

Central West Environment Council is an umbrella organization for environment and field naturalist groups in Central West NSW. The increasing severity of drought in our region caused by climate change factors is of great concern.

A CSIRO pilot study of the Macquarie River catchment predicted up to a 20% decline in rainfall runoff by 2050 if weather patterns continue to change due to global warming. This will have a major impact on the rural economy in our region.

We believe that the cost of climate change must be factored into this inquiry: Any cost benefit analysis of energy efficiency must be weighted against the cost of climate change without uptake of energy efficiency, as energy efficiency is a key element of reducing consumption and therefore mitigating climate change.

Our region is also threatened by major large development proposals related to the coal industry, expansion of coal fired electricity generation and expansion of the Transgrid transmission line network to western NSW. All of these project proposals are affecting property values in the region, dislocating farming communities and agricultural production, and locking western NSW into coal fired electricity dependency for another 50 years.

Energy efficiencies have not been adequately factored into the economic studies relating to these proposals.

State and Commonwealth subsidies for coal fired electricity for large energy users (eg smelters) should be phased out to ensure that there is a 'level playing field' for cost benefit analysis of energy efficiency.

Energy efficient housing design is a very important issue in relation to the rapid uptake of air conditioning in Australia. Incentives for insulation, double glazing and improved housing design need to be factored into an energy efficiency and demand management program.

Also improved efficiency standards are needed in the manufacture of electrical appliances.

There are economic benefits in these initiatives and job opportunities in newly emerging energy efficiency design, manufacture, installation and retro fitting industries.