

# **Giving Ireland a Sustainable Future**

**Cleaner air, warmer homes, better-connected communities, and a more sustainable economy**

## **Climate Action Plan to Tackle Climate Breakdown launches**

The Government has today (Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> of July) published the Climate Action Plan, led by Minister Richard Bruton, to give Irish people a cleaner, safer and more sustainable future.

The far-reaching plan sets out over 180 actions, together with hundreds of sub-actions, that need to be taken at a time when the warning signs are growing, and the time for taking action is rapidly reducing.

At a time when we should be radically reducing our reliance on carbon, Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions have been rising rapidly. We are currently 85% dependent on fossil fuels. We have a short window of opportunity to reverse this trend and secure a better, healthier, more resilient future for the country. This means changing the way we heat our homes, the way we travel and the way we power our country.

This plan identifies how Ireland will achieve its 2030 targets for carbon emissions, and puts us on a trajectory to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. It uses the same model as the Action Plan for Jobs, which was also spear-headed by Minister Richard Bruton and was instrumental in restoring Ireland's economy.

The Plan embraces every relevant sector: electricity, enterprise, housing, heating, transport,, agriculture, waste, and the public sector. It's ambitious but realistic and will:

- Eliminate non-recyclable plastic and impose higher fees on the production of materials which are difficult to recycle, implement measures to ban single-use plastic plates, cutlery, straws, balloon sticks and cotton buds
- Establish a new Microgeneration Scheme, allowing homeowners to generate their own electricity and sell what they don't use back to the national grid;
- Move to 70% renewable electricity by 2030, currently only 30% of our electricity comes from renewable sources;
- Bring 950,000 electric vehicles onto our roads, deliver a nationwide charging network, an electric vehicle scrappage scheme and legislation to ban the sale of petrol / diesel cars from 2030;
- Expand our network of cycling paths and "Park and Ride" facilities, helping ease congestion;
- Deliver an intensive programme of retrofitting to install 400,000 heat pumps in homes and businesses, replacing the existing carbon-intensive heating systems;
- Establish a system of 5 year carbon budgets and sector targets, with the relevant Minister responsible for delivering on the target, with penalties if they are not met.

These targets will be underpinned by a new Climate Action Act. All major government investments and decisions will be carbon-proofed;

- Deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture by creating new, sustainable opportunities for family farms
- Deliver a new Retrofit Plan to retrofit 500,000 homes, with large groups of houses being retrofitted by the same contractor to reduce costs, smart finance, and easy pay back methods;
- Every public body will be given a climate action mandate by their line Minister to prioritise climate action and new letters of expectation will issue to semi-state bodies on Climate Action.

The plan also includes actions to ensure that all of us as citizens become engaged and mobilised to take climate action, while ensuring that the necessary societal and economic transition that we have to make is fair, both in Ireland and globally.

The Climate Action Plan, like the Action Plan for Jobs, will be annually updated, with actions reported on quarterly. The government today also approved the establishment of the Climate Action Delivery Board to ensure that the delivery of the plan is overseen by the Taoiseach's office.

Failure to implement these policies to meet our legally binding EU targets could result in a cost to the Exchequer of up to €1.75 billion over the next decade as well as locking Ireland into a future high carbon trajectory.

An Taoiseach said:

“The greatest responsibility we have is to pass on our planet to the next generation in a better condition than we inherited it. With this Plan we are making changes now, before it is too late, to ensure we do exactly that.

“We recognise that Government doesn't have all the answers. So we will work with people, industry and communities to chart the best and most inclusive way forward. A way forward that is both effective and sensible. One that achieves our targets, and in a way that is thought through and considered, supports employment and living standards and enables a just transition.

“Our approach will be to nudge people and businesses to change behaviour and adapt new technologies through incentives, disincentives, regulations and information. Our objective, as we plan for the future, is to transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient society. This Plan represents the sum of our hopes for the future. Our call to action in the fight to save our planet.”

Minister Bruton said,

“Every generation wants to leave the world in a better place than they found it for their children. We have a short window of opportunity to act. We must act now and leave a better, healthier, more sustainable Ireland for future generations. This Plan provides our way forward.

“We are currently 85% dependent on fossil fuels. This Plan sets out radical reforms, which will cut our reliance on carbon, making our businesses more competitive, our homes more sustainable and our farms more efficient. We will be doing things in new, innovative ways. Most of the actions set out will actually save money in the long-run. We will now implement this Plan, rolling out the required actions through a sustained effort.

“This is a life changing journey and it is a rapid, transformative adjustment that is required. Nothing less will do. We must all now take up the challenge.”

The Government Climate Plan to tackle climate breakdown has been informed by the work of the Citizens Assembly and the work of the All Party Committee on Climate Action, chaired by Hildegard Naughton.

The Climate Action Plan puts us on a trajectory to meet our 2030 target for carbon emissions, which is consistent with achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Plan commits to evaluating in detail the changes required to adopt a more ambitious commitment of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In the new Climate Action Act, we will include a 2050 target in law.

### **Notes for Editor**

The full plan can be accessed on [www.gov.ie/climateaction](http://www.gov.ie/climateaction)

Social media handle: #ClimatePlan2019

The Climate Action Plan is to be seen as a rolling process for effective consultation and implementation of change. The Minister plans to immediately engage in a series of consultative meetings to explain the approach, hear views and take on ideas. A Climate Action Plan 2020 will be published next year which will also take into account all consultation that takes place.

### **Summary of key actions**

#### **Electricity**

- Increase reliance on renewables from 30% to 70% adding 12GW of renewable energy capacity (with peat and coal plants closing) with some of this delivered by private contracts
- Put in place a coherent support scheme for micro-generation with a price for selling power to the grid
- Open up opportunity for community participation in renewable generation as well as community gain arrangements
- Streamline the consent system, the connection arrangements and the funding supports for the new technologies on and off shore

#### **Buildings**

- Introduce stricter requirements for new buildings and substantial refurbishments
- Design policy to get circa 500,000 existing homes to upgrade to B2 and 400,000 to install heat pumps
- Build a supply chain and a model for aggregation where home retrofits are grouped together to allow this level of activity to be funded and delivered
- Delivering two new district heating systems, and identify a roadmap for delivering District Heating potential
- Increase attention to Energy and Carbon ratings in all aspects of managing property assets

## **Transport**

- Accelerate the penetration of EV into sales of cars and vans on the route to reach 100% by 2030, so that 950,000 electric vehicles will be on the road by 2030. This means approximately one third of all vehicles sold during the decade will be Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) or Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV)
- Make growth less transport intensive through better planning, remote working and modal shift
- Increase the renewable biofuel content of motor fuels
- Set targets for the conversion of public fleets

## **Agriculture**

- Deliver substantial verifiable greenhouse gas abatement through adoption of a specified range of improvements in farming practice
- Deliver expansion of forestry planting and soil management to ensure that carbon abatement from land-use is delivered in 2021-30 and in the years beyond
- Support diversification within Agriculture and land use to develop sustainable and circular value chains and business models for lower carbon intensity farming including organic production and protection and enhancement of biodiversity and water quality; and the production of bio-based products and bioenergy through the Common Agricultural Policy and implementation of the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy.

## **Enterprise and Services**

- Embed energy efficiency, replacement of fossil fuels, careful management of materials and waste and carbon abatement across all enterprises and public service bodies
- Mobilise clusters regionally and sectorally to become centres of excellence for the adoption of low carbon technologies

- Plan for the delivery of quality employment and enterprise in the new areas of opportunity being opened up

### **Waste and the Circular Economy**

- Develop coherent Reduction Strategies for Plastics, Food Waste and Resource Use
- Increase the level and the quality of recycling with less contamination and greater replacement of virgin materials by recycling. Eliminate non-recyclable plastic
- Reduce the reliance on landfill with sharp reductions in plastics and compatibles entering landfill

The Climate Action Plan has been informed by the work of the Citizens Assembly and the work of the All Party Committee on Climate Action, chaired by Hildegard Naughton.

The Citizens Assembly was established under the Programme for Government and signposted the way for radical reform. The All Party Committee convened thereafter, produced a report based on the Assembly's recommendations. This report has since been unanimously endorsed by the Dáil, while at the same time declaring a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency.