

Media Release

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2023-24 Annual Report: Commission says net zero action must be accelerated

The Minister for Climate Change has today tabled the Net Zero Commission's first annual report, which provides its initial assessment of the progress being made by the NSW Government towards meeting its legislated emissions reduction targets and the adaptation objective.

The commission's report focuses on NSW's progress towards decarbonising the same sectors used in the Climate Change Authority's [Sector Pathways Review 2024](#) released in September 2024.

A central finding from the report is that despite considerable progress in reducing emissions since 2005, NSW must accelerate action to stay within reach of its emission reduction targets.

The *Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023* (NSW) outlines specific targets for the state: a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 2030, a 70% reduction by 2035, and achieving net zero by 2050.

However, the commission's initial assessment has found that unless faster and more significant progress is made, NSW will not achieve its 2030 target.

"Deeper and more extensive collaboration between governments, businesses, and communities is needed to accelerate progress," said Dr Paul Grimes, chair of the Net Zero Commission. "Unless we pick up the pace, we will fail to meet all of our targets, and NSW will miss out on economic opportunities from building a clean economy, investing in jobs, and developing new export markets."

Highlighting key themes and areas of focus to accelerate climate action

The commission's initial assessment looks at progress since 2005 across six key sectors of the economy: electricity and energy; transport; resources; industry and waste; agriculture and land; and the built environment.

A key message for the NSW Government is to maintain a sustained focus on the electricity and energy sector. The report stresses that progress in this area will be critical for reducing emissions in NSW — not only through the sector's own decarbonisation efforts, but also by enabling other sectors such as transport and the built environment to decarbonise through electrification.

"While many of the foundational elements for NSW to commence the transition towards net zero are in place, all sectors of the economy need to play their part in meeting legislated targets. This also involves all areas of government," Dr Grimes said.

The commission's initial assessment also found that there are risks to the state's targets from potential increased emissions in the resources sector associated with coal mine extension and expansion projects. In addition, it highlights uncertainties around the contribution that the land sector may ultimately make towards NSW's emission reduction targets.

Further, the report identifies key actions needed to build climate change resilience and adaptation in NSW. It points out that strengthening resilience to a changing climate will require action from all levels of government, business and industry, communities, and individuals.

Advancing the commission's work in 2025 and beyond

This is the commission's first annual report. It is necessarily an initial assessment given the commission was not established until after 2023-24.

Informed by its initial progress assessment for 2023-24, the commission will be developing its work program for 2025 and identifying potential focus areas for the following 4 years. As part of its work assessing progress and preparing recommendations for the NSW Government, the commission intends pursuing best practice community consultation.

"The commission sees consultation as being central to its work. We need the best information to support our advice and we want to hear the perspectives of a broad range of community voices" said Dr Grimes.

To support the development of its 2024-25 Annual report the commission will be releasing a high-level issues paper and calling for submissions by early March 2025.

Download the full media release PDF (webpage version) [here](#).

Read more on the 2024 annual report, including the full report, [here](#).

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About the Net Zero Commission

The Net Zero Commission is an independent body that provides expert advice and recommendations on NSW's approach to addressing climate change. We monitor and publicly report on NSW's progress towards its legislated emissions reduction targets and adaptation objective.