

Name	Jean Fleming
Email	
A Zero Carbon Act is important to me because...	I grew up in a family that discussed endlessly The Limits to Growth report, produced in 1972. My PhD was on the biochemical control of reproduction, because I feared the consequences of population growth. Back then we didn't know much about the effects of greenhouse gasses on our planet's climate. But we do now. A Zero Carbon Act is important to me because it is New Zealand's chance to lead the world towards a better future. It is important to me because we must turn away from the neo-liberal ideas of economic growth at all costs, which have been unsustainable for decades and have led to the drastic reduction in biodiversity and our crazy dependence on fossil fuels and their products. A Zero Carbon Act is a first step to showing that the government realises that the flooding and coastal erosion we have seen recently, in Golden Bay, Auckland, Canterbury, Dunedin and now Tolaga Bay, will happen again and again, ruining lives, livings and assets. The Zero Carbon Act is important because it will begin to expose the failure of companies, including forestry and agricultural companies, to pay the full costs of their business.
Q1. What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?	The Government should set a target for 2050 in legislation now. In my opinion this is our last chance to show bold leadership and to think globally. I suspect there will be thousands of submissions, on forms like this, but also hand-written or emailed. When I was a Commissioner on the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification, over 10,000 submissions were received, with well over 90% being against GMO release in New Zealand. The ideas nested in all those submissions informed our final decisions, but the range of views made the process unwieldy. I like the consultative, collaborative approach taken by this government. Yes, people will respond from both "sides" of the argument, but the consultation document clearly lays out three options to choose from. This is very useful, both to the submitter and to the decision makers! As James Shaw says "With this challenge comes opportunity". In this case I believe the opportunities are numerous and not facing up to the challenge calamitous.
Q2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?	To quote Horace, who would probably have been philosophical about climate change, "Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise." Choose net zero emissions by 2050. Do not listen to the lobbyists! Yes, this will have the biggest impact on our agricultural sector, but it is clear to me that we need to include all activities in our emissions reductions. Of course we must take a science-based approach to reducing emissions, so we should aim for negative levels of long-lived gases, while reducing short-lived gases to sustainable levels.

Q3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

I am a strong supporter of New Zealand concentrating on its own emissions and I do not believe we can trade our way out of trouble. I love the "billion trees" idea, but the bulk of those trees should not be harvested every 20 years. Parts of the country that are steep and eroding fast (and our irreversible loss of soil into the ocean is another major issue which we are not addressing), such as the East Coast of the North Island, should be reforested in native flora, including manuka and kanuka in perpetuity. These lands will take many years to recover, but could/should be used for non-extractive uses, including honey production, recreation (biking, tramping and rafting, etc.), with farms confined to the valley floors. The amount of "slash" coming down the rivers after the big rain events we are frequently experiencing suggests the forestry industry needs to look carefully at its logging processes. I can understand the idea of leaving the slash to compost and provide nutrients to the next crop, but the change of weather conditions may require a change to this, such as the production of mulch. Yes, all this will require money and change the economics of logging pinus radiata, but the cost of cleaning up and righting people's lives will be huge too, in places like Tolaga Bay.

The other major change that is required is to increase the EV fleet, in government agencies, as well as commercially, at a much faster rate than currently. Part of that move requires the import of a wider range of second-hand EVs and PHEVs to help make the transition more affordable. And, as a PHEV driver, the network of fast charge stations needs to expand hugely too. Encouragement of new innovations, such as stand alone (and possibly solar-powered) charging stations in regional towns, would help convert people. On a recent trip in my PHEV, groups of people inevitably gathered to ask questions, as soon as I plugged my car in. People are hungry for change and for solutions.

Q4. Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change?

The 2050 target should NOT be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines its long-term certainty. I feel this is our last chance at trying to reduce the impacts of inevitable climate change. However, the ability to revise the 2050 target in light of major changes in scientific understanding or international agreements should be permitted. For example, there may be such a response that the world's emissions start plummeting. Yeah right.

Q5. The Government proposes that three emissions budgets of five years each (i.e. covering the next 15 years) be in place at any given time. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes - I agree with 5-year budgets set 10-15 years in advance, so that 3 are in effect at all times.

Q6 - Q7. Should the Government be able to alter emissions budgets?

No - emissions budgets should not be altered in response to "economic changes" as this undermines their long-term certainty. However, the ability to revise budgets in light of major changes in scientific understanding or international agreements should be permitted.

<p>Q8. Do you agree with the proposed considerations that the Government and the Climate Commission will need to take into account when advising on and setting budgets?</p>	<p>I agree that the Government and the Climate Commission should take the following factors into consideration when advising on and setting budgets, but I would encourage the Government to be bold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scientific knowledge should always underlie decisions regarding climate change • new technology relevant to climate change should be considered, if not encouraged or subsidised • economic circumstances and the likely impact of a decision on the economy, as well as the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy should be understood, but I believe we need new approaches to our economy to deal with climate change. • fiscal circumstances and the likely impact of the decision on taxation, public spending and public borrowing • social circumstances and the likely impact of a decision on fuel poverty • energy policy and the likely impact of a decision on energy supplies and the carbon and energy intensity of the economy.
<p>Q9. Should the Zero Carbon Bill require Governments to set out plans within a certain timeframe to achieve the emissions budgets?</p>	<p>Yes - we must learn from the mistakes of the UK's Climate Change Act and specify a strict time frame for producing a plan. The Government needs to be proactive, not reticent. Things have got to change.</p>
<p>Q10. What are the most important issues for the Government to consider in setting plans to meet budgets? For example, who do we need to work with, what else needs to be considered?</p>	<p>The Government's policy plans to meet emission budgets should be comprehensive, fair, cost-effective, environmentally sustainable, and reflect a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Yes, but they have to elicit change too!</p>
<p>Q11. The Government has proposed that the Climate Change Commission advises on and monitors New Zealand's progress towards its goals. Do you agree with these functions?</p>	<p>Yes - the Commission should not be a decision-making body.</p>
<p>Q12. What role do you think the Climate Change Commission should have in relation to the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS)?</p>	<p>The Commission should advise the Government on policy settings in the NZ ETS. It should not make decisions itself with respect to the number of units available in the NZ ETS, or its implementation.</p>
<p>Q13. The Government has proposed that Climate Change Commissioners need to have a range of essential and desirable expertise. Do you agree with the proposed expertise?</p>	<p>I agree with the following collective expertise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate change policy (including emissions trading) • resource economics and impacts (including social impacts, labour markets and distribution) • te Tiriti o Waitangi, te reo me ona tikanga Māori and Māori interests • climate and environmental science including mātauranga Māori • experience with addressing adaptation challenges like planning, insurance and local government • risk management • engineering and/or infrastructure • community engagement and communications. • business competitiveness • knowledge of the public and private innovation and technology development system. <p>I think expertise in public health and science communication are also important.</p>
<p>Q14. Do you think the Zero Carbon Bill should cover adapting to climate change?</p>	<p>Yes - it is all connected. This may require a separate adaptation sub-committee within the Climate Commission.</p>

<p>Q15. The Government has proposed a number of new functions to help us adapt to climate change. Do you agree with the proposed functions?</p>	<p>I agree with the proposed functions below, but recognise that nuance is required in terms of how local councils are involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a national climate change risk assessment • a national adaptation plan • regular review of progress towards implementing the national adaptation plan • an adaptation reporting power
<p>Q16. Should the Government explore setting up a targeted adaptation reporting power that could see some organisations share information on their exposure to climate change risks?</p>	<p>Yes - and as open as possible.</p>
<p>Further comments</p>	<p>I think I've said enough. I am very pessimistic that anything can be done to have any real impact on climate change, even if New Zealand reduces its emissions to zero.</p>