

South Australians for Climate Action

We are South Australian businesses, institutions and community organisations. We have come together to seek a commitment from all political parties and candidates at the 2022 State election to implement powerful policies that protect our community, economy and environment from climate change impacts.

South Australia has a track record of bipartisan leadership on climate and energy policy, and we are well-placed to both improve our climate future and build the new economy powered by clean energy. We have a lot to gain by responding positively and forcefully to the changing climate. Now is the time to innovate for climate resilience and carbon-neutrality, to adapt our energy, transport, industry and agriculture to net zero emissions, and to reap the benefits in export and growth opportunities. Our goal must be the rapid achievement of 100% green energy, climate smart agriculture and biodiversity protection.

We have a lot to lose if we miss this critical time for action. A 'business as usual' future is no longer possible and the sooner we ramp up our response, building on our strengths, the sooner South Australians can face the future with optimism. We need a strong and feasible action program that engages communities, businesses and institutions. We need the Government to lead with a far-sighted whole-of-government strategy that includes targeted incentives to support promising innovations and outcomes.

We don't have all the answers, but there are some clear priorities for government.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Clean Energy for All Uses

SA leads the nation in the shift to renewable electricity and has an aspiration of 100% renewable electricity by 2030ⁱ. But electricity provides less than 30% of our energy use. We need a broader focus to include energy used in heating, transport, industry and agriculture, together with energy storage, to achieve the State's goal of reducing greenhouse emissions by at least 50% by 2030ⁱⁱ.

- Complete the transition to 100% renewable electricity by 2030
- Ensure a rapid path to replacement of all fossil fuels with the best available renewable alternatives, such as renewable electricity and green hydrogen
- Convert all forms of land transport to carbon-free energy
 - Support the adoption of world standards for vehicle emissions
 - Accelerate the development of renewable refuelling facilities for cars, trucks and buses
 - Set strong targets for increasing the share of public and active transport
 - Convert government vehicle fleets to zero-emissions by 2030, and act to accelerate the universal uptake of zero emission vehicles in private and business fleets
- Accelerate the replacement of natural gas with renewable alternatives and oppose the development of new natural gas fields
- Strengthen energy efficiency standards for the built environment
- Provide transition support for SA companies, workers and communities whose businesses, careers or opportunities are significantly impacted in the move away from fossil fuels

- Expand support for low income households through programs to improve rental housing energy efficiency and access to renewable energy technologies
- Keep oil and gas exploration and drilling out of the Great Australian Bight
- Support innovation in industry and research to develop new technologies (eg for recycling and environmentally-sensitive mining for minerals critical to green technologies).

Climate Smart Land Use

Many SA farmers, graziers and agriculturalists are adopting innovative practices to improve energy productivity, reduce emissions and produce renewable energy. Converting vehicles to renewable fuels and adopting low-emission farm machinery and equipment, reducing methane, changing land use and improving land management can make Australian agriculture emission neutral by 2040ⁱⁱⁱ.

- Accelerate SA's food waste and biogas capture programs, and support the Australian Red Meat Industry's Carbon Neutral Roadmap to decrease methane by up to 90% by 2030^{iv}
- Recognise and respect First Nations' traditional land uses and rights and incorporate their knowledge in landscape management
- Fund the development of climate-smart actions through SA's eight regional landscape boards; and establish a regional emissions reporting framework to measure their progress
- Incentivise land management practices that build healthy soils, sequester greenhouse gases, increase on-farm biomass, and encourage revegetation for productivity and biodiversity.

Protection of Biodiversity

SA is in an extinction crisis through accelerated loss of native flora and fauna and ecosystem resilience. Healthy ecosystems are critical for human health, and for food and fibre production. Their loss makes people and animals more vulnerable to dangerous heat waves and extreme weather events and destroys essential habitat for native animals and plants.

- Support strengthening of the national Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act through enforceable national standards and implement in SA the relevant reforms recommended by the 2020 Independent Review^v
- Act to prevent native wildlife extinctions, actively support landholders to regenerate native vegetation, restore healthy ecosystems and reduce habitat removal
- Continue strong advocacy for full delivery of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- Ensure the ongoing protection and funding of SA's network of marine parks and sanctuaries
- Expand the Indigenous Ranger Program in SA for protection of land, waters and culture and incorporate traditional knowledge and practice in biodiversity protection initiatives.

Greenhouse Gas Neutrality of Business and Agriculture

Certified actions to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality and to earn carbon credits are practical measures to enable all businesses to benefit from the new economy. But there can be significant cost and compliance burdens that particularly affect smaller enterprises: they need assistance.

- Establish a service to assist small businesses to achieve certification as carbon neutral, and to help landowners and farmers earn carbon credits, with appropriate financial assistance
- Prioritise zero-carbon options in government procurement, and include carbon neutrality (or evidence of progress towards it) as a factor in government tenders.

ⁱ Department for Energy and Mining. South Australia has transformed its energy system from 1% to over 60% renewable energy in just over 15 years. The State's aspiration is to achieve 100% net renewables by 2030.

ⁱⁱ The South Australian Government Climate Change Action Plan 2021–2025. The SA government has set goals to reduce SA's greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50% below 2005 levels by 2030, and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ernst & Young Australia. 2021. How can Australia's agriculture sector realise opportunity in a low emissions future? Farmers for Climate Action.

^{iv} Meat & Livestock Australia 2020. The Australian Red Meat Industry's Carbon Neutral by 2030 Roadmap.

^v Samuels G 2020. Independent Review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Available at: <https://epbactreview.environment.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-01/EPBC%20Act%20Review%20Final%20Report%20October%202020.pdf>