

# New Zealand Climate Contribution Submission

## Introduction

The discussion document represents a lack of leadership on climate change.

The document positions the New Zealand economy as an enemy of climate action. That is an irresponsible and, I hope, inaccurate portrayal. Have we created something we are incapable of using to do good in this world? I believe we can have a cleaner and more diverse economy as a result of taking strong action on climate change.

## Q1. (a) Do you agree with the above objectives for our contribution? (b) What is most important to you?

It is seen as a fair and ambitious contribution – both by international and domestic audiences. Domestically, what is required is public education. A more ambitious target will be seen as fair when people understand the urgency of climate action, and that New Zealand per capita emissions are over double the global average.

Internationally, action on climate change will be the yardstick on which 21<sup>st</sup> century civilisations are measured. Increasingly people question not only the quality of the products they purchase, but also how the products were made. Were they produced ethically and sustainably? A key factor in those equations will be carbon emissions. Data on individual products is often not easy to come by. What will be publicly known is the product's country of origin, and that country's climate change targets. What will the citizens of our international trading partners think of New Zealand's climate change targets? If one goal is to protect our export economy, then New Zealand must be the best possible trading partner, and that means having the most sustainable practices and the most ambitious climate change targets.

## Costs and impacts on society are managed appropriately

No, the contribution does not need to be affordable to all businesses, or even to all families. If a business is a major part of the problem, then it's a bad business. If there are sensible, reasonable guidelines for families to follow to reduce emissions, and they choose not to follow those guidelines, then they're a bad family.

Yes, sufficient social support and education services must be put in place to help people adapt.

Yes, we do need to ensure there isn't shameless profiteering off the sacrifices people make while we adjust to better ways of living.

## It must guide New Zealand over the long term in the global transition to a low emissions world

It must clearly define the upper limit of carbon emissions for each year through to zero emissions in 2050, in an ambitiously decreasing yet achievable way. There must be a plan in place, at least for the first decade, where there are already proven technologies and ideas that can be implemented, targeting emission reductions across the various sectors (transport, energy, agriculture, etc.).

## Q2. What do you think the nature of New Zealand's emissions and economy means for the level of target that we set?

Let's put the environment first, and modify the economy.

The nature of New Zealand means we have options. And enormous opportunities to do more. And improve. And share what we've achieved with the world. And feel proud.

Let's get the facts and science of our agricultural emissions clear. First methane is included to dominate the infographic, then later in "Comparison with others" it's suspiciously overlooked. Eventually (reducing by about half per decade) methane breaks down to carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, but while it's methane, it's a far more potent greenhouse gas. An expanding dairy sector would seem to imply an ever expanding amount of methane, and I don't know if that produces a large local warming effect, which may be more damaging in the short term. Methane is confusing due to its relatively short lifetime, and its global warming potential sometimes used with 20 year figures, sometimes with 100 year figures, and sometimes considered the same as carbon dioxide in the long run. The source of the nitrous oxide emissions isn't well explained.

## Q3. 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?

It is disingenuous to suggest a "household will be less 'well-off'". Even if the phony figures here play out, that's not \$1,800 per annum paid out for nothing. That's \$1,800 for a future. Effectively a 2% tax. Less than the recent GST increase. I see no evidence for how this figure, based on a 40% emissions reduction below 1990 levels, could devastate the economy, which seems to be the government's opinion.

There is no accounting for the positive benefits or new industries that will result from climate action. There is too much focus of carbon trading rather than real emissions reduction.

## Q4 . Of these opportunities which do you think are the most likely to occur, or be most important for New Zealand?

Electric vehicle use is happening right now. We have one. Electric trains are in use.

Why is it "difficult to predict what effect such take up of new technology will have on our emissions over time"? The emissions are well understood: some duration production of EVs; none during operation if charged from 100% renewables. What might be difficult to predict is how many people will change to using the new technologies. However this can be directly influenced by government policy, either with infrastructure and incentives for the new technologies, or push factors such as carbon taxes to move away from fossil fuel emissions.

Biofuel is extremely promising, as the discussion document states. Research funding for biofuel production could be paid for by carbon taxes. Perhaps the GST on petrol/diesel could be replaced with a carbon tax.

Q5. How should New Zealand take into account the future uncertainties of technologies and costs when setting its target?

There is too much focus on costs and uncertainties in the discussion document. The greatest cost will be if we don't act. The greatest uncertainty is whether this government has the will to act.

What is it we don't know? Make a list. How do we overcome uncertainty? Science, research and innovation. How do we deal with the cost? By convincing people that there is no alternative, because there isn't.

Thank you