

# 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? No

1b. What is most important to you?

Living in a truly clean and green country is MOST important to me. Currently we live in a country which portrays itself to the outside world as clean and green but we are clearly not. The emissions target is neither fair or ambitious. The cost and impact on society of climate change will be far greater than the NZ government seem to realise or admit to. It is important for New Zealand's people to feel the affects of setting a more ambitious target and also to be provided with the tools with which each and every one of us can help with reducing emissions.

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?

The New Zealand government seems to think that we are special and that the nature of our economy and emissions require us to be treated differently. I'm sorry but that's just not good enough. The current government is riding on the wave of decisions made by long term thinking governments decades ago who (for example) built our massive hydro schemes. I know these are not popular with many environmentalists but I personally believe they are necessary evils and provide us with a foundation of clean energy on which our current government stand and tell everyone how good we are. Instead, our government should stand on this foundation and show what else we can do. How we can complement this clean energy source with even more renewable energy sources such as wind, thermal solar, photovoltaics, geothermal and biomass. Currently our energy sector contributes 22% of our greenhouse gas emissions EVEN WITH our massive hydro schemes. Shame on us, this number should be more like 5%.

Also, statements like "our low population density has contributed to a high per capita use of road transport" are simply clutching at straws and looking for excuses for our poor performance. Transport contributes a whopping 17% of our greenhouse gases. This should realistically be cut in half by implementing 1. Better public transport systems in cities and rural areas. 2. Use of rail transport to replace at least 50% of the 1000's of trucks that blast up and down our country every day. 3. Helping rather than hindering the introduction of electric vehicles into NZ.

Using our completely out of balance agriculture industry as an excuse for high emissions is crazy. We seem to have attained an addiction to dairy with around 15% of all agriculture area taken up by dairy and dairy exports being our largest export earner (95% of dairy production is exported). We are all reminded how important dairy has become to NZ when the international milk solids prices go down, the NZ\$ goes down. My point is, what is the REAL cost to NZ of the dairy industry. We are using it, via this document, as an excuse for not being able to do our part in the war on climate change. It will also come to haunt us later (in 2 years or 10 years or 20 years) with untold damage to our pastures and waterways. Why not look at diversifying our agricultural industry to include more of a focus on horticulture where we know we can be very successful with a much lower carbon cost. We have shown

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this with our success with kiwi fruit and grapes.

Based on this, a fair contribution for New Zealand would be to reduce our emissions 20% below the 1990 levels by 2020 while also paving the way for further infrastructure changes to reduce these to 40% below the 1990 levels by 2030.

How about we use the nature of New Zealand's emissions and economy as a reason to look at more ambitious emissions targets rather than an excuse for not reaching the pathetic 5% that we are looking at now.

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?

I find this a very strange approach. What level of cost is appropriate for NZ to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? What level of cost is acceptable for us to NOT reduce greenhouse gas emissions would be a better question. Why not demonstrate what will happen if the world does NOT reduce emissions and make that a starting point? I think you will find that it is far more cost to NOT do anything than the numbers that you are quoting in the climate change consultation document for 5% reduction and up to 40% reduction.

As there is no basis given for the costs shown in the document (i.e. Table 1 on page 14) it is very hard to understand them or even to determine if these are realistic numbers but let's say they are reasonably accurate. In that case we should be aiming for 40% below 1990 emissions levels at a cost of \$1800 per annum rather than 5% at a cost of \$1270 per annum.

By the way, this could be achieved pretty easily by adding a solar hot water system to every house or better still, implementing shared solar hot water systems in all new housing developments. Once again, either of these would need to be government driven.

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?

Wow, a "New Opportunities" section? Why wasn't this at the start of the document as opposed to starting off the document with all of the excuses and reasons why we shouldn't have an aggressive target?

That aside, all of these are equally as likely to occur or not depending on the attitude of our government. There are only a few of us who are actively reducing our emissions because we know it is the right thing to do and at our own cost. For all New Zealanders to join in it will require the NZ government to make the changes. Acting on the list under "New Opportunities" would be a good start.

New Zealand has a critical role to play in demonstrating to other countries that reducing emissions can be achieved and not only that can stimulate an economy and not stifle it as this document seems to be intimating.

Summary

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

The future costs and benefits of the large hydro schemes were not known at the time of conception and construction. We are all benefiting from them now in a positive way. Trying to second guess uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting targets is counter productive in particular when a downside approach is taken rather than an upside approach. What is certain is that if we continue our high reliance on high emissions transport, energy and agriculture the cost to New Zealand and New Zealanders WILL be high.

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Ministry for the  
**Environment**  
*Manatū Mo Te Taiao*

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## Other comments

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

Why did it take a friend of a friend to tell us about the discussion document? This is one of the most important issues that affects the future of all New Zealanders and I am sure there is only a tiny % of us that know about this. Maybe that's a good thing because the discussion document is poor at best. If this is truly our current Government's stance on climate change and emissions then we are even further behind a large % of the world than I thought we were. Some issues I have with the document:

1. The document is steered towards telling everyone how bad emissions reductions are instead of focussing on the benefits. These benefits, which, by the way, will far outweigh the down sides eventually, are touched on, on what is essentially the second to last page of the document.

2. Comparisons are made to other countries to show how "different" we are and how much easier it is for them to make emissions reductions etc etc. The countries that we are comparing ourselves to, Australia and the United States are very different in many ways (size, economy, population, renewable generation %). Why don't we see a comparison to a country like Norway for example where there are many similarities like size, population & renewable generation % and see how we shape up then?

3. Numbers. Page 14 contains many numbers, none of which seem to have any basis behind them. A document that carries as much weight as this document does need to be able to stand up on it's own. There is no discussion about where this extra cost is going to come from. Is it coming from a higher cost of electricity? If so then why not demonstrate how people can use less electricity to combat this? Is it from higher fuel costs? If so then why not demonstrate how people can use less fuel by using public transport or using a car with a smaller engine or an electric car. Is it from higher food costs? If so then why not demonstrate how people can shop more cost effectively by purchasing locally grown food for example.

4. There is no mention of what domestic policies could and would be implemented to achieve which ever target we are trying to achieve. Again, if feel this should be an important part of a document such as this.

As you may have noticed I feel very strongly about this topic. Please contact me if you would like to discuss any of my comments or indeed if you feel there is anything I could do to help.