



Government of Western Australia
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

RE: Climate Change in Western Australia – Issues Paper: Consultation

On behalf of the WA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects, we would like to congratulate you on the release of the *Climate Change in Western Australia – Issues Paper* dated September 2019. It is positive for the State Government to openly discuss issues of Climate Emergency and set proactive policies with that regard which we view are vital in facilitating continual quality of life for all citizens.

As the peak body for architecture we represent over 11,500 members globally and are committed to raising design standards and positively shaping the places where we live, work and meet. As such, we welcome the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of our WA Chapter members.

Limitations of the Issue Paper

- The climate change issues identified offer little substance for critical review and tangible, valuable insight for the community, including architects. For example, what are the actual rates at which the State aims to decarbonize its electricity supplies and by which year are we targeting to achieve a carbon neutral electricity supply?
- Climate issues and targets forming the basis of this Issues Paper, are based on targets and assumptions that do not adequately address the Climate Emergency we are in. We would refer to Climate Analytics' November 2019 report *A 1.5C Compatible Carbon Budget For Western Australia - WA's role in implementing the Paris Agreement* to adequately represent realistic climate targets which should be set to safeguard our unique and iconic ecosystems, coastal and agricultural regions. By example, as we are at the frontline of climate impacts, it is vital to limit global warming to within 1.5C temperature variant (not 2C).



- The State's emissions are going to increase in the short term due to the increase in the LNG sector and other fossil fuel extraction industry project developments. Policy that intends to reduce emissions puts undue onus on other sectors to offset the oil, gas and mining sectors. We are of the opinion that this does not set a positive precedent or sustainable transition to a de-carbonized and sustainable future.
- The paper makes no reference to indigenous knowledge systems, which are essential in addressing climate issues.

Recommendations

The built environment and associated sectors, such as energy, transportation and land use, contribute >25% to the State's carbon emissions. Along with minimizing impact of climate change by reducing and offsetting carbon emissions, we must enhance the resilience of our built environment to extreme weather events and predicted climate change impacts. Design plays a critical role in integrating systems, such as water and waste management, natural ecologies, culture, human health and wellbeing. Growth in our cities means increasing pressures on our natural environment and the crucial ecosystem services they provide (e.g. clean air, cooler urban areas). Climate change is expected to exacerbate these pressures. We must create a sustainable built environment that fosters connectivity and integrates essential resources and functions to mitigate against adverse impacts from climate change.

We recommend the Australian Government and the State:

- Establish a plan towards zero carbon buildings. We are in support of the recent scientific call for *Zero Carbon Act* to establish a binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions in Western Australia by 2050 and to implement shorter-term carbon budgets for the State.
- Set strong mandatory minimum standards for energy performance of buildings and appliances.
- Adopt energy efficiency programs for existing and new buildings.
- Provide incentives for the private sector to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in the built environment.



**Australian
Institute of
Architects**

ABN 72 000 023 012
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

WA Chapter
33 Broadway
Nedlands, Perth, WA, 6009

P: (08) 6324 3100
beata.davey@architecture.com.au
architecture.com.au

Key policies to support sustainable development by the State include:

- Incentive schemes to refurbish existing buildings, alongside regulations and incentives to reduce energy demand.
- Ambitious renewable energy targets, taking into account additional electricity demand through decarbonisation of buildings and other end-user sectors.
- Embedding considerations of climate change into building practices.
- Embedding considerations of biodiversity and habitat into building practices.
- Plan for future mobility that firmly prioritises public transport, cycling and walking over cars.
- Incentivise or regulate holistic sustainability measures in policies, such as mandatory circular economy in buildings and regenerative practice.

We look forward to continuing this discourse further and thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission on behalf of our members.

Regards,

Beata Davey

Interim State Manager - WA