Newcastle Greens Policy on

Making Newcastle a Climate Change Leader

Working with our community for a just transition to a clean-energy future

Since the 1970s scientists have been clear that carbon emissions are causing global warming and that, if we continue with 'business as usual', we will warm the planet by more than 4°C by the end of this century. Already we are experiencing the effects of warming – increased summer heat waves, catastrophic bushfires, droughts, and damaging coastal erosion from rising sea levels. The world has agreed we must keep warming below 1.5°C to avoid a climate disaster.

In May 2019 Newcastle City Council unanimously agreed we are in a climate emergency. They confirmed their commitment to the Paris agreement to keep global temperature rise below 1.5°C, and for a just economic transition for our local coal-mining communities.

The Newcastle Greens believe the City of Newcastle can play a leading role in preventing catastrophic climate change. As the biggest coal export port in the world, we have a pivotal role in phasing out the mining and burning of coal while maintaining a flourishing community and economy in our region. This requires some difficult decisions, but also offers new opportunities.

The Greens believe the Newcastle community can show the way to become leaders in adopting and developing new renewable technologies, and the new industries and jobs that come with them.

Newcastle Greens will work with the community to:

Help meet the Paris goal of keeping global warming below 1.5°C by:

- Making Newcastle Council carbon-neutral by 2030 by:
    - Adopting and resourcing a pathway to achieve the target and reporting at least annually on progress
    - Monitoring emissions from all Council activities and reporting at least annually on progress
    - Improving energy efficiency in Council operations and new developments
    - Switching to 100% renewable energy for all Council operations including transport
    - Developing a program to transition 30% of Council's cars, trucks and other equipment to renewable electric power by 2025
    - Making Council a net exporter of renewable energy by 2025
    - Expanding urban forests and other plantings on Council land to cool the City and offset carbon emissions
    - Capturing and/or offsetting methane emissions from Council landfill and other waste operations

- Making the City of Newcastle carbon-neutral by 2040 by:
    - Developing and adopting a city-wide pathway and timetable to carbon neutrality in conjunction with business, the public sector and the community and based on the best scientific and technical advice
    - Monitoring emissions from Council, industry and the community to identify problem emitters
    - Planning for and building the infrastructure required to support an economy that is not dependent on fossil fuels such as distributed and smart electricity networks, EV car charging stations, an integrated public transport and cycleway system, and a diversified port and industrial sector
    - Changing State planning law to give Council the power to require new developments to meet energy and water standards in excess of the BASIX minimum

    - Using large hard-paved areas such as carparks to install solar arrays that provide shade as well as energy
    - Providing and supporting opportunities for off-setting carbon emissions through urban forests within the city and reforestation in the Hunter Region
    - Reviewing Council Development Controls to make it easier for new developments to incorporate green roofs and walls that reduce energy consumption and cool urban environments
    - Eliminating waste to landfill by adopting a circular economy that recycles or reuses all waste

- Opposing a gas field off our coast and opposing any new coal mines or coal-fired power stations

- Opposing proposals for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal in the Port of Newcastle

Live safely with the changes we are already experiencing from global warming by:

- Beginning immediate implementation of the city's low-lying areas strategy to protect harbourside suburbs from flooding and rising sea levels
- Developing a detailed management strategy for all the city's beaches to reduce coastal erosion caused by sea level rise (see our 'Coast and Waterways' Policy for more details, especially for Stockton Beach)
- Ensuring all new public outdoor spaces are designed to reduce the urban heat island effect and implementing a works program to progressively redesign existing public spaces to cope with increasing summertime temperatures
- Continuing to work with Hunter Water to reduce water consumption by Council and across the city through water-sensitive urban design, increased efficiency of water use, stormwater harvesting, and installing water-saving technologies
- Developing and publicising a city-wide emergency response for days of extreme heat in conjunction with other agencies such as Hunter New England Health and SES, with special provision for vulnerable residents such as the elderly, the homeless, and people with disabilities and chronic illness

Make sure people and communities affected by the switch from fossil fuels have new opportunities for employment and economic development by:

- Supporting the diversification of the economy of Newcastle and the Hunter Region through land-use planning and infrastructure provision to support new and emerging industries
- Assisting in the staged closure of coal export from the Port of Newcastle by:
    - Not extending the Carrington (T1) coal loader's licence when it expires in 2024
    - Establishing new uses for the port such as a rail-supported container terminal and a suitably located purpose-built cruise terminal
- Demanding State and Federal Governments provide substantial funds (such as the NSW Greens proposal for a $1.8 billion NSW Coal Community Transition Fund) to assist local communities develop new industries and expand their vocational skills and community resources
- Partnering with local innovators and researchers such as Newcastle University and CSIRO to make Newcastle a leader in developing, trialling and manufacturing new renewable energy technologies and systems
- Building community resources, cohesion and resilience by involving communities in decisions that affect them, and encouraging cooperative enterprises such as community food-growing, transport pooling and 'virtual power station' energy networks