



BALLARAT
RENEWABLE
ENERGY
AND ZERO
EMISSIONS

Catherine King MP
Federal Member for Ballarat
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development & Local Government
5 Lydiard St North
Ballarat, Vic 3350

4 March 2023

Dear Catherine,

Thank you for meeting with us on Friday to hear our views on the Safeguard Mechanism - the bill for which is currently before parliament – and also for hearing us on community expectations for more ambitious climate action.

We appreciate that as a Senior Minister you are very busy.

As we noted, the City of Ballarat's endorsement of the Declaration of Climate Emergency (2018) implementation of the Carbon Neutrality 100% Renewables Action Plan (2019), community-wide aspirational Zero Emissions Ballarat 2030 Plan (2022), and the elevation of 'Sustainable Environment' as the number one goal in the Council Plan (2022), all reflect local government understanding of community ambition for strong climate action.

This ambition is represented in our BREAZE Inc. Board: Lydia Mzondo' like many residents with young families, is faced with fears for her childrens' future; Sue Broadway, like many retirees, is making the effort to live sustainably and conserve the environment; and Campbell Mercer, like many climate-aware agriculturalists is adapting to reduce environmental damage, in Campbell's case via regenerative farming on his organic olive grove. BREAZE works for and represents many members similarly engaged on a daily basis in minimising their carbon emissions in various ways. As a registered charity we also actively promote and project manage the installation of renewable energy resources onto the properties of not for profits, often social housing, through our Social Solar program along with other initiatives,as detailed in our Annual Report.

So we very much welcome the Albanese Labor Government increasing the 2030 emissions reduction target to 43%, and take much heart that this is a 'floor and not a ceiling' – given we have less than seven years to set emissions on the right trajectory for zero by 2050.

As we noted in our discussion, our concerns with the Safeguard Mechanism are that it needs a radical overhaul to be fit for purpose - to curb emissions from the big polluting industries and help set Australia on that emissions reductions trajectory. There is a moral imperative

Ballarat Renewable Energy and Zero Emissions Inc
A0049836H ABN 35 704 902 844
PO Box 1301 Bakery Hill Victoria 3354



BALLARAT
RENEWABLE
ENERGY
AND ZERO
EMISSIONS

here too, given the adjustments and collective burden being carried by ordinary citizens. These large industrial polluters shouldn't be entitled to offset 100% of their emissions with Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs). Apparently the only other nation that permits this is Kazakhstan.¹ Regarding Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs), we support *Recommendation 3* of the Environmental Defenders Office Submission to the *Safeguard Mechanism Reform Consultation Paper*: a cap on ACCUs as alternative to meeting baselines at 5% or less; that Safeguard Mechanism Credits (SMCs) be used before ACCUs; introduction of strict integrity measures for ACCUs as per Chubb Review; and no international offsets.

We believe big polluters need to be impelled to undertake systemic changes to reduce their emissions. Without this we cannot achieve our emissions reductions target. We also believe there should be no commissioning of new coal or gas plants, however, where these do emerge, we endorse the Climate Council's recommendation that they be compelled to avoid and minimise emissions, to ensure they are as low as possible and acquire Safeguard Mechanism Credits (SMCs) to address any remaining emissions over their baselines. These new fossil fuel plants should not be entitled to purchase Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs). We would also like to see the recommendations of the review of the Safeguard Mechanism by Professor Chubb fully implemented.

Australia's biggest polluters should do their bit to reduce emissions – just as millions of ordinary citizens are doing theirs – particularly as time for effective action is running out.

We understand that the Safeguard Mechanism bill is currently being debated and hope that concerns such as ours can be considered in the event of any discussions around amendments.

Thank you again for meeting with us and for all your work for the people of Ballarat and the nation.

Yours sincerely

Mary Debrett
President, BREAZE Inc.



¹ <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2023/03/04/the-polluting-f-law-the-safeguard-mechanism>