

Climate Change Contribution Consultation,
Ministry for the Environment,
PO Box 10362,
Wellington 6143

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In early April this year, 196 high school students came together to discuss the future of policy making in New Zealand. This event is Aotearoa Youth Declaration, an annual civics education event that culminates in the Youth Declaration - a policy document that acts as a platform for the youth voice of our country.

One of the focus groups at the event was Environment. The Environment focus group wrote seven statements covering topics such as the primary sector, youth involvement and education, renewable energy and exhaust emissions. At the event they engaged with Kelly Tarlton's Aquarium and conservationist Dannie Cullen, while also bringing their own interests to the discussion.

I have attached an extract from the 2015 Youth Declaration with the specific statements from the Environment Focus Group as a submission for the Climate Change Contribution Consultation. I believe that these statements represent an informed, engaged group of young people that genuinely care about the future of their country and global community.

If you would like any further information about the Environment Focus Group or the Youth Declaration, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Brendon Lee

Promotions Officer - Aotearoa Youth Declaration 2015
UN Youth New Zealand

ENVIRONMENT

6.1. We believe in a more sustainable primary sector, which should be achieved by reducing farming intensity, educating stakeholders, and enacting restorative measures. In particular, Aotearoa New Zealand needs to reduce the amount of pollutants leaching into freshwater systems, reduce CO₂ and methane emissions, as well as reassess current commercial livestock numbers. We recommend further research into these areas and communicating safe and preventative agricultural practices, while acknowledging our commitment to kaitiakitanga.

6.2. We recommend the inclusion of youth in protecting Aotearoa New Zealand's environment through awareness and involvement in more environmental programs. This should target youth broadly and be done through accessible and appropriate avenues. In particular, we recommend extending formal sustainability education in high schools to create environmentally responsible citizens in the future.

6.3. We wish to commend the Department of Conservation on their achievements in the field of conservation. In order for the Department of Conservation to be able to save endemic species - our natural, living taonga, such as the Maui's Dolphin - they must receive more funding. Such funding should focus on maintaining and building their work in pest control, animal rehabilitation, conservation, research and monitoring.

6.4. We recommend government invest in renewable energy sources to make Aotearoa New Zealand less reliant on fossil fuels and mining, and to cease deep-sea oiling, drilling and fracking. This is because these practices poses a permanent risk to our ecosystem, particularly our biodiversity, and will only lead to further pollution.

6.5. We recommend that the government invest in the research and implementation of alternative sustainable fishing methods to move away from trawling. We believe that this change will preserve both our fish stocks and marine biodiversity for future generations.

6.6. We believe agriculture should be included within Aotearoa New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme. We hope that this can result in greater regulation and incentives concerning the environmental impacts of primary industries. We also recommend measures such as carbon taxation or investigating other appropriate subsidies to promote sustainable agricultural and industry practices.

6.7. We believe that the government should amend existing exhaust emissions standards. This is to better differentiate between vehicles that produce differing degrees of emissions. We recommend implementing long-term incentives and subsidies to help move towards low-emission vehicles, as well as taxing or implementing import tariffs on high-emission vehicles.

