



## **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Policy for Major Projects**

This Policy aims to guide Government decision-making relating to greenhouse gas emissions for major projects that are assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

### **Introduction**

The Cook Government is committed to working with all sectors of the Western Australian economy to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Opportunities to transition Western Australia to net zero are outlined in the *Western Australian Climate Policy (2020)* and *Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy (2023)*.

The Government has committed to legislating its 2050 target, unlocking opportunities for new low-carbon industries, and working with the Commonwealth to support national decarbonisation goals.

This document replaces the 2019 policy, which was developed in recognition of changing international obligations and Federal Government policies, and the flow-on effects to this Government's delivery of effective and efficient regulation.

Recent reforms to the Commonwealth's Safeguard Mechanism have established a nationally consistent approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions for facilities with emissions over 100,000 tonnes per annum of carbon dioxide equivalent.

The *Safeguard Mechanism (Crediting) Amendment Act 2023* passed Federal Parliament in March 2023, amending the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007* and other related Acts to provide the basic architecture for the reforms. The Commonwealth subsequently amended the Safeguard Rules and other subordinate legislation in May 2023 to give effect to the reforms, with further amendments to the Safeguard Rules in October 2023, April 2024 and August 2024 providing additional policy detail.

These reforms will reduce net emissions from designated large facilities to zero by 2050. These emissions currently contribute more than half of Western Australia's total emissions.

### **Purpose**

Last year the Cook Government commissioned the Vogel-McFerran Review in a commitment to reform the State's environmental approvals system. The Review highlighted the duplicative nature of state and commonwealth conditions for greenhouse gas emissions, applying an unnecessary administrative burden on regulators and proponents without delivering any additional environmental benefit.

One of the recommendations of the Review was that the EPA should limit its assessment of projects and proposals subject to the Commonwealth Safeguard Mechanism to meeting its statutory responsibilities while avoiding unnecessary duplication. Having considered the recommendation, the Government has determined that where proposals with significant greenhouse gas emissions are adequately dealt with by other regulatory measures such as

the strengthened Safeguard Mechanism, those emissions should not be regulated by the State.

This policy outlines the approach that will be taken in consideration of new and existing proposals and expansions with significant greenhouse gas emissions in Western Australia.

### **Application of this policy**

This Policy is intended to apply to new and existing major projects with greenhouse gas emissions that are assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

### **Streamlined conditions**

Where the greenhouse gas emissions of a major proposal assessed under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (WA) (EP Act) will be subjected to alternative regulatory measures, the State will no longer apply conditions to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions.

However, given the uncertainty around Commonwealth regulation of greenhouse gas emissions over the last decade, a standard condition will be applied that requires proponents to notify the State of a substantial change to its obligations under the Safeguard Mechanism. If and where regulation changes at the Commonwealth level, State limits may be applied or reestablished.

### **Streamlined assessment**

The EP Act requires the EPA to identify and consider key environmental factors as part of its statutory assessment functions. Acknowledging the EPA's duties to assess proposals lawfully and in a manner it considers appropriate, the State Government expects that in line with this policy, there is no need to assess emissions dealt with by other regulatory measures.