

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



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Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? No

1b. What is most important to you?

Most important is that NZ makes some significant lowering of its emissions. The 5% argued for in Cabinet paper (13-C-01331) presupposes little change to our behaviour and policy settings. And if we are to "establish a common vision for a resilient low-carbon NZ society" (2014 BIM), then citizens must experience changes to how they live. That is not to be punitive, but to establish different ways of living as the norm.

The first objective refers to a fair share of reductions. But this presumes that we have always been prudent. Yet in 2011 our emissions per capita were ranked 22nd in the world and 6th in the OECD. We need to reduce our emissions by a much greater % before we can claim that we are progressing much faster than is fair!

The second objective refers to managing the impacts appropriately. But the 5% reduction advocated in above Cabinet paper for 2013 to 2020 was predicated on business as usual. The target could be achieved without social change, without noticeable impacts.

I do agree with the third objective!

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?

I acknowledge the unusual combination of our greenhouse gases. But the era of the "fart tax" revolt is long past and we need to be addressing this set of circumstances more vigorously. So agriculture should no longer be absent from NZETS.

CO2 still contributes the largest amount of emissions. And that is attributed to road transportation and public electricity and heat production. Our population is skewed with a quarter of our population in Auckland. And Auckland is without an effective public transport system that would reduce CO2 emissions. And agreed that time would be taken to effect that building and change of behaviour...but at least let us begin. The same goes for reduction in movement of goods by truck rather than by rail and coastal shipping.

As well, we still have housing stock that is nowhere near as winter-proof as it ought to be. Having just returned from five years in England, I am well aware of the difference in warm housing, and my home in Dunedin is only ten years old! And the effect of warm housing on health is important. (Random thought: costs/advantages are more powerful when other benefits are twinned with emission reduction, as in health from warmer houses and energy reduction)

Another factor which increased use of non hydro electricity sources was the dry 2012, with less water in our hydro storage lakes. So we must look to reduce our need for electric heating, because the repetition of such dry years is perhaps more likely with climate change. Has that been modelled?

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We must tackle CO2 emissions and continue to work on emissions associated with agriculture. It is good to see the work on the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases and to see the contribution to it...but a very minimalist contribution, especially when compared to cost of discussion on flag. But more importantly, we need to increase the research effort. How long before the research produces results and then has anyone done the work to ascertain how this will be taken up by the farming community? And there is the added concern that ownership of farms now includes overseas-based consortia, who may feel no obligation to work with NZ government on plans to reduce emissions and therefore regulation/law may well be needed.

It is interesting to see that one solution around the application of nitrates would both reduce emissions and help clean our waterways.

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 would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?

Help? I read your sums on page 13 of the discussion document, especially the para around more ambitious targets and you switched from billions to millions. My sums showed 5% decrease equalled 269million pa; 10% was less according to your para at 200million pa and 20% was 500 million pa. I may be wrong but that whole section was not helpful.

So to answer this question I used Table 1. The difference between 5% and 40% is \$530pa. I think therefore that that is doable. Our retired household lives on half the average household consumption and we live well. But we do not have to serve a mortgage or pay rent....so I do know that I cannot translate from personal to national!!! But I am constantly trying to make concrete in my head what the changes/costs at family level might be, as against the threats. \$1800 is 90 bottles of wine, and forgoing that would be better for my health and for the planet. (This is to allow you to smile as you work on these submissions!)

But as I have just demonstrated we need to make this argument real for citizens and their very different communities. It is too simplistic. And until we understand how we must change at the personal level we will not be in a position to make steps towards finding a solution around how we reduce our emissions.

I really want us to be responsible for our reductions within New Zealand, rather than buying carbon credits from other countries. The monitoring of the effectiveness of these projects is not robust (well, it wasn't when I was Minister of NZAid)...and really we must clean up our backyard. The only issue may lie around the sale of our dairy products overseas. If we are to continue as a food producer for other states, then maybe there may be a carbon cost that is paid by those overseas consumers.

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?

Transport of freight by rail and coastal shipping is one area of improvement. I travel nearly every day along SH88 from Dunedin to Port Chalmers. A railway line runs alongside, but the road is full of freight trucks...logging and containers. It does not make much sense.

Electric cars is an area of development and of course innovative public transport (pods and lines).

We are facing Comalco leaving: we could so use that extra electricity to support electrification of railways/cars.

My five years living in UK and travelling throughout Europe showed me how seriously much colder areas are adopting to use of solar power, let alone wind power.

There is much we can do and with a smaller population, demonstrate the new technologies to others.

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Biofuel technology: I found it so sad that the introduction of fuel from algae did not progress. It seemed to me that that was an example of international companies wishing to use the smallness of our population to experiment. But from (faulty) memory that was drastically opposed by current providers of fuel.

Summary

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

Just as it takes into consideration uncertainties around dairy prices. Our economy, as a price taker, has always lived with such uncertainties. We have tried to iron out those uncertainties by growing our household savings habits. So this issue of limiting the effects of climate change by lowering our emissions cannot be seen alone: we must work on our economic structures. So we must continue to lessen the gaps in income/wealth. Because \$1800 more for our household is much easier than it will be for others with little discretionary income. We must build up savings. I know it is not simple, but it is too simplistic to view the costs/opportunities from reducing emissions as a separate item.

Other comments

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

I attended the Dunedin meeting and came away very depressed. I was alarmed at the lack of detail. While I wish to see a strong target figure for our reduction in emissions, I want to understand what "solution" might produce most emissions for least costnot just the chanting of a % reduction.

This awfully reminded me of public meetings on genetic modification....when thoughtful weighing of priorities seemed to depart, and where the community worked against each other.

I do not want to see this happen with Climate change. I accept that climate change is happening and that its cause is anthropogenic. I see a need to reduce emissions as quickly as possible.

But it is the how. If I were back as Minister (!!!!) then I would want to see some work on costing different programmes to reduce emissions. So we build clever railway systems in Auckland to reduce private transport. What reduction in CO2 emissions would that result in? and what cost in dollars to achieve? What time would it take? What increase in emissions as we build it? And do this with the many options that are being suggested.

I think citizens need those sort of choices in front of them. That helps with real engagement, real decision-making, rather than the hurling of slogans and disparaging comments and building a divided community that few political groupings will bring together...and we will be paralysed.

It occurred to me after the meeting that maybe a Royal Commission would help, as it did with genetic modification. We do need a way to engage with the community, not just with the heavy weights from either side of the argument.

I have found it hard to come down with an actual percentage, because I do not know enough. The figures you gave in Table 1 on page 16 persuaded me that 40% was a good target, but I feel uncomfortable that I do not understand how that might be achieved. Certainly it must be in advance of 5%. So for me it is somewhere between 20% and 40%..and I do not want this target achieved through smoke and mirrors as in supporting the reduction in others' emissions. Several conference experiences have made me very very sceptical of these.

Thanks for the chance to submit. Thanks for attending those fairly awful meetings...ministers should really be there. But the more managed discussion through a Royal Commission is maybe a way forward, as well as more information about different choices.

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Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mo Te Taiao

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Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? No

1b. What is most important to you?

The third objective is the only objective that is important to me, and it is really the final paragraph.

The first objective makes a comment about "fair share" which is at odds with the fact that the largest emitting nations have been those in the first world. And in our immediate neighbourhood of the South Pacific it is those with lowest emissions who are suffering from worst effects.

The second objective skirts around the issue that ever since the defeat of the popularly known "fart tax" we have excluded the agricultural sector from ETS.

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?

I accept that we have an almost unique chemical make-up of our emissions, but we have increased our emissions by 25% since 1990....I think that is gross emissions. And while there has been an increase associated with increase in dairying, there is also a significant CO2 increase associated with road transport and public electricity and heat production. In 2012 we had low rainfall which meant we depended on coal etc to fill the energy gap. So putting agriculture aside we should be working on solutions to reduce our CO2 emissions. And yes we should strengthen our research efforts to reduce methane emissions from cattle in particular. From memory we have set aside only \$45m over a number of years to support such study and I only need to compare that with flag consultation costs to see that we are not serious in our efforts.

We grow food. We have water, land and sunshine. There will always be markets for food. So unlike some countries much more dependent on CO2 derived energy for industry and national earnings, we have the opportunity to do more rather than less in the reduction field.

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?

This was difficult to answer, because of some seeming contradictions: Table 1 was based on a carbon price of \$50 a tonne, yet Box 7 estimated that the price of carbon needed was between \$60 - \$200 a tonne by 2030.

And this has an effect on answers, because on a limited income, but a freehold house, I can cope with \$1800PA and I could certainly cope with the difference between 5% of 1270 pa and 40% of \$1800. That \$530 difference is 24 trips to local coffee house or 30 bottles of reasonable wine. And my household income is well below average income.

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But I did not find this a satisfactory way of making this decision....too many unknowns! But as it stands I would be happy to see us reduce our emissions by 40%, certainly not leaving the level at a 5% reduction.

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?

This is where I had to go searching among other MfE papers, to little avail.

These are projects I would love to see evaluated for both capital cost and emission reduction values as well as time to deliver and other effects on environment/jobs.

1) Build an effective electric-powered metro railway system for Auckland...reduce CO2 and congestion.

2) Replace road haulage with railway and coastal freight.

3) Bring our houses up to EU insulation standards...much higher than our current standards, I understand from listening to German architects working in NZ.

4) Re-electrify our railways, using maybe surplus power from Comalco leaving.

5) encourage use of electric vehicles with introduction of regular fast charging points.

6) research algae as a source of bio fuel.

Summary

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

because we are price takers, there are always uncertainties...see the dairying prices of the moment.

So we encourage savings, raise lower wages, so as people can save etc.

But we can be leaders in agricultural technologies and some energy related technologies....wave, currents, wind, solar, let's invest here and earn through intelligence as well as through food.

What I do not want us to use is that international scheme whereby we buy credits from other nations. I saw this in action as Minister for NZAid when I saw EU nations trying to compete for activities in the Pacific, whereby their capital helped reduce waste etc. I was not impressed that the money spent was ever achieving the target. But it relieved some of their responsibility to reduce emissions in their own country.

Other comments

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

My apologies, but this is my second electronic submission. It is much briefer, and without the references and more detailed argument. Apparently the first submission has been lost...I cannot find it on my computer.