I refer to: New Zealand's Climate Change Target. Ministry for the Environment,

I am not using the submission form provided on the web site because there are a number of implicit assumptions I disagree with and because the submission form provided begs many important questions.

I wish to make the following points to be considered.

1) Of course, the climate is changing; it always has.

2) There is considerable confusion regarding what is being discussed. Is “climate change” the new “global warming”?

3) No real issue is cut and dried. We can only predict by probability. Only blind belief is 100% certain and that is the domain of religion not science. Claims of some definite outcome undermine themselves.

4) If the issue is of importance, then we must first determine what it is we are discussing. The only sense in which the present concern makes sense can be broken down into:
   a) Does the anthropogenic production of CO2 increase the adversity of the world's weather conditions for human habitation.
   b) If so, are the proposals to limit CO2 production likely to be effective?
      Attempts so far, such as carbon pricing and support for “green energy”, have been totally ineffective merely providing massive benefit to speculators and fraudsters.
   c) If so, do the benefits of attempting to limit CO2 production outweigh the costs.
      None of these questions have a definite true/false answer, all are can only be considered to be true to some level of probability; we depend on science not religion for these answers.. The probability of all being true is their product.
Comments on Box 1.
a) The writers of the document themselves show ambivalence to the predictions. 4 degrees in the main text becomes 3.5 in Box 1. This difference casts doubt on the rigour of the document. Further, it is unclear where these figures come from.
b) The document states a rise in global temperatures of 0.9 degrees since 1900. A 3.5 (4, perhaps) degree rise would require the rate of temperature rise to be 4.5 times greater during the remainder of this century as compared to that since 1900. Such an increase has not been observed.
c) With regard to the claimed dangers of sea level rise, the document itself provides no guide as to the expected magnitude of these phenomena. Presumably the danger is based on: Climate Change, New Zealand Climate Change Centre. This document suggests a sea level rise of 0.5 - 1m by the end of the century. Sea level rise from 1900 - 2000 was about 15cm. This requires that the rate of seal level rise would have to increase by 3.9 to 7.8 times the presently observed rate.
d) Ocean acidification is claimed to be another expected impact but no data is given in support of this claim.

There seems no good evidence to expect any particularly large effects on NZ from global warming. Also, since NZ's contribution to total global emissions is very small, any contribution we make is symbolic. It will not affect climate change but it may affect NZ's reputation and this in an area that might affect our major industries.
It is important that NZ is not labelled a pariah.

On consideration of the above, I would recommend a target near the middle of the field somewhat more conservative than the average. Conservative because I believe the projections of temperature and sea level rise on which the discussion document is based will not be borne out.

M McQueem       22_05_2015