.netzerocommission.nsw.gov.au/2024-annual-report>, NSW is not on target to meet its net zero emissions targets in 2030, 2035 and 2050.

One cause of this likely failure to meet our targets is the “sizeable pipeline” of more than 17 coal mine extensions and applications in the state. This is a cause for considerable concern where they are for thermal coal, particularly as the International Energy Agency has been saying for some time that no new fossil fuels are needed if we are to limit warming to 1.5C long-term. Further, the UN has called on rich countries, including Australia, to reach net zero emission by 2040, and to phase out coal power by 2030, <https://reneweconomy.com.au/un-says-australia-must-quit-coal-by-2030-reach-net-zero-by-2040/>.

In order to understand what we need to achieve this, 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, differentiating between thermal and metallurgical coal. The report should include advice on a coal sectoral target to drive emissions reduction in the coal sector. Metallurgical coal mines should not be exempt from operational emissions reductions.

Until this advice has been provided by the NZC, approvals of new coal expansions should be paused.

Further, 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.

In addition, 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.

It is critical to the future of the world that emissions are controlled. Australia must play its part and NSW is a major part of Australia. It is critical we achieve net zero emissions, and really, sustainability across any number of fronts, in order for us to survive and minimise the damage we are doing to our world. The steps outlined above should help us walk this path.

Jennifer Nicholls, PhD