

19 October 2017

Report confirms increasing emissions impacting New Zealand

New Zealand is seeing impacts of excess greenhouse gas emissions in our climate and oceans, according to the latest national report from the Ministry for the Environment and Stats NZ about the state of the atmosphere and climate.

Our atmosphere and climate 2017, released today, reports on changes in global and domestic greenhouse gas emissions and how these are affecting our environment; provides projections for New Zealand's climate; and the factors that influence our high summertime ultraviolet light levels.

Key findings from the report are:

- Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have increased 23% since 1972
- Global gross greenhouse gas emissions have risen 51% from 1990 to 2013
- New Zealand gross greenhouse gas emissions have risen 24% from 1990 to 2015
- While agriculture makes up nearly half of NZ gross emissions, road transport has had one of the largest increases in emissions, with a 78% increase since 1990
- New Zealand has experienced a 1°C temperature increase since 1909
- New Zealand's glaciers have lost a quarter of their volume since 1977
- Sea levels have risen 14–22cm at four main New Zealand ports since 1916
- The global production of ozone-depleting substances has dropped 98% from 1986 to 2015.

Government Statistician Liz MacPherson said the report shows climate change is impacting New Zealand.

“We have enough data on measures like annual average temperature to confidently say New Zealand's climate is warming. That is showing up, for example, in the significant loss of our glacier volume,” Ms MacPherson said.

“New Zealand has naturally variable weather, making trends in some areas difficult to determine. We need longer-term data to establish whether changes are persisting.”

Secretary for the Environment Vicky Robertson said the most concerning change in our atmosphere is the unprecedented high levels of carbon dioxide, which are leading to increasing global temperatures and changes to our oceans, including rising sea levels and increasing ocean acidity.

“While New Zealand is not a large contributor of emissions globally, we are certainly affected locally and we need to act on what that means for us,” Ms Robertson said.

“The future impacts of climate change on our lives all depend on how fast global emissions are reduced and the extent to which our communities can adapt to change.

“Encouragingly, the report shows international efforts have been successful in phasing out the use of ozone-depleting substances. This has led to gradual recovery of the ozone hole.”

Ms MacPherson said *Our atmosphere and climate 2017* uses New Zealand and international data and research to draw a picture of the climate and atmospheric conditions for New Zealand.

“National and international data collections on the atmosphere and climate are increasingly comprehensive but there are still some things we don’t know at this time, in particular the full impact of climate change on our biodiversity, cultural values and the economy,” Ms MacPherson said.

“I want to emphasise our reporting series is for all New Zealanders. It aims to equip New Zealanders with honest, trusted, and independent information on the state of the environment for making their own informed decisions.”

Tonight the Ministry for the Environment, in partnership with Auckland Council, is hosting an Auckland Conversation facilitated by Kim Hill to support a discussion about the report findings. The discussion will explore the transformative change needed to respond to climate change and future-proof our economy. Watch or listen to the event live stream or on demand on the [Auckland Conversation’s website](#) and Ministry for the Environment’s [Facebook page](#).

For more information check out the Auckland Conversations website: conversations.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

More information:

- Video on findings available on [Vimeo](#) can be embedded
- [Full report](#) and [poster](#)
- Interactive regional maps are available on the [Stats NZ web pages](#) (embed links are available from the maps)
- Technical Advisory Group members are available for interview. See report for membership.

For media enquiries, hi-res copies of the poster or photos of spokespeople, please contact:

Ministry for the Environment media enquiries, 027 231 6930

Stats NZ, Marina Skinner, 021 792 260