

Setting New Zealand’s post-2020 climate change target

Submission: All or part of our submission may be published on the Ministry for the Environment’s website www.mfe.govt.nz.

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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 However, the most important thing is that New Zealand takes action - having these as objectives and then taking little or no action to reduce emissions would be unacceptable - It would be seen as a fraud both domestically and internationally. According to a [recent survey](#), 87% of New Zealanders have at least some level of concern about the impacts of climate change on society.

1b. What is most important to you?

That it is a fair and ambitious contribution, and that we actually take actions to reduce emissions. Buying “hot air” is not an acceptable action as it does not reduce emissions.

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?

New Zealand (NZ) is fully capable of reaching at least a 40% reduction target by 2030, within its environmental, technological and socio-economic parameters. NZ must also commit to a global and **NZ net-zero carbon target by 2050** or sooner.

We ask for this to be **NZ's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)** – a commitment based on science and ethical grounds..... and that implementation follows a **transparent decision-making process** after the consultation process ends and includes **health, fairness, and the true costs of inaction on climate change** in the assessment of costs and benefits. This target or contribution must be supported by concrete policies and actions, with annual steps outlining how to get there as quickly as possible.

NZ is a developed country which has benefitted from cheap fossil fuels over the last 150 years. However, it also has a temperate climate which enables it to grow food and trees relatively cheaply, with minimal energy use compared to other developed countries. NZ can easily decrease its greenhouse emissions through efficiencies, greater use of renewables, urban design, greater use of public transport, rail and local shipping and encouragement of active modes of transport within urban centres.

Our high level of consumption and mobility at all levels, can be reduced with positive benefits in terms of health, employment and community resilience. Fast uptake of modern technology can also enable greater adoption of a share, reuse, recycle and replace economy.

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?

This is an inappropriate question, as we face catastrophic climate change if we do not accelerate a transition to a low carbon economy, and the cost we face is that of not taking action.

Income equality must be addressed and energy poverty can be reduced by governmental support for passive solar technologies and renewables. The cost of climatic disasters such as floods, coastal erosion, and other emergencies, must be minimized by adaptation and avoidance of risky developments from this moment on with an emphasis on making existing infrastructure more resilient rather than further expansion. Taking action to ensure a clean, green sustainable future should result in an improving quality of life!

The average family could then live sustainably with some reduction of average income with a

greater adoption of a share economy, and improved urban infrastructure including safe cycle ways and accessible public transport.

NZ must build economic and political structures that support and promote the practice of sufficiency....When we ask ourselves what way of life would be consistent with a 'fair share' of the world's finite resources, it quickly becomes evident that a just and sustainable civilisation must not seek to universalize the high impact consumer way of life.

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?

Strong central and local government policy direction and support should enable a huge range of opportunities to be adopted. There needs to be an independent Climate Commission specifically set up with this purpose to ensure NZ meets its targets and stays within the global carbon budget.

Key policies:

i) **No subsidies for fossil fuels:** This needs to end immediately as it is a perverse incentive to pollute more. Stop granting new petroleum exploration and mining permits, ban fracking, and start incentivising sustainable and renewable energy investments and initiatives.

ii) The **forestry sector** has enormous potential to absorb further carbon dioxide in the short term, with new planting on marginal lands and milled logs manufactured into quality furniture and high strength laminated timber to replace steel, thus storing carbon well into the next century. Waste wood can be used as bio-fuel in domestic and commercial wood burners, substituting for natural gas and petroleum, and peak hour electricity.

lii) **Building low carbon cities:** It's important that these are planned and developed for minimal carbon emissions, in the form of urban islands around high quality transport hubs. We need to ensure that we electrify all major public transport systems. In particular, electric light rail systems must be installed in Auckland and Wellington for public transport spine routes.

The largest single immediate opportunity may be in giving **greater choices** to commuters in our major cities, with improved use of electric public transport, construction of safe cycle ways and higher density living around transit nodes.

Cities in particular, need greater funding from Government to lead in the implementation of climate adaptation activities.

iv) **Climate smart agriculture** can be more diverse bio and smaller scale permacultural farming methodologies leading to reduction in nitrogen and methane greenhouse emissions and increased

carbon stored in soils. New irrigation schemes, if developed, must be accompanied by strict controls on nitrogen outputs.

v) **Pricing carbon emissions:** The “polluter-pays” principle must be enforced in earnest. Doing so will automatically incentivize investments into cleaner energy alternatives. The ETS system needs to have a carbon cap introduced. If the ETS continues to fail to deliver carbon reductions, then a mandated carbon tax must be introduced.

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

Technologies available today, can reduce our carbon footprint significantly if adopted as above. Newer technologies will allow even greater efficiencies, but we must not delay any further in beginning our transition to a low carbon economy.

Other comments

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

The discussion document exaggerates the costs on household consumption under meagre reduction targets.

Mr. Jim Kim, the president of the **World Bank Group**, has warned that if we do not mend our ways, we could be faced with a significant rise in global average temperatures and drastic changes to regional weather patterns. We are already seeing **climate change** manifest itself in the form of heavy floods, droughts and storms, and the effects will likely worsen in the coming decades.

We believe by adopting a number of different practices, we can curb carbon emissions and might be able to avoid **catastrophic climate change**.