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UTAS releases Discussion Paper on options for a climate-positive Tasmania

The University of Tasmania has an international reputation for excellence in climate science, research, and education, and is deeply committed to aggressive climate action.

It considers the findings of the recent International Panel on Climate Change Assessment Report on the impacts of climate change and the need for urgent and aggressive action as a line in the sand for humanity.

As global leaders contemplate more aggressive climate action and the State Government is consulting on Tasmania's next climate strategy, the University has prepared a detailed discussion paper setting out options for a 'climate-positive' Tasmania.

This is an ambitious strategy but, we believe that with a community-wide effort Tasmania can provide an example to the world on how to respond to climate change. The vision for a 'climate-positive' Tasmania consists of three broad elements:

1. Maintaining Tasmania's world leading net-negative emissions profile to 2030 and beyond.
2. Continuing to develop and deploy low-and zero- carbon technologies and processes to reduce emissions in Tasmania while capitalising on the accelerating decarbonisation of the global economy.
3. Working with communities and partners to develop and implement detailed adaptation plans to prepare for and minimise the impact of unavoidable climate change.

The paper welcomes the Tasmanian Government's proposed target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2030 and beyond but also highlights that significant emissions cuts from key sectors such as transport, agriculture and industry are likely to be required by 2030 to meet this target and prepare the Tasmanian economy for a low carbon future.

Professor Richard Eccleston, one of the primary authors of the university-wide collaboration, summarised the challenge ahead:

"It's important to understand that we will have to achieve significant emissions reduction across the Tasmanian economy over the next decade to ensure that Tasmania maintains its current net-negative emissions status to 2030 and beyond," Prof Eccleston said.

"Our analysis and the independent modelling published by the Tasmania Government suggests that the amount of greenhouse gasses which can be removed from the atmosphere and stored in Tasmanian forests and land is likely to decline over time."

While the amount of additional carbon which can be stored in Tasmanian forests in the future is uncertain, analysis presented in the paper suggests cutting gross emissions by 37 per cent by 2030 should ensure Tasmania would maintain its current world-leading

emissions profile under the most challenging scenario presented in the recently published Independent Review of the Climate Act.

Meeting this target will also ensure that we are transitioning in line with the rest of the world to a low-carbon future. The paper also outlines policy options and strategies for cutting greenhouse gas emissions across Tasmanian industries in efficient and effective ways.

According to Professor Eccleston: “Our hope is that these options will be considered as part of industry-specific emissions reduction plans the Tasmanian Government proposes to develop.”

“Decarbonising the Tasmanian economy will require fundamental changes to how we live and how our industries operate, but with our renewable energy assets, expertise and commitment to climate action, we are well placed to meet this challenge in a way that benefits the economy, the Tasmanian community and the planet.”

The Discussion Paper also highlights the economic opportunities a world-leading climate strategy would create for Tasmania, as well as the inevitable costs of inaction.

“The global economy is changing rapidly,” Prof Eccleston said. “There are literally trillions of dollars being invested in zero-carbon research, industries and products while markets for carbon-intensive products are in decline.

“Tasmania effectively has a choice: we can embrace ambitious climate action, or risk being left behind and pay the price into the future.”

The full *Discussion Paper* and summary chart pack are available at:

<https://www.utas.edu.au/community-and-industry/tpe/climate-positive-tasmania>

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