

Dear Climate Action Monaro members

As many of you have been aware, I have been a long time supporter and advocate of action to address and ameliorate climate change. Including, having been an advocate during my whole political career of a transition to Net Zero. We have seen more than a decade wasted by Government since the decision to reject the Rudd era cap and trade proposal.

Now that we finally have a Federal Government taking real action it is vital we have a State Government that is in lock step – if not trying to be even more ambitious. From my work on boards and in agriculture over recent years it has become clear to me that often the private sector is well ahead of Government in its thinking about what needs to happen.

If I am elected I will be an advocate for climate action, particularly in regional communities and industries. I believe we can make a transition without disadvantaging regional communities – indeed I see great opportunities. It is a transition though, and for that reason it really isn't possible to give full responses via yes/ no or survey style answers.

I believe that answering no to some questions reflects adequately the commitment that is there to making progress.

For that reason I have responded as briefly as I could to the flyer you gave me in Jindabyne, rather than to the Google survey. I have also spoken to our Shadow Minister Jihad Dib MP, he and I would be happy to have a Zoom meeting with the group to discuss the issues in more detail.

I can assure you that although I don't feel I can do the yes/no answers on the Google survey I remain very strongly committed to being an advocate of climate action if I am elected as Member for Monaro later this month.

1. Reduce Carbon Emissions – Labor will legislate for carbon emissions targets in NSW, 50% of 2005 levels by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050. Labor's bill will also establish a Net Zero Commission who would develop the plan to net zero by 2050, monitor and review the plan and trajectory, including impacts on jobs and industry, as well as energy prices. The Commission would update the plan every five years.
2. New Coal and Gas – Labor is committed to a transition away from fossil fuels. We recognise that as part of that transition we will continue to need some fossil fuel for some time, in particular gas and coking coal. As NSW sees the accelerated retirement of coal fired power stations, we need to work with communities to ensure that there is a strong path for their economic future. I continue to hold the strong view that had Australia introduced a domestic gas reservation policy a decade ago then the current pressure for new gas development would have been substantially removed.
3. Accelerate adoption of electric transport – We will set up an EV Readiness Taskforce that will develop the necessary policies, and regulations to encourage consumers who are want to purchase electric vehicles by having the right measures in place to support their transition.
4. Increase renewable energy – Labor will establish a new Government owned energy company to increase the take up of renewable energy. In particular, this new corporation with \$1 billion in seed funding will focus on the roll out of storage including community batteries and other clean storage options. (Further information is here: <https://www.chrisminns.com.au/energysecuritycorporation>)

5. Increase energy efficiency in buildings – The government operates a hodgepodge of schemes that fail to marry the right incentives to increase energy efficiency in buildings. Their policies are largely discontinued pilots. Labor will take the learnings from the pilots and collate incentives into a one-stop-shop in government to improve accessibility and take up.
6. Protect native forests for carbon – As a previous Minister responsible for Forestry I was a strong supporter of keeping our State Forests in public ownership so that we could ensure that we kept plantation forestry expanding. Labor also has a record of encouraging private plantation forests, something that will be encouraged when we have reliable long term offset programs. Labor’s commitment to a Great Koala National Park and future habitat protection will also ensure the protection of further native forests.
7. Farm carbon on agricultural land – I have spent some of the last few years working with agriculture on energy and renewables issues. I do feel there are very strong opportunities for agriculture to make the transition to Net Zero using a combination of emissions reductions and measurable carbon offsets. Many farmers are keen to manage their land in ways that improve soil quality and enhance carbon content, it is critical to develop a reliable methodology for measurement and accounting. I would hope to be able to play a role in encouraging that if I am elected.
8. Support a just transition for workers – workers in the fossil fuel extraction industries are well aware of the changes that are happening and are going to happen with transition to Net Zero. They are not well served by conservative politicians who pretend they don’t need to act or plan. Labor at all levels recognises the need to plan and start the transition now, not lead communities to a cliff. We will also support regional authorities to empower communities with both resourcing and autonomy to guide their own economic diversification.

Thank you for forwarding your questions. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Steve Whan

Labor Candidate for Monaro

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