



**TASMANIAN
CLIMATE
COLLECTIVE**

Submission on Enhancing Community Engagement Practices in Energy Infrastructure Development

[Tasmanian Climate Collective](#) (TCC) offers this submission in our ongoing efforts to support the copious, overwhelming scientific advice regarding the necessary actions required to mitigate climate change, including the transition to clean energy sources.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute our views on community engagement practices in the context of the transition to net zero emissions, focusing on electricity transmission and renewable energy developments. We strongly believe that community support and involvement are integral to the success of these projects.

Public Relations Campaign for Energy Transition

The Federal Government has a crucial role to play in informing and motivating the public about the energy transition and their individual contributions. A national public relations campaign can effectively convey the importance of clean and secure energy sources, encouraging individuals to participate in the transition. Such a campaign will empower communities by showing them how they can share the benefits of the energy transition.

Australians have been subjected to many years of misinformation on climate science and the required energy transition from the [fossil fuel industry](#), [industry associations](#) and [News Corp media](#). A strong public relations campaign on climate and energy transition facts is now required to counteract this. TCC supports the call for a [Murdoch Royal Commission](#) as a starting point for a new era of climate truth telling.

Incorporating Local Community Values

Renewable energy projects must consider and incorporate local community values. By seeking community input and mapping land and sea areas, we can identify the best locations for these projects. This approach, already implemented in Victoria, can help prevent conflicts and protect the environment. It should be replicated in other regions to ensure sustainable and mutually beneficial outcomes.

TCC supports the [Local Power Plan](#) proposed by Helen Haines MP. While the details may need updating, we strongly support the principle of:

“Community energy – where everyday people are empowered to develop, own and benefit from their own energy projects – is a way to ensure the renewable boom happens with and for us, not to us.”

Establishment of Local Hubs

To enable meaningful community participation in the energy transition, funding for local hubs is vital. These hubs would serve as platforms for education and engagement, offering independent and quality information to communities. By promoting energy efficiency, electrification and renewable energy participation, these hubs can help communities maximize the benefits of the transition. Furthermore, they can facilitate ongoing dialogue between communities, local councils, and energy project developers, promoting social acceptance and empowering communities to have a say in decision-making processes.

Trusted Information Source on Renewable Energy Transition

There is a lack of clear and comprehensive information about the transition to renewables, leading to confusion and scepticism. Communities need a trusted source that can disseminate accurate and easily understandable information to address this gap. By providing communities with accessible information, we can enhance public understanding and support for renewable energy initiatives.

Trusted information must include publication of the risks we face if we fail to reduce global carbon emissions. Decision makers and everyday Australians must be able to understand the risks involved with a failure to achieve sufficient emissions mitigation, partly as a motivation for the rapid transition to clean energy sources. The release of a declassified version of the Office of National Intelligence report into the national security risks posed by climate change is central to the broad understanding of these risks.

Strengthening Oversight and Standards

While acknowledging the existing efforts of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, there is a need to strengthen oversight and establish clear standards to ensure effective community engagement. A transparent mechanism for identifying and addressing poor community engagement is necessary to safeguard industry's social license. In addition, there should be incentives to reward proponents who demonstrate meaningful and thorough community engagement. This will promote best practices across renewable energy generation and transmission projects.

Strengthening the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act is also required to ensure public trust that the infrastructure involved in the clean energy transition will not *ruin our environment to save our environment*. An example

of the failure of the EPBC Act is the proposed wind farm development at Robbins Island in NW Tas that will impact migratory shore birds.

Embedding First Nations Clean Energy Strategy

To ensure energy security, rights, and power for First Nations people, it is crucial to integrate the First Nations Clean Energy Strategy into policy frameworks and practices. By actively involving First Nations people in the development and implementation of renewable energy and transmission projects, we can achieve a truly inclusive energy transition.

Federal Funding for Regional Planning

Regional communities, particularly those in Renewable Energy Zones, face both challenges and opportunities in the transition to renewable energy and transmission development. To assist these communities in planning and adapting to the changes, federal funding for regional planning is crucial. This support will enable communities to address cumulative impacts and benefits, alleviate consultation fatigue, and effectively prepare for the energy transition.

Enhancing community engagement practices is pivotal for a successful energy transition. By conducting a national public relations campaign, considering local community values, establishing local hubs, providing trusted information sources, strengthening oversight, incorporating First Nations perspectives, and allocating funding for regional planning, we can ensure that energy infrastructure developments deliver for communities, landholders, and traditional owners. We appreciate the Commissioner's commitment to gathering feedback and look forward to the implementation of these recommendations.

Tasmanian Climate Collective

www.tasclimatecollective.org

We acknowledge the traditional owners of lutruwita, the Palawa, their ongoing custodianship of the land, community, sea and waters.

We pay our deepest respect to Palawa elders, past and present.

Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land