

# Consultation on setting New Zealand's post-2020 climate change target



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## Contact information

Name Professor Jennie Connor

Organisation (if applicable) University of Otago

Address [REDACTED]

Telephone [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

## Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? No

1b. What is most important to you?

Our contribution must guide New Zealand towards a zero carbon economy by 2050. This government must stop the increase in emissions in this term of government. INDC targets must include all-sectors and prioritise health and fairness. We need to build on our clean energy strengths, and improve housing and transform transport. Agricultural greenhouse pollutants must also be reduced, through agricultural diversification then technology.

Our contribution must BE a fair and ambitious contribution that meets our globally assessed responsibilities, regardless of what it is SEEN AS.

But in addition it must be sufficient and credible. We must stay within the safe global carbon dioxide emissions budget. NZ's economy relies on world climate cooperation, but we can also be influential, if our contributions are credible and do not discourage stronger commitments by other nations.

Costs and benefits need to be distributed fairly within New Zealand. Healthy people depend on a healthy climate – we can't afford not to take real climate action. Ambitious climate action is the best investment in our future. The costs of climate change are much greater than the costs of responsible action – and climate change will affect our most vulnerable households the most. The important health gains ('mitigation co-benefits') from climate action must be included in the calculations. We need to share the costs and benefits of action fairly, both between countries and within New Zealand.

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?

Current and future human wellbeing depends upon not exceeding our global carbon budget. We need to call for a global zero carbon target before 2050 – and NZ needs to have a plan that is implemented without any further delay. The steps needed from 2015 to 2050 must be outlined now. Further, we need to keep up with other wealthy nations in pledging at least 40% cuts in our gross domestic greenhouse gas emissions compared with 1990 emissions, by 2030, towards at least 95% by 2050.

Importantly, the world has five times the amount of fossil fuels in reserve as we can afford to burn. We need to immediately commit to zero new fossil fuel exploration and phase out existing extraction in the next decade. Our INDC needs to also commit to the cross-party agreement and national policies needed to achieve these targets.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

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

This is the wrong question. The costs of inaction on reducing emissions far exceed the costs of taking action and we need to account for this in the cost calculations. The longer we take to act the more these inaction costs escalate. Many changes that need to be made to reduce emissions will improve health and equity ('mitigation co-benefits') – especially by shifting from cars to active and public transport; better housing energy efficiency; climate-friendly home heating; reducing red meat and dairy intake; phasing out coal and lignite mining. NZ must include these co-benefits when calculating costs and benefits of action but in fact we have no choice and need to pay whatever the cost is. In addition, a fair transition to a low carbon economy will require particular support to be provided to the most vulnerable households.

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 discussion document focuses heavily on agriculture, but half of our emissions are long-lived carbon dioxide from transport, housing and other energy use which have to rapidly reduce to zero. We already have the technology and policy ideas to reduce these emissions – we need the cross-party political will to put them in place. We will also need to reduce our economic reliance on ruminant livestock farming.

## Summary

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

We need to take a precautionary approach when faced with uncertainty in information and very high stakes. We can not afford to make any more mistakes or create any more delays. There is little uncertainty about potential short to medium term gains of well-designed emissions reductions policies. We do not have the luxury of deciding whether change is worth the cost.

We need government to give clear, strong, consistent signals that we are on our way to a low-carbon society to spur both behaviour change and technological development.

## Other comments

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

Health and wellbeing has been ignored in this discussion paper and should be at the heart of our response. I support a Parliamentary climate change and health summit;

health sector leadership on mitigation and adapting to locked-in climate impacts on health; involvement of public health expertise in the whole process; Health (including equity) Impact Assessment (HIA) routinely used to inform key climate-relevant policies; and climate commitments that protect and promote health in the climate-vulnerable Pacific regions.