

CLIMATE CHANGE CONTRIBUTION CONSULTATION

SUBMISSION

From:

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Responses to the Questions

Q1 The three objectives listed are very general. The effects of each are dependent on very specific policy decisions which are not indicated here

1 It does not state 'fair' to whom. It does not seem very fair to me for NZ to propose only a 5% reduction below the 1990 levels when we have allowed emissions to rise by 21% since 1990. Germany's emissions are 24% below their 1990 total and they are an industrial country.

Though NZ has the difficulty of agricultural emissions, there has been no attempt to reduce emissions in other sectors of the economy. There has been no policy for reducing emissions from transport and there has been a determined policy to retain coal: both of these sectors could provide for a significant reduction of emissions.

2. I would consider costs and impacts on society appropriately managed only if the existing high level of income inequality is dealt to. At the very least people on our current very low incomes, whether employed or unemployed, should be exempt from any extra charges. The cost burden will need to be carried by those who have enough to live on. I agree 'our target should provide us with flexibility to design our response in a way that affects different sectors fairly'.

3. The third objective is central but the phrase 'over the long term' gives an unfortunate impression of ease and relaxation in what is an urgent situation. It is by no means certain that the set date of 2020 will be soon enough. Climate change doesn't wait for us to get our act together. There is an ongoing process of warming and if or when any features such as the ice caps and the Siberian tundra reach a tipping point we will be powerless to stop the increase. As well, if in some less dramatic way the carbon in the atmosphere exceeds 400 parts per million the world will be committed to more extreme weather events leading to widespread food insecurity.

I think it is fallacious to believe that a financial market in emissions can be relied upon to solve our difficulties. The effect of the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme and the Forestry scheme has been disenchanting. I am not aware of any reduction in emissions at all. Financial 'wheeling and dealing' can't be trusted to save us. We have to actually reduce our emissions.

Q2 It is true that certain countries should do more than others. Probably all the developed countries fall into this category because we have pursued economic growth as the central tenet and created a consumerist economy that has majored in fossil fuel energy use, a major

contributor to carbon emissions.

1. New Zealand is a developed country with a focus on providing for the use of the individual car and for increasing the number of cars. Transport policy has emphasised this in recent years.

We cannot shelter behind our difficulty with agricultural emissions. Encouraging research is being done and hopefully will be able, in time, to address the problem. It is interesting that, in the twenty years since warnings have been published about climate change, no one has joined the dots between cows and methane emissions and climate warming until very recently.

2. It is good to have a lower base in carbon emissions than other developed countries. Knowing that carbon dioxide has the greatest impact on global temperature means that we also know that a focussed effort to lower our carbon emissions is called for. (Remember, we have allowed our emissions to increase by 21% since Kyoto. No reductions at all.) It would make for a great education campaign alerting the population to the actions that are relevant - how to do it differently, how to rethink and commit to an effective programme. It could be a game for school children, a challenge for teens, an information campaign for adults, a summit meeting for businesses, reeducation seminars for politicians. Planning for all these to take place in one year would be powerful.

3. Clearly different countries have different conditions and needs. For instance developing countries will feel and, I would say, would be entitled to a higher share of the emissions globally. We have had more than our share in the developed countries.

It is apparent that New Zealand will need to develop a substantial contingency fund, probably up to the two billion that was directed at tax breaks a few years ago. This will help to allay anxieties about the uncertainties and unpredictabilities of the new phase of climate responsibility.

Q3 There seems to be an assumption that buying international carbon offsets from overseas is the only way to manage our carbon emissions. I would like to see a calculation of the impact of developing public transport to a much higher level, reducing fossil fuel use, ending mining for coal and developing a renewable energy industry that would also create jobs.

The estimates of cost per household show a small increase between a 5% reduction from 1990 and 20% of just three dollars a week. For 40% below the 1990 level \$10 a week more than a 5% reduction is needed, requiring \$36 per week per eligible household. This is eminently doable. I am encouraged to see that it is well within our reach. The proviso is that households with very low incomes will have to be exempt which will raise the average cost. The figure of \$85,000 as the average annual household consumption suggests a high number of very high income households which can readily bear this cost.

I would like to add that an increase in electricity charges is quite unacceptable. The high charges New Zealanders are subjected to are the result of a market system which is a real anomaly in a land so well supplied with rivers and with a small population which can be supplied quite readily by a minimum number of central agencies. The current competition

model raises costs with all the paraphernalia of individual businesses, spending our money on promotions, sponsorships, junketing, none of which are necessary for normal power suppliers.

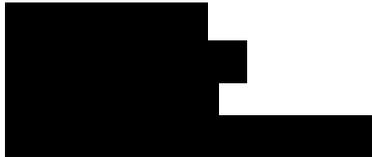
Q4 It is sensible to take up the new opportunities that are presenting themselves. I would hope that we would take up all five. They are all essential and probably inevitable if we are serious about our responsibilities. My query is about the inclusion of erosion in the list. Is this to suggest planting of poplars and/or pinus radiata? I would hope that planting would be of New Zealand natives which are less likely to grow well on eroded hillsides.

It would be difficult to rank these opportunities, except to say that remaining aligned with the global transition to a lower-carbon economy is the central tenet. Global agreement is basic.

Q5 I have already proposed that New Zealand establish a substantial contingency fund of up to at least \$2 billion for this purpose. It will support good decision-making by removing the pressure for sudden or 'knee jerk' decisions when consultation needs to be deep and wide.

Thank you for the Discussion Document. It gives rise to hope that climate change will now be taken seriously in our country.

Barbara Mountier



References: *Six Degrees* by Mark Lynas
The Stern Report
This Changes Everything by Naomi Klein