

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



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## Contact information

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## Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? Yes

1b. What is most important to you?

It is most important that the target be seen as a fair and ambitious contribution by international and domestic audience because then it will hopefully be that - a fair and ambitious target. A 40 or 50 % reduction is a fair and ambitious target.

New Zealand must submit a fair and ambitious target ahead of the Paris summit. For too long we have pleaded that we have special circumstances that mean we can't do our fair share, or that we are too small to make a difference. But the reality is that New Zealand is one of the highest per capita emitters in the OECD, and despite existing targets for 2020 and 2050, New Zealand's emissions have continued to rise. Official projections say they will continue rising under current policies.

I try my best to do my bit as a New Zealander; my shopping purchases are based on the ability to recycle, reuse or compost where possible, our household monitors water and electricity useage, we use public transport where possible and have reduced the amount of meat we use in cooking – the cumulative effect of small actions like this by committed people like myself do add up but the situation is now a crisis and we need our views as New Zealand citizens to be reflected in the policies and agenda of the New Zealand government. In this world, at this time, anything less from the government that promotes itself as pure green, is an utter disgrace and embarrassment. Our international reputation is at stake, and all that is associated with that.

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?

We cannot hide behind any excuses, i.e our emission is tiny compared to other countries, and our economy is dependant on agriculture. Firstly, the agricultural industry could change if it were given real incentives, and secondly, as mentioned previously our emissions may be tiny compared to others but per capita they are not. Regardless of this, regardless of our the relative proportion of our emissions, THIS IS A GLOBAL ISSUE and we all need to act as global players.

The concept of fairness was repeated numerous times at the Auckland public consultation – New Zealanders do believe in fairness, and we have a history of it. Again and again, people spoke of our proud history of standing for human rights and justice, particularly in terms of women's rights, and the nuclear free movement. Climate change is a crisis, noted to be the most significant challenge in human history...and warrants a truly fair and ambitious target for humanity, and the planet for live and depend on.

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New Zealand already has natural advantages, and capacities in the science of green technology and economy – we could be a world leader, we could seize the economic opportunity of the century, and we could show that this is a topic that eclipses anything else, and use it as a chance to demonstrate the goodness of human collaboration and ingenuity. This is particularly important for the Pacific region, where Pacific islands are already experience the results of climate change. New Zealand has a responsibility as a Pacific neighbour.

How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

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

There is an international consensus, from the World Bank, the UN to the IMF, the transition to green economies will build economic opportunities, not cost us. Change is possible. The costs of solar power have fallen by around 80 per cent over the past five years, and we are seeing dramatic reductions in the costs of battery storage and electric cars. A wave of innovation is resulting in new business opportunities across the OECD and emerging economies. As an example, Germany generated half of its power from renewable energy last year, and major developing countries like China are transitioning away from coal.

A recent report by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate points out a false choice between fighting climate change and growing economies. The report provides evidence of opportunities to improve economic growth, create jobs and boost the economy through low carbon policies. New Zealand households are missing out on these opportunities.

From an economic perspective, it is crucial to set the right framework of incentives for business by putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions that reflects the damage they cause. But the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme has been so weakened that our carbon price was the lowest of 60 international schemes analysed by the World Bank last year. AND government policy remains fixated on mining, offshore drilling, coal and dairy. So it about supporting the right kinds of initiatives (not fossil fuel exploration) and giving incentives to industry to transition to innovative, low carbon options. AND rather than them passing any costs of transition to New Zealand households, how about they do the moral thing and allow their profit margin to squeeze a little.

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?

Remaining aligned with the global transition to a lower-carbon economy will ensure we remain competitive and productive in a world where the emissions intensity of our products and services will increasingly be an issue.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing forest sinks can lead to improved health, environmental and social well-being, and improved erosion control and water quality.

Summary

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

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target?

I have not read or thought in depth on this topic, however, it is probably very safe to assume that technologies will only get better with time, and the associated costs of technological advancements only reduce with time. So we should be ambitious now!

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.  
Additional action that is required:

A Climate Change Act: The UK Climate Change Act provides a model for government commitment and accountability that New Zealand should adopt. This Act puts national emissions targets in domestic law (which is not the case in New Zealand) and requires every government to produce credible plans to meet these. This will show other countries we are serious. The Act also sets up an independent Climate Commission to advise government on its policies and hold whoever is in power accountable. This makes the issue of climate change less politicised by having an authoritative independent voice in the debate. Set up a NZ Climate Change Act!

Cross party collaboration: This issue needs cooperation across the political spectrum and efforts to engage all New Zealanders in the solutions. We need stable climate policy that steers us clearly towards a zero carbon society. This will allow businesses to make good long-term decisions and New Zealand will benefit by attracting investment in low carbon industries and innovation. We need climate change to bring the various political parties together – this is an issue that cannot be at the whim of the political game.