

# Setting New Zealand's post-2020 climate change target

## Submission form

The Government is seeking views on New Zealand's post-2020 climate change contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

You can have your say by making a submission using this form or using the online tool available at [www.mfe.govt.nz/more/consultations](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/more/consultations).

For more information about this consultation:

- Read our [Consultation on New Zealand's post-2020 international climate change contribution web page](#)
- Read our discussion document: [New Zealand's Climate Change Target: Our contribution to the new international climate change agreement](#)

**Submissions close at 5.00pm on Wednesday 3 June 2015.**

## Publishing and releasing submissions

All or part of any written submission (including names of submitters), may be published on the Ministry for the Environment's website [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz). Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, we will consider that you have consented to website posting of both your submission and your name.

Contents of submissions may be released to the public under the Official Information Act 1982 following requests to the Ministry for the Environment (including via email). Please advise if you have any objection to the release of any information contained in a submission and, in particular, which part(s) you consider should be withheld, together with the reason(s) for withholding the information. We will take into account all such objections when responding to requests for copies of, and information on, submissions to this consultation under the Official Information Act.

The Privacy Act 1993 applies certain principles about the collection, use and disclosure of information about individuals by various agencies, including the Ministry for the Environment. It governs access by individuals to information about themselves held by agencies. Any personal information you supply to the Ministry in the course of making a submission will be used by the Ministry only in relation to the matters covered by this consultation. Please clearly indicate in your submission if you do not wish your name to be included in any summary of submissions that the Ministry may publish.

## Questions to guide your feedback

Your submission may address any aspect of the discussion document, but we would appreciate you paying particular attention to the questions posed throughout and listed in this form. You may answer some or all of the questions. To ensure your point of view is clearly understood, you should explain your rationale and provide supporting evidence where appropriate.

### Contact information

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### Objectives for the contribution

**1a. We have set the following three objectives for our contribution:**

- **it is seen as a fair and ambitious contribution – both by international and domestic audiences**
- **costs and impacts on society are managed appropriately**
- **it must guide New Zealand over the long term in the global transition to a low emissions world.**

**Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution?**

- Yes
- No

**1b. What is most important to you?**

That the New Zealand (NZ) Government represents all New Zealanders both present and future and works with other governments to limit climate change to a maximum of a 2°C temperature rise. It is a scientific fact that the world faces temperature rises well in excess of what is sustainable in the long term both to humans and other species.

It is critical that decision makers who are trained in economics need to understand that their economically focussed world view will never accurately describe the future since economics is not a science based subject. Economic analysis of an activity that impacts on the environment or society is

unable to adequately cost these impacts of that activity. This assigning of costs to environmental and social impacts becomes increasingly difficult the further from the present you consider. Consequently the costs of these impacts are undervalued or ignored. The government's discussion document is fundamentally flawed for this reason, it has not assigned costs for the environmental and social impacts of maintaining a business-as-usual economic model over the next century and beyond. The document focuses on the short term.

Limiting climate change globally is a real tragedy of the commons problem. The government's discussion document clearly demonstrates this. It focuses on the short term economic costs only to NZ and expresses our "uniqueness" and "specialness". Every country can identify special attributes and argue their unique status, some with more validity than others. Adopting this approach of emphasising our differences will not solve this issue.

The only way to solve the issue is for governments to demonstrate leadership. Here is another challenge, democratically elected governments maintain power for very short periods of time compared with the long term problem of climate change. As politicians' *raison d'être* are to retain, or gain, power at election time it is highly unlikely that they would take action that would make them unpopular in the next few years.

Politicians however could demonstrate leadership in two ways. Firstly by ensuring that people are well informed about the long term consequences of not dealing with climate change now, including ensuring that their scientific understanding of this issue is improved. The government has not initiated a national discussion on this issue, and it seems from the limited timeframe for consultation that this government has no interest in having such a debate and thereby demonstrating leadership. It would appear that the government is more interested in having a national debate about a flag.

Secondly, politicians could decide to reach a cross-party agreement that NZ does want to demonstrate leadership globally and that irrespective of which ever political party is in power over the next twenty years they will demonstrate global leadership in ensuring that the issue of climate change will be solved in this timeframe.

## What would be a fair contribution for New Zealand?

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

Very little as this is a global challenge. Whilst I am a New Zealander, more importantly to me is that I am a human who needs the temperatures on this planet to stay within a very limited range to sustain both human life and that of many other species. As humans, if we have sufficient scientific understanding, we have the knowledge to understand the future. Let's hope that our leaders have that understanding and set emission levels that will ensure a future for both humans and other species on this planet.

## How will our contribution affect New Zealanders?

- 3. What level of cost is appropriate for New Zealand to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? For example, what do you think would be a reasonable impact on annual household consumption?**

When, next year or in 2100? As a mother, I place a very high value on 2100.

- 4. Of the opportunities for New Zealand to reduce its emissions (as outlined on page 15 of the discussion document), which do you think are the most likely to occur, or be most important for New Zealand?**

**Transport:** improved public transport and cycling and walking in urban areas. Electric cars for longer distances.

**Electricity generation:** an increase in the percentage from renewables to 90%+

**Education:** ensure that people have a good understanding of:

- the scientific issues of climate change,
- the risks of inaction over the next few years,
- the risks of maintaining an exponentially increasing economy every year.

## Summary

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

The nature of the future is that it is uncertain. It would be foolhardy to assume that a technology not yet known will save us just in the nick of time. It would be more prudent to adopt a conservative approach to setting greenhouse gas emission reductions, which could then be adjusted if there was some technological revolution, that did not have other environmental or social impacts. Government incentives and regulation would have an impact on the speed of the development of technologies and their uptake.

## Other comments

- 6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.**

I believe that the most equitable global method for reducing greenhouse gas emissions is to give everyone globally the same per capita level, which would need to reduce over time due to increases in population and the need to limit greenhouse gas emissions levels. If New Zealanders knew what these figures were and how high their per capita emission levels were compared with the global average, it would improve their understanding and awareness of the scale of the issue.

## When your submission is complete

Email your completed submission to [climate.contribution@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:climate.contribution@mfe.govt.nz) or post to Climate Change Contribution Consultation, Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143.

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