

# 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?

That these good objectives translate into effective policies. I'm grateful that government understands the necessity of transitioning to a low carbon economy but concerned that it doesn't realise the urgency for this. Currently we are set for a 4 degree celsius rise in global temperatures. To stabilise climate change scientists have identified the need to keep temperature rise below 2 degrees and that in order to achieve this global emissions need to be reduced to 40 percent of 1990 levels by 2040. New Zealand's current pledge to reduce emissions by just 5 percent by 2020 is irresponsible because it's current per capita annual emission rate is 17 tonnes compared with the world average of 8. The EU pledges to reduce it's current emissions by 40 percent by 2030 and I believe that we should match this despite our unique challenges.

The consultation document does not consider the benefits of reducing emissions or the cost of not reducing them. A responsible government will consider the very real implications of climate change on it's citizens and legislate accordingly.

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?

48 percent of New Zealand's current emissions are attributed to the agricultural sector, notably ruminants, and 80 percent of our energy is from renewable sources. These facts do not justify NZ abdicating responsibility for making concrete domestic/national emissions reduction targets. Relying on a flawed ETS scheme and buying reduction units from other countries to meet reduced emissions levels has a diluted effect on climate action unless it is coupled with direct emissions cuts. The EU has pledged to ban the use of international offsets beyond 2020 for this reason. NZ's emissions have grown 20 percent since 2008 and are set to rise a further 48 percent in the coming decade. We must pull our weight with setting a fair emissions target, encouraging other nations to do the same.

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?

The projected calculations for annual household emissions in 2027 were flawed as they used a base price of 50 dollars/tonne, 8x the actual price! Also, focusing on what it might cost NZ households for specific emissions reductions misleads the public and justifies the government's goal of setting a pitifully low reduced emissions target. Nowhere is there an acknowledgement of the huge employment opportunity of a vibrant renewable industry or the consideration of the far-reaching implications of climate change which will certainly be worse without concrete action on emissions reduction. Drought, flooding, erosion, changing pests and diseases, sea level rise,

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increased immigration, food and water shortages and increasing political instability will continue to affect all New Zealanders, directly or otherwise. We need to be flexible to create an economy and way of life that prepares us for the challenges ahead.

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? Despite being 80 percent renewable, NZ's energy sector is 30 percent responsible for emissions increases. A petition soon to be presented to government will request 100 percent renewable energy by 2025. I do hope that the government recognises this great initiative and favours renewables over the current ETS scheme that not only supports polluting industries but indirectly requires taxpayers to do the same! Last year taxpayers contributed 31 million dollars to polluting industries; this is not acceptable. The Carbon Tax proposed by the Green Party would raise revenue to reduce taxes. Forestry is currently set to give a carbon sink deficit as much is due to be harvested in the next 15 years. To achieve good carbon storage and potential carbon dioxide absorption, cycles of planting and harvesting need to be carefully planned. Forestry biomass could be used to produce biofuels; there is promising technology being developed for this. Our highly greenhouse gas producing and irrigation dependent dairy industry could be scaled down in favour of lucrative tree crops (olives and nuts) which would also add to the carbon sink. There are surely other options to reduce emissions.

## Summary

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

New Zealand has a rich tradition of research and innovation. The technology is developed but governmental will to enable green industry has been sadly lacking to date. I sincerely hope that this will change.

## Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.  
I ask goverent to consider setting up an independent Climate Commission and a national carbon emissions target in domestic law. Thankyou for considering my suggestions.  
Iona Jelf BSc Hons