

Submission from Sustainable Living Education Trust, PO box 58 Geraldine 7956.

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The discussion paper is intellectually a poor quality piece of work. It ignores later costs of not acting now on climate change and fails to report the substantial financial incentives being given to road transport and the coal, oil and gas industry in NZ, while exaggerating the costs of action on projected household consumption. These economic 'calculations' are unconvincing.

Our experience as educators working alongside local government is that there is both a concern about and willingness to take action on climate issues, but that recent lack of Government and commercial media interest or leadership has suppressed this, whilst NZ emissions have grown.

In terms of targets, New Zealand is capable of reaching at least a 40% carbon emission reduction by 2030. This should be NZ's internationally-signalled contribution in December 2015. It needs to be clear, whole-hearted and measurable. Longer term we must commit to zero carbon emissions by 2050, not just to trading offsets for emissions and pretending that our high emissions per capita do not matter because NZ's population is relatively small.

There are benefits to the economy of adopting and innovating use of carbon-reduction technologies and practices: we see job creation, in (for example) insulation and energy efficiency actions, in public transport, electric vehicles, and distributed solar and wind power generation, taking over from the oil-focussed economy. Biofuels and wood should replace coal in industrial heating systems too.

Limits to dairy expansion are not simply a matter of seeking irrigation but of managing effects – the methane and nitrogen dioxide emissions must be reduced, either by technical fixes for bacteria in the rumen or by reduced herd sizes. We do not have any obligation to 'feed the world' with milk powder, simply an opportunity to profit from trade, but must consider the moral question of at what price for future generations today's profits are being obtained?

NZ urgently needs a rewrite of our Energy Strategy (2011-2021), to abandon reliance on infinite growth and fossil fuels, to commit NZ to 100% renewable electricity by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

As a community education body based in local government with over a decade's practical experience, the Trust is ready to help inform and motivate citizens towards lower-carbon lifestyles, providing a set of 'future living skills'. We would be happy to discuss these with Ministry for the Environment, as you progress towards the COP in Paris. But first the Government has to show that it is taking the issue seriously – we are not willing to simply provide greenwash!