

3rd November 2022

NSW Environmental Protection Authority
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

By email: climatechange.review@epa.nsw.gov.au

Dear Climate Change Review team,

Re: Draft Climate Change Policy and Climate Change Action Plan 2022- 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the EPA's draft Climate Change Policy and Climate Change Action Plan.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-seven years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Our mission is to 'create a better environment for all bicycle riders', from 8 to 80 years of age, and we support improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. We advocate for new cycling routes that provide connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips. Bike riding provides a healthy, congestion-reducing, low-carbon form of travel that is quiet, efficient and attractive for all ages with the correct infrastructure design.

The declaration by the court that CO₂ emissions require urgent regulation is a defining moment in the history of climate action in Australia.

We are delighted that the EPA is strengthening its climate change response by drafting two very significant documents that will support a greener future for NSW. Other Australian states and territories are closely watching how the Climate Change Policy unfolds because it will set a new benchmark and precedent for state environmental regulations.

The NSW Government has recognised the urgency of the climate emergency and committed to a 50% reduction in carbon emissions (from 2005 levels) by 2030, and Net Zero by 2050. These targets are ambitious but align with global best practice.

The EPA is the primary environmental regulator for NSW but has traditionally focused on reducing the impacts of industrial activity on human and environmental health. The draft Climate Change Policy establishes the agency's critical role in regulating the cause and consequences of climate change. Acting on climate change is a huge opportunity. Innovation in green metals, regenerative agriculture, clean energy and circular manufacturing will thrive within the correct policy context.

The Policy promises that climate will be considered in all of the EPA's planning, licencing, enforcement, compliance decisions. Each business in the regulated community needs to develop and implement plans to minimise emissions and prepare for climate change risks. The EPA will partner with DPE to ensure that climate change is always considered in planning approvals. Internal operations will be overhauled too to look at the EPA's own climate change risks and adaptation needs.

However, Bicycle NSW is very concerned that the Climate Change Policy and Action Plan do not tackle the second largest and fastest growing source of emissions: transport.

Concerns

The draft documents are almost completely silent on transport. 'Transport' is mentioned just 3 times in the Action Plan!

The table on Page 13 of the Policy (Figure 1) explains that transport-related emissions from regulated industries make up a very small proportion of total transport emissions¹ despite accounting for 20% of NSW emissions overall.




| Sector * | Description | Total NSW emissions (% of total NSW emissions)** | Activities in this sector that are covered by the EPA's regulatory remit |
|--|--|--|--|
|  Stationary energy (electricity generation) | Emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels for electricity generation | 52 Mt (38%) | The EPA is responsible for regulating larger electricity generation activities that generate almost all of these emissions (e.g. coal-fired power stations). Local councils are generally responsible for regulating smaller activities, which typically have much lower emissions. |
|  Stationary energy (excluding electricity generation) | Emissions from on-site fossil fuel combustion (e.g. to run boilers and furnaces) used in manufacturing and other activities | 15 Mt (11%) | The EPA is responsible for regulating larger industrial activities that generate most of these emissions (e.g. metallurgy). Local councils generally regulate smaller premises that use on-site stationary energy (e.g. some commercial, residential and smaller industrial premises). |
|  Transport | Includes fossil fuel combustion emissions for use in transport activities (e.g. on-road vehicles, rail, domestic aviation and domestic shipping) | 28 Mt (20%) | While some operators that the EPA regulates use on-road vehicles or rail rolling stock, emissions from these account for a very small proportion of total transport sector emissions. |

Figure 1: Extract from table showing NSW greenhouse gas emissions (2018–19) and description of coverage by the EPA's regulatory remit (Source: EPA draft Climate Change Policy)

This is not a reason to neglect the possible levers that the EPA could pull to influence transport emissions. As set out in Appendix A, emissions have declined across most economic sectors since the 2007 peak. Transport is the worrying exception, experiencing almost uninterrupted growth in emissions.

Transport is one of only two sectors from which emissions are projected to increase by 2030 (Figure 2), and transport emissions will contribute much bigger share of total emissions by 2030 (Figure 3)

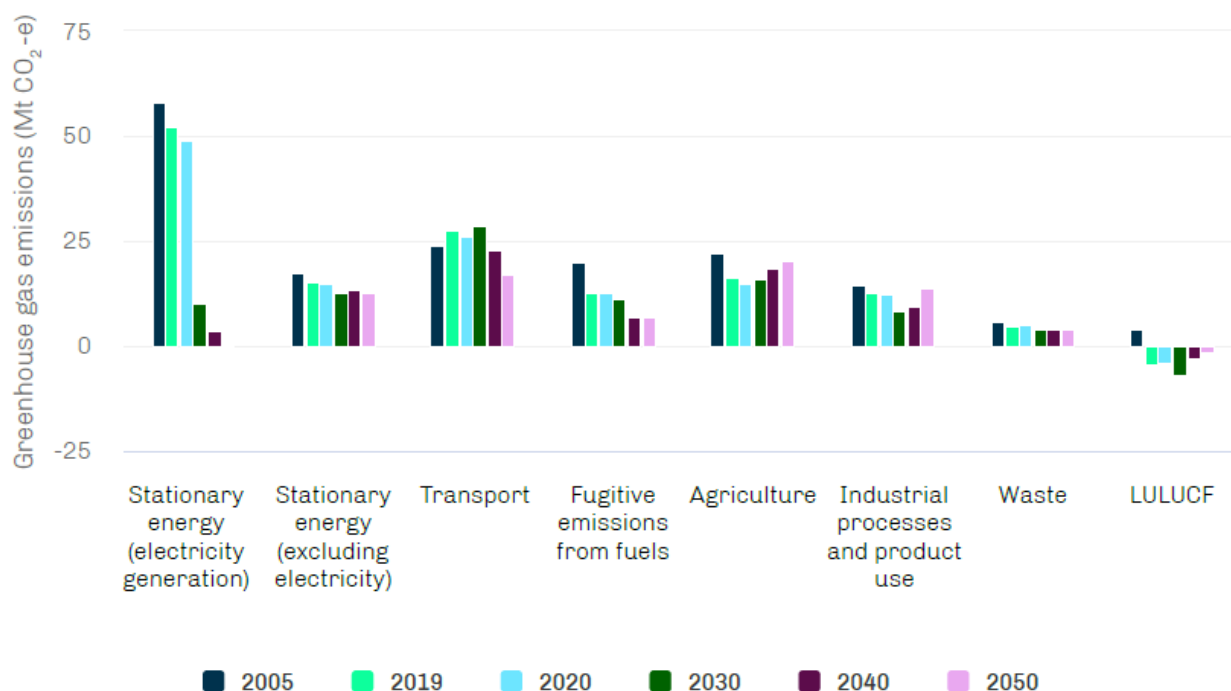


Figure 2: Changing emissions from different sectors 2005-2050 (Source: EPA)

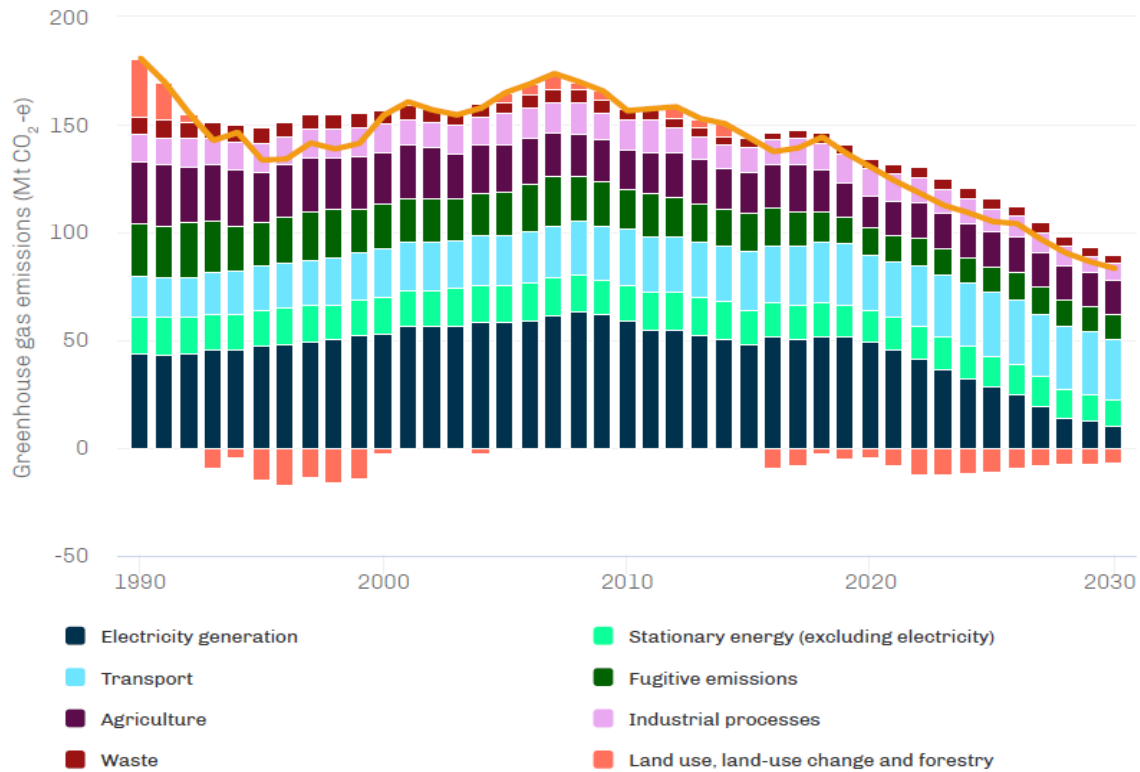


Figure 3: Total greenhouse gas emissions, 1990-2030 (Source: EPA)

By 2050, transport will be the second highest emitter (Figure 4).

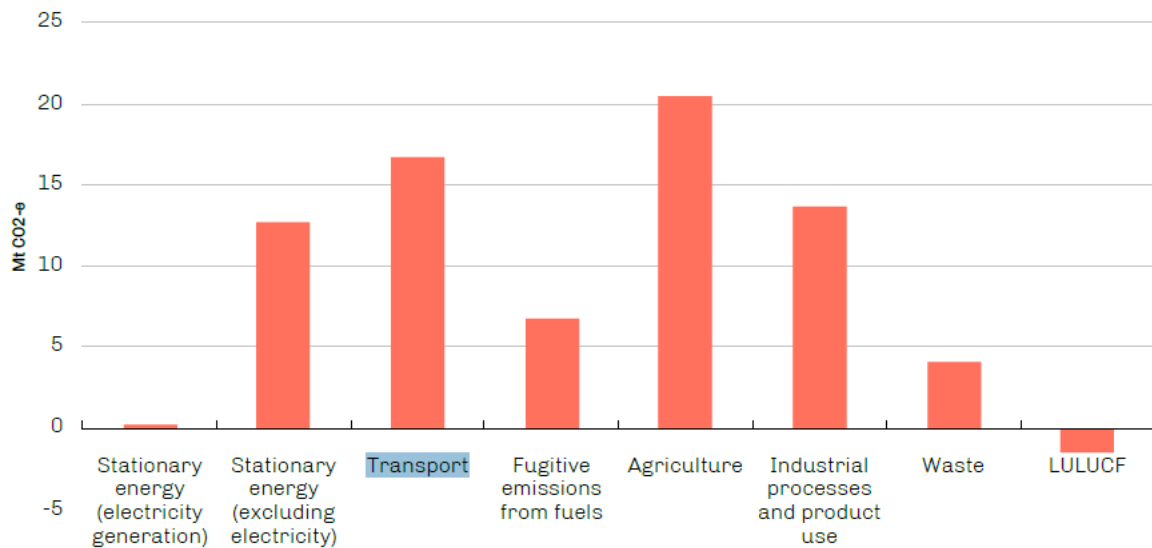


Figure 4: Projected NSW emissions by sector for 2050, with current Net Zero Stage 1 policies implemented (Source: EPA)

It is assumed that the poor outcomes for transport are expected despite efforts to electrify vehicles and decarbonise the grid that charges them. If so, it is startlingly evident that much more needs to be done to bring down transport emissions.

Transport for NSW is a regulatory partner of the EPA. The EPA has the power to regulate operators whose projects could significantly impact the environment. Why not Transport for NSW?

Recommendations

Hold Transport for NSW to their excellent policies and strategies

Since 2019, there has been a seismic shift in NSW policy direction, framed by innovative thinking around ‘place’ after 70 years of car-centric planning that focused on movement to the detriment of community, urban amenity, walkability, public health and air quality. The [Movement and Place Framework](#) takes an integrated cross-governmental approach to infrastructure projects and land use design. It is bolstered by two policies published by Transport for NSW in early 2021 that require State projects to prioritise road space for active transport: *Road User Space Allocation Policy*ⁱⁱ and *Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy*ⁱⁱⁱ. The former establishes a road user hierarchy that considers pedestrians first and private cars last and allocates road space according to need.

The new Future Transport Strategy^{iv} further embeds movement-and-place thinking and promises to support car-free mobility and urban vitality by delivering ‘connected walking and cycling networks which integrate with public transport and green infrastructure’.

However, Transport for NSW is still pushing forward on projects which will increase emissions and discourage walking and cycling. Oversized roads with a determined car-first mentality are under construction and in planning, while public transport services have been damaged by privatisation.

Licence and monitor Transport for NSW

If Transport for NSW can’t be relied on for action to reduce transport emissions, the EPA should be able to require Transport for NSW to stall the increase in transport-related emissions. It may be that regulating a partner agency does not fit within the EPA’s narrow remit. In which case it should be considered under “expanding your focus” (page 10), since no other NSW Government agency is doing it and reducing car use is missing from all the other climate change policies and strategies listed on page 9. If not the EPA, then who?

Set timeframes and targets for the reduction of transport emissions

Transport for NSW needs clear goals to push back against business-as-usual and meet its policy ambitions.

Develop policies and regulation to reduce private car travel

Influencing the broader community through behaviour change programmes will be part of the EPA’s future remit, as set out under the ‘Mitigate’ pillar of the Climate Change Policy.

The NSW Government can take immediate action to halve short car trips. Half of Greater Sydney’s car trips are less than 5km, and many are under 2km. Half of these should be shifted to walking (for trips up to 800m) and cycling (for trips up to 5km and more) by measures that could be implemented extremely fast, including:

- Adopt 30km/h default speed limits in local streets and town centres;
- Ensure that bike can be carried on all buses and trains;
- Enable 75% of students to walk, scoot, cycle or take public transport to school daily;
- Improve and expand streetscape projects to support local businesses;
- Build or upgrade 2,560 pedestrian crossings;
- Build 1,000 km of connected, safe and direct cycle and micromobility routes per year, with sufficient budget and a fully resourced Active Transport Delivery Unit in TfNSW
- Provide incentives and subsidies for e-bikes in transport-disadvantaged areas of Sydney and NSW;

- Run an education campaign to ensure NSW residents understand that making unnecessary short car trips is as harmful and anti-social as smoking and littering.

Set up an emissions trading or permit scheme

The EPA could establish an emissions trading scheme that puts a price on every tonne of carbon emitted by the transport sector. We recommend exploring a wide range of [international precedents](#).

Change advertising standards

No longer allow the advertisement of any ICE vehicle, or fossil fuel product. Support tobacco-style bans on fossil fuel advertising and sponsorships. See <https://commsdeclare.org/> for inspiration!

Require regulated industries to develop last mile logistics hubs for micromobility

By overcoming congestion with zero emissions, micromobility systems and infrastructure solve the wicked logistical problem of the last mile^v. This is because one e-cargo bike connected to a logistics hub can make 10 times as many trips as a truck battling through traffic^{vi}. Megacities like Cairo and Dakar are leapfrogging^{vii} into micromobility and upending the assumption that pollution and congestion are essential by-products of economic development. Western examples of decarbonisation and decongestion facilitated by micromobility technology and infrastructure include-

- Toronto's bicycle network saw a 40%^{viii} increase in deliveries by bike from 2019-22.
- Micro-logistics hubs and last-mile services in London could reduce traffic volumes by 13% vehicle emissions by 17%^{ix}.
- A pilot project in New York resulted in a 109% increase in deliveries by cargo bikes.

Conclusion

The EPA's draft Climate Plan Policy and Action Plan is a significant step forward, but there is still scope to make it more ambitious.

We must move towards a transport system that prioritises active transport and public transport rather than cars used for personal transport. Policies to support walking and cycling will benefit everyone in the community, reducing congestion, noise and pollution while improving public health and providing more equitable access to employment, businesses, services and public transport.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Bike Planner
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

Chief Executive Officer
Bicycle NSW

-
- ⁱ EPA. 2022, September. Draft Climate Change Policy. https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/download_file/902/607
- ⁱⁱ Transport for NSW. 2021, February. Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001, <https://s23705.pcdn.co/wpcontent/uploads/2021/02/providing-for-walking-and-cycling-in-transport-projects-policy.pdf>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Transport for NSW. 2021, February. Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy CP21001, <https://s23705.pcdn.co/wpcontent/uploads/2021/02/providing-for-walking-and-cycling-in-transport-projects-policy.pdf>
- ^{iv} Transport for NSW. 2022. Future Transport Strategy. <https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/documents/future-transport-strategy>
- ^v <https://www.wsp.com/en-au/insights/future-of-delivery>
- ^{vi} <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d30896202a18c0001b49180/t/61091edc3acfa2f4af7d97f/1627987694676/The+Promise+of+Low-Carbon+Freight.pdf>
- ^{vii} https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/01/25/changing-the-way-we-move-a-win-win-for-climate-and-development?cid=SHR_SiteTweetable_XX_EXT
- ^{viii} <https://www.wsp.com/en-au/insights/future-of-delivery>
- ^{ix} <https://www.wsp.com/en-au/insights/future-of-delivery>