

# CACE Goal and Targets Factsheet

Community Action in the Climate Emergency DRAFT1.0 Last edited 9 May 2019

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## Goals and Targets for a Climate Emergency Declaration

### The start point: value based decision making

When I teach kids about global warming at CERES environment park in East Brunswick, Melbourne. I usually in the following questions:

- What are impacts of global warming we are seeing today?
- Are these impacts acceptable or unacceptable?
- Do we want more or less of these impacts?
- If we want less impacts what do we need to do now?

The kids give a range of the negative impacts they have seen on the news or been taught about in class or experienced first hand. They will tell me that these impacts are unacceptable. They will say we want less impacts. They will conclude we need to cool the globe and do it fast.

Here the children are applying a moral and ethical response to global warming based on seeking to maximise the protection of the human and non human life around the world, including their own lives.

For a child who has lived in a world of fast changing technology, including the rise of many of the solutions we need, technical obstacles do not even register as an issue, while any political and economic limitations are considered secondary to the primary goal of doing what we should do for the planet and themselves.

When climate change is seen through a child's ethical and moral lens our path of action becomes clear. Councillors can adopt this approach and simply choose to respond to global warming through the lens of making value based decisions about current or future impacts and could consider this within a number of frameworks, including deciding what they personally want to save, maximum protection, minimum protection or acceptable risk.

### Choosing to save something.

One way to approach action on climate change would be to choose something you want to save. It might be the Great Barrier Reef, the Pacific Islands from drowning, North Pole summer ice or polar bears etc. Drawing meaningful goals from this process would require one of two approaches, one simple and one complex.

The complex way would require examination of the scientific literature around each issue and make links to climate science and predictions to enable goals and targets to be set that would prevent damage or restore the thing you wanted to save. Very little of this work has been done to date.

The simple way is to ask is climate change already impacting negatively on the thing I want to protect? If the impacts are already significant and it is in decline, then the only real option you would have would be to seek to reverse global warming and apply "maximum effort" to this task.

### Maximum Protection\*

The concept of maximum protection is about maximising the survival of human and non human life and represents the broadest and strongest response to making a value based decision around global warming.

To implement a maximum protection approach it would require the largest possible contribution from a council to reverse global warming it could possibly make.

From a practical point of view a council would allocate the largest possible amount of its resources to reversing global warming and local resilience. This would include activities to directly reduce a council's own emissions

and undertake greenhouse gas drawdown, supporting and encouraging community members to reduce their own emissions, and to put pressure on higher levels of government and other councils to do the same.

This response is what we call a mobilisation\* response and is discussed in more depth on the CACE website.

Maximum protection if applied on a global scale would also require use of geoengineering to prevent many ecosystems from suffering a catastrophic collapse and allowing others that have already suffered a collapse a chance to recover. Options for geoengineering by local councils are very limited but include increasing the reflectivity of hard surfaces such as road and roofs.

*\*The concept of maximum protection and mobilisation were first developed by Philip Sutton from RSTI.*

### Minimum Protection

The opposite approach to maximum protection would be to provide minimum protection your community. This might assume that a significant proportion your community could be protected from climate related extreme weather events such as floods, fires, storms etc AND be provided with adequate nutrition AND be protected safe from social unrest triggered by global warming at a local (looting, food riots), regional (internal migration, state collapse) or global (war, mass migration) levels.

In order for a council to achieve these goals the global temperature would certainly need to be limited to 2 degrees and most likely to 1.5 degrees. Unfortunately global agreements are setting us on track to 3-4 degrees of warming and 3-4 degrees of warming will lead to catastrophic consequences around the global. Thus to achieve minimum protection a local council would need to do all it could to support mitigation of global warming and provide resilience for its community and do it now.

### Acceptable Risk

All councils should have a risk register to identify and assess risk to their residents. If risks exceeds the risk tolerance or the risk acceptance criteria, measures should be put in place in order to reduce the likelihood or the consequence of this risk on the council community.

Failure to properly assess the near and long term risk arising from global warming and respond in a meaningful manner will likely expose councillors and council to future litigation and they could become personally liable in both civil and criminal proceedings.

|                            |             | Potential Severity Rating |          |             |              |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
|                            |             | Minor                     | Moderate | Significant | Catastrophic |
| Likelihood severity occurs | Very Likely | Moderate                  | High     | Extreme     | Extreme      |
|                            | Likely      | Low                       | Moderate | High        | Extreme      |
|                            | Unlikely    | Very Low                  | Low      | Moderate    | High         |
|                            | Rare        | Very Low                  | Very Low | Low         | Moderate     |

Risk is a combination of likelihood and degree of impact. Due to extremely catastrophic impacts of future global warming events, currently likelihoods of reaching 2, 3, or 4 degrees presents an unacceptable risk when using any current risk assessment practice. For example see the diagram above, noting that catastrophic in this context means death of an individual rather than a collapse of civilisation.

Given that councils can take meaningful action towards both mitigation and resilience, it would suggest that to avoid potential future litigation and achieve an acceptable risk profile, maximum effort would need to be applied. Image sourced from <https://www.arriscar.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/4x4-Matrix-2-660x440.gif>

### Choosing a temperature target to achieve.

You might like to approach your goal setting from a viewpoint of hitting a temperature target, such as 1.5 or 2 degrees celsius. When you consider the work from the Breakthrough institute that the IPCC is underestimating the science and risk around these targets, then achieving these targets most likely would require maximum effort. (see: [www.breakthroughonline.org.au](http://www.breakthroughonline.org.au))

## Taking Action: Choosing to apply maximum effort

Whether we chose to approach global warming from the point of view from *maximum protection*, *minimum protection*, trying to achieve a level of *acceptable risk*, or an ambitious goal such as even saving one of the many species or ecosystems already impacted or stopping the Pacific Islands drowning, a response by council will require maximum effort from a council if these objectives have any chance of being achieved.

A maximum effort is about mobilising all available council and community resources in an attempt to mitigate future climate and provide community resilience to global warming while encouraging higher levels of government to do the same.

A council needs to ask how much of a council's resources can be free up to do this task. What are discretionary spends? What are essential services that must continue to be provided? What are positive actions such as installing solar panel or energy efficiency measures in council buildings that ultimately save money and allow this money to be spent on further mitigation or resilience measures.

Actions that councils can take are described more fully on the CACE website on the council guide pages (<http://www.caceonline.org/a-guide-for-councils.html>) and in the tool box section (<http://www.caceonline.org/nuts-and-bolts-toolbox.html>).

### When do we stop maximum effort?

Until governments and communities around the world successfully reverse global warming and get close to returning to pre industrial temperatures and ocean acidity levels, councils would continue a maximum effort to reverse global warming. As we approach these targets the global efforts would be slowed in a coordinated manner to avoid any significant overshoot.

## Converting maximum effort to goals and targets

If we converted the concept of maximum effort into a goal we would say: "*cool the planet by returning to pre industrial temperatures and ocean acidity levels as soon as possible*" or equivalent.

We could convert this goal into simple statements that capture our objective (cooling the planet) and that provides a sense of urgency and immediacy. For example:

- *Cool the Globe Now*
- *Global cooling starts in 2025*
- *Cool the planet by 2035*
- *Reverse global warming and cool our planet now*
- *Save the Reef, cool our planet*

### Using emissions focused goals and targets

The above mentioned goals and targets (or similar) could be adopted as they are, but it has been the tradition to use emissions focused targets. So how could these goals be translated into an emissions focus while maintaining a sense of urgency and translating well into actions councils and their community can achieve.

**Negative Emissions goals** - Negative emission goals call for negative emissions by a certain date. These goals clearly put forward the concept that stabilization of future emissions is not enough and our larger goal is to reverse global warming and depending on the date chosen can convey an adequate sense of urgency

**Negative Emissions Now** - this goal is aspirational but conveys a sense of urgency and demands immediate massive action.

**Largest possible negative emissions as soon as possible** - this goal is long winded but clearly defines our goal in relation to emissions but not cooling. You could add "*Cool the planet.*" to the front of it.

*Negative emissions by 2025* - this goal is aspirational given our current lack of action on global warming but represents the earliest likely date we could achieve a net negative target if we approached emissions reduction at emergency speed.

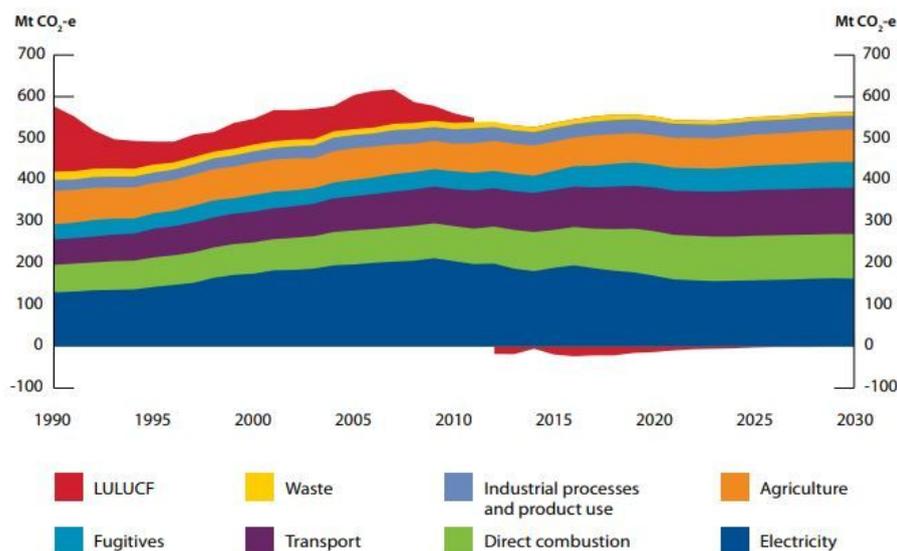
*Negative emissions by 2030* - this goal represents the slowest time you would aim for if adopting an emergency response.

*100% net negative emission by 2030 (based on a XXXX baseline)* - this goal represents drawing down a years worth of emissions every year based on a chosen a reference point or base line year. For example this could be the total emissions released in year 1990 or 2000 etc. Your target would be to draw down that amount of emissions until our safe climate goals are met. The baseline could be any year but the highest emissions year is a good choice. See graph right for an example of emission in Australia by year.

*500% net negative emission by 2030 (based on a 2000 baseline)* - this is probably the sort of targets we will actually need if we want to avoid a climate catastrophe.

## Overall results

Figure 3 Australia's emissions, 1990 to 2030



## Zero Emissions Goals

Zero emission goals imply in part that once we stop contributing to global warming we have done our bit and done enough to avoid a climate chaos. They do not include the idea that much more needs to be done in order to reversing global warming and return to a safe climate. Given almost all “zero emissions” goals are “net” targets there is little reason you would not frame your target as a “negative” target vs a “net zero”, as you simply need increase your drawdown and you are into negative emissions. If you insists on using a “net zero” goal here are some options.

*Zero Emissions Now* - this goals is aspirational but conveys a sense of urgency and demands immediate massive action. First used by in the early 2000’s by campaigners in Australia.

*Net zero emissions by 2025* - this goal is aspirational given our current lack of action on global warming but represents the earliest likely date we could achieve a net zero target if a country approached emissions reduction at emergency speed. Used by Extinction Rebellion in 2019.

*Net zero emissions by 2030* - this goal represent the slowest time you would aim for if adopting an emergency response and is used by many UK councils declaring a climate emergency.

## Goals that delay and undermine effective action

*Net zero by 2050* - the 2050 goals is designed to prevent today’s government from having to take meaningful action, leaving the heavy lifting for future government and generations. It will commit us to collapse if followed.

*Net zero by 2040* - the 2040 goal is not an emergency response and is the latest incremental improvement on the 2050 goals. It still allows today’s government to avoid significant action and commits us to 20-30 plus years of increasing climate impacts and most likely result in widespread social chaos or collapse.