We are already seeing the impacts of climate change in increasing droughts, flooding and storms, and all predictions are that it will continue to worsen. We need rapid, and significant action from all levels of society in order to begin carbon drawdown, and to mitigate for against what promises to be rolling climate crisis.

Impending climate change has been an ongoing, distressing part of my adolescence into adulthood, making me unable to clearly plan for the future, or imagine how life on the planet will be as I grow older. I fear for the vulnerability of our food system to extremes of weather, and hunger and social unrest that will come with that. I grieve for the collapse of already damaged ecosystems as changing climate pushes them out of natural cycles. The loss of coral reefs is devastating - and what will we do if/when the great ocean currents that regulate the planets' temperature cease to function as they have for millennia?

A rapid transition to not just zero, but *negative* carbon is essential from a responsible, government that has the interests of current and future generations at heart. This is not about economics, it is about our potential to live well and any economics of this decision, or favouring of corporate profits, should be viewed through a lense of social and ecological wellbeing.

Q1. What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?

The Government should set a target for 2030 in legislation now, with 2050 a target to be significantly carbon negative.

Q2. If the Government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand?

The 2050 target is not ambitious enough - I fear that will be too late. Knowing the challenge faced the government should aim to reduce total greenhouse gases to net zero by 2030, and be well into carbon negative by 2050. Whether or not we currently deem this 'realistic' without the goal being set, we will surely miss any chances.

Alongside taking a science-based approach that ensures our efforts to reduce emissions are as impactful as possible (ie aiming for negative levels of long-lived gases, while reducing short-lived gases to sustainable levels), we should be taking a wellbeing based approach, that goes beyond measuring emissions, to measuring whether people are thriving in their relationships with each other and with the land and sea where they live. The crux of the climate crisis isn't about playing with numbers of emissions, it is about ensuring that the conditions for life to flourish continue to the best of our ability.

Q3. How should New Zealand meet its targets?

By using domestic emissions reductions, including new diverse forest planting, empowering community based, ecological economies. By setting up transitions from industrial agriculture to divers ecological models like silvopasture, and growing crops like hemp. By ensuring that soil carbon is built in farming and forestry practices, where currently it is mined or eroded. By creating free/subsidised public mass transport systems. By stopping all New Zealand based oil exploration and natural gas - and pushing the industry to 'innovate' a response.
| Q4. Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change? | It should allow it to be brought forward and strengthened in its ambitions (ie, to include carbon negative). It should not be altered in response to “economic changes” as this undermines its long-term certainty. However, the ability to revise the 2050 target in light of major changes in scientific understanding or international agreements should be permitted *if* this is to strengthen climate action. It should be changed to allow more action by government to support the ongoing wellbeing of the people and ecologies of Aotearoa. |
| 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? | At a minimum, yes - I agree with 5-year budgets set 10-15 years in advance, so that 3 are in effect at all times. Overall though, I hope that the government can begin moving away from an entirely economic/budgetting based model into one that is grounded in community and ecological health. |
| Q6 - Q7. Should the Government be able to alter emissions budgets? | No, but it should be encouraged to exceed their ambitions and bring about a quicker reduction and drawdown of carbon emissions. The ability to revise budgets in light of major changes in scientific understanding or international agreements should be permitted *if* this is to strengthen climate action. |
| 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? | I agree that the Government and the Climate Commission should take the following factors into consideration when advising on and setting budgets:  
- scientific knowledge regarding climate change  
- technology relevant to climate change  
- economic circumstances and the likely impact of a decision on the economy, as well as the competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy  
- 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. |
| Q9. Should the Zero Carbon Bill require Governments to set out plans within a certain timeframe to achieve the emissions budgets? | Yes - we must learn from the mistakes of the UK’s Climate Change Act and specify a strict time frame for producing a plan. |
| 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? | 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. They should also aim to move towards a measurement of success that reflects Gross National Happiness rather than GDP. |
| 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? | Yes - the Commission should not be a decision-making body. However, the Government should be legally required to consider and formally respond to the Commission’s advice, and to provide an explanation if they do not act on it. |
| Q12. What role do you think the Climate Change Commission should have in relation to the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS)? | We should not rely on ETS to fix anything. The markets are trying to make a profit, not to ensure a the planet remains habitable, and therefore we should be moving away from trading emissions, to penalising the big emitters and using that ‘penalty’ /carbon tax to subsidise others to transition into ecological, carbon negative practices.  

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. |
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?

I agree with the following collective expertise:

- 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.

I think expertise in public health is also important.

Q14. Do you think the Zero Carbon Bill should cover adapting to climate change?

Yes. This may require a separate adaptation sub-committee within the Climate Commission.

Q15. The Government has proposed a number of new functions to help us adapt to climate change. Do you agree with the proposed functions?

I agree with the proposed functions below, but recognise that nuance is required in terms of how local councils are involved:

- a national climate change risk assessment
- a national adaptation plan
- regular review of progress towards implementing the national adaptation plan
- an adaptation reporting power

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?

Yes

Further comments

This has ended up being a more emotive submission than I expected. Climate change is really a huge threat, and given that most of the science has been giving conservative predictions for so long for fear of alarming people - can we please start being alarmed enough to do something? Please take a risk management approach, and start acting as if it's going to be catastrophic... The worst that can happen is that it's not that bad but in the process we build a more equitable, thriving society and restore the wondrous ecology of life...

And if I haven't gone over it enough already - I really advocate for a move from such an economic, and emissions counting model to one that also puts wellbeing centrally. The way that Equador has been working with "Beun Vivir" (Living well) at a government level is one example of how we could do this.

Thank you for your work to make sure people's concerns are reflected in the final bill.