

Sustainable Living Armidale congratulates the New South Wales Government, particularly the Department of Planning, for preparing the Draft New England North West Regional Plan 2036. We make the following comments on what is of great significance to the future of our Region and therefore must be reflected within the Plan

## **GOAL 2 – A diversified economy through management of mineral and energy resources**

Overall the Goal seeks to present a ‘balanced’ approach within the Region where large-scale and expanding coal and coal seam gas (CSG) extraction co-exists with renewable energy generation and agriculture industries. There is scant mention of dangerous and costly climate change being a major problem for the future of the Region. Neither does it identify the significant contribution that coal and CSG extracted from the Region will contribute towards worsening global climate change.

Goal 2 provides for the continual, long-term and large-scale expansion of coal and coal seam gas mining, despite the irrefutable scientific evidence that climate change will have major adverse impacts on the Region’s agricultural industries and natural environment. Therefore, it is in conflict with many of the objectives of Goal 1 – A growing and diversified agricultural sector and Goal 5 – Protected water, environment and heritage.

All communities, regions and nations of the entire world are facing a broad-scale climate change emergency. All Regions, including our own, have a fundamental duty to cease extraction of coal, CSG and other contributing energy sources as soon as possible. It must also make targets for the rapid development of renewable energy alternatives. These must be a clearly-stated key objectives of this plan, rather than implied and contradicted.

Electricity generation in the Region must be characterised by a rapid, significant increase in the use of renewable energy. Aside from the crucial climate change imperative of rapid, significant substitution of doing so, this gives the Region the chance of greater energy independence, with potential regional benefits of a diversified economy including manufacturing.

### **Direction 2.3 ‘Increase opportunities for renewable energy generation’**

#### **Case Study: New England North West Renewable Energy Projects**

Whilst this list of current and planned projects is welcome and positive, it appears to be the only place in Goal 2 where climate change, or the role fossil fuel consumption will contribute to it, has some quantitative expression. This is only in terms of what each individual project does or will save on carbon dioxide emissions. The volume of carbon dioxide and other climate-changing emissions, both currently produced and consumed within the Region must be quantified. Then it must specify clear reduction targets, which include a point in time before 2036 when the goal is zero emissions.

The Case Study demonstrates the potential for the Region to be a significant net exporter of generated renewable energy and/or support the development of zero emission manufacturing industries. For example, the three wind farms between Glen Innes and Inverell alone have the potential to provide for the energy needs of 270,000 households – far more than are projected to exist within the Region by 2036.

