

Setting New Zealand's post-2020 climate change target

Submission form

The Government is seeking views on New Zealand's post-2020 climate change contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

You can have your say by making a submission using this form or using the online tool available at www.mfe.govt.nz/more/consultations.

For more information about this consultation:

- Read our [Consultation on New Zealand's post-2020 international climate change contribution web page](#)
- Read our discussion document: [New Zealand's Climate Change Target: Our contribution to the new international climate change agreement](#)

Submissions close at 5.00pm on Wednesday 3 June 2015.

Publishing and releasing submissions

All or part of any written submission (including names of submitters), may be published on the Ministry for the Environment's website www.mfe.govt.nz. Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, we will consider that you have consented to website posting of both your submission and your name.

Contents of submissions may be released to the public under the Official Information Act 1982 following requests to the Ministry for the Environment (including via email). Please advise if you have any objection to the release of any information contained in a submission and, in particular, which part(s) you consider should be withheld, together with the reason(s) for withholding the information. We will take into account all such objections when responding to requests for copies of, and information on, submissions to this consultation under the Official Information Act.

The Privacy Act 1993 applies certain principles about the collection, use and disclosure of information about individuals by various agencies, including the Ministry for the Environment. It governs access by individuals to information about themselves held by agencies. Any personal information you supply to the Ministry in the course of making a submission will be used by the Ministry only in relation to the matters covered by this consultation. Please clearly indicate in your submission if you do not wish your name to be included in any summary of submissions that the Ministry may publish.

Questions to guide your feedback

Your submission may address any aspect of the discussion document, but we would appreciate you paying particular attention to the questions posed throughout and listed in this form. You may answer some or all of the questions. To ensure your point of view is clearly understood, you should explain your rationale and provide supporting evidence where appropriate.

Contact information

Name	██████████
Organisation (if applicable)	
Address	██
Telephone	██████████
Email	████████████████████

Please do not publish/post this submission under my name or email address.

I am happy to have it published/posted anonymously.

Objectives for the contribution

1a. We have set the following three objectives for our contribution:

- **it is seen as a fair and ambitious contribution – both by international and domestic audiences**
- **costs and impacts on society are managed appropriately**
- **it must guide New Zealand over the long term in the global transition to a low emissions world.**

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution?

Yes

1b. What is most important to you?

The third objective is the most important to me because climate change is not a one-time, quick-fix problem. Current levels of CO₂ will remain in the atmosphere for more than a hundred years and other “greenhouse” gases for shorter but still significant periods. We need a sustainable strategy for moving to a lower-emissions world that can then be maintained for the foreseeable future. This is the overriding objective of any country’s contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change.

What would be a fair contribution for New Zealand?

2. What do you think the nature of New Zealand's emissions and economy means for the level of target that we set?

Our low level of industrialisation means there are no easy wins from that sector – other than to encourage businesses to be as energy-efficient as possible by tightening up the ETS or even introducing a carbon tax. A tax is clear and direct; businesses are likely to know their costs under it and can adjust their operations accordingly.

Transport and energy use are the obvious areas to target. Our low population density doesn't mean more can't be done to encourage public transport, car pooling, buying more energy-efficient vehicles, cycling, walking and more use of the rail network for goods transportation. This can be achieved through a mix of public-education campaigns and financial incentives or levies of various kinds. Encouraging tele/remote working and more use of video conferencing are other ways of reducing transport use. Ironically, the Paris meeting to determine each country's "intended nationally determined contributions" will undoubtedly leave a large carbon footprint. Higher density housing in our major cities – particularly Auckland – is another way of reducing transport use.

We should aim as a priority for a close to 100 percent renewables energy policy, although some thermal capacity may still be needed for peak use and "dry" hydro years.

Our dependence on agriculture is shown in our carbon-emissions profile. We need to do more on reducing our level of emissions from agricultural production; the submission from the World Wildlife Fund (New Zealand) has suggestions on how this could be done.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what do you think would be a reasonable impact on annual household consumption?

One way of looking at the impact of reducing New Zealand's greenhouse-gas emissions is that the difference between a 5% reduction target and a 40% reduction target is slightly more than the equivalent of a household giving up two café-bought lattes a week (2 x \$4.50 a week = \$468 a year vs \$530 a year for adopting a 40% reductions target). This doesn't seem an unreasonable sacrifice given the catastrophic consequences for New Zealand household consumption if the world heats up to 3.5°C or beyond. So I support a reduction target in the 30-40 percent range as this will begin to make a significant difference – although I don't have enough information available to know whether that can be achieved entirely from reducing our transport and energy emissions. I don't think it's possible to make the transition to a lower-emissions economy without some sacrifice and pain – much as we would wish that wasn't the case.

There will be some obvious equity implications from reduced household consumption because lower-income families will find the reduction in consumption more difficult to cope with. And so

consideration would need to be given to giving these families more help through the family support programme, a tax rebate or a similar mechanism.

4. Of the opportunities for New Zealand to reduce its emissions (as outlined on page 15 of the discussion document), which do you think are the most likely to occur, or be most important for New Zealand?

The likeliest ones to occur will depend on a mix of the price of carbon, government policies of various kinds and whether businesses find some of these opportunities profitable. As the discussion paper points out, electric-car technology is increasingly viable and bio-fuels are also a very real possibility for New Zealand. Transport is one area where, as a nation, we can make a difference and change our habits; it's up to the government to foster and encourage these developments.

Summary

5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?

The question is more that we need to take a lead as a nation despite the uncertainties about future technologies and costs. We aren't going to have perfect information on these issues.

The problem with no nation wanting to do more than its "fair share" and each nation protecting its national interests is that the world will not meet its current rather low targets for greenhouse emissions. The discussion paper makes the point twice that the international response so far has not been sufficient (pages 3 and 6). All countries – including New Zealand – need to be bolder if the international response is going to be sufficient.

What has happened to this point is a global variant on the "tragedy of the commons", where self-interest means no individual has an incentive to stop over grazing the common land. Professor Nicholas Stern – one of the most authoritative economic commentators on climate-change – has been quoted by the BBC as saying that, based on the "intended nationally determined contributions" issued so far, "it seems unlikely the pledges from all countries before the Paris summit will collectively be sufficient to bridge the gap to an emissions pathway that is consistent with the limit of 2°C". The known pledges include those from the US and the EU. The EU has pledged a 40% reduction in "greenhouse" emissions; the US rather less at 28%, although it has called this commitment "fair and ambitious".

Small countries like New Zealand – by joining together with other countries in agreeing to a sizeable emissions reduction target – can encourage, inspire or shame laggards into doing what is needed to keep future warming of the planet to 2°C or less.

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.

Some more technical background as part of the discussion paper would have been useful: it could have explored in more detail some of the trade-offs involved. From what's provided in the discussion paper, it's difficult to know what's possible in terms of specific emissions' reductions. Also, there seems to have been little publicity about the consultation – and the timeframe for responding is very short for such a major issue. The next rounds of consultation need to provide more detailed information and allow more time for responding.

When your submission is complete

Email your completed submission to climate.contribution@mfe.govt.nz or post to Climate Change Contribution Consultation, Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143.

Submissions close at 5.00pm on Wednesday 3 June 2015.