

Consultation on setting New Zealand's post-2020 climate change target



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Objectives for the contribution

Do you agree with these objectives for our contribution? Yes

1b. What is most important to you?

That our contribution be ambitious - New Zealand has been a world leader in so many other areas, including women's suffrage and tangata whenua rights. Why should we then be a "fast follower" instead of a leader? Why should we try to accommodate our responses to climate change within the framework of continuing economic growth at all costs when this won't save us in the long run? We need to set challenging goals and stick to them if we are to make changes that actually make a difference.

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?

A fair contribution would take the economy into consideration but set emissions as a higher priority than it is currently. We need more speeches from ministers and more parliamentary debate around climate change - the level that it's at currently demonstrates that the government is not putting it as a major focus when it has the potential to affect the nation and the world so devastatingly. A greater reduction than to 5% less than 1990 levels is needed.

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 would be a reasonable reduction in annual household consumption?

This is a hard question to answer as I am not an economist but I think it would be reasonable to reduce emissions at some cost for both businesses and households. Any percentage I give would not be a ballpark figure of any sort - this is up to the government to decide - but suffice to say I would gladly sacrifice some of the comforts of living if it meant we were a step closer to saving the planet.

On a side note, people would be more willing to give up some consumption if they were better educated about the effects and hard statistics of climate change in the first place. This shouldn't just be something kids are taught about for a week at primary school and forget about for the rest of their lives.

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?

Increased energy efficiency and increased reliance on renewables are two important opportunities, which I believe could be more heavily funded. The point on remaining aligned with the global transition to a low-carbon economy is

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a bit worrying - if no-one is brave enough to take the plunge and make changes first, countries will not transition fast enough. If we can be on the fore-front of this change and prove to the world that it works for us, we could actually be part of making a difference.

Summary

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

It may be prudent to set different levels of targets dependent on expected, optimistic and conservative levels of technology/cost fluctuation. However, all of these levels should be greater than those goals we have set currently.

Other comments

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

As a university student, I'd like to say that there are fewer climate change deniers in the younger generations and that we care about this issue. We are the ones who will live with the long-term consequences and we care quite a bit about stopping climate change. Please listen to us - the opinions of businesses and the dairy industry are founded on logical concerns, but their proponents will not be living with higher sea levels and species losses like we will have to if we don't act now. Thank you very much for your consideration.

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Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Acting on climate change is an investment in our future.

The Government's narrow fixation on the short-term costs of taking action is flawed and damaging. This is about investing in a safe and prosperous future where we're all better off. Failing to act will cost us and the World Bank warns that the longer action is delayed, the more costs will rise for the next generation. Taking action to cut carbon pollution in New Zealand creates benefits like cleaner air, less dependence on foreign oil, better human health and more liveable cities. Our existing renewable electricity portfolio is an opportunity, not an excuse for inaction. By building on this we can be a positive example to other countries, pioneer solutions the rest of the world needs, and capture new economic opportunities.

I want the Government to act on climate change as an investment in our future.

New Zealand needs a target of zero carbon dioxide emissions.

Carbon dioxide is the main driver of long-term climate change. The discussion document highlights that for a good chance of limiting warming to less than 2°C, the world can emit less than one trillion tonnes of CO₂ from now on. At current rates of emissions, the world will blow this carbon budget by 2035. Regardless of what we do about other emissions from agriculture, every country ultimately needs to reduce CO₂ emissions to zero to stop climate change and avoid blowing the global carbon budget. That means shifting from fossil fuels to clean energy and planting forests to absorb carbon.

I want New Zealand to call for a global zero carbon target, and walk the talk by committing to a pathway towards zero CO2 emissions by 2050 or earlier (alongside reductions in other greenhouse gases).

Targets need to be backed up with a credible plan.

In order to meet our targets we need a credible national strategy for how we can achieve them. Without a clear pathway, targets are just empty numbers. Despite existing targets for 2020 and 2050, New Zealand's emissions have continued to rise. Official projections say they will continue rising under current policies. Our international reputation can't survive that much longer - we need real results.

I want to see a real action plan that adds up.

We need a climate change law to keep government on track.

The UK Climate Change Act provides a model for government commitment and accountability that New Zealand should adopt. This Act puts national emissions targets in domestic law (which is not the case in New Zealand) and requires every government to produce credible plans to meet these. This will show other countries we are serious. The Act also sets up an independent Climate Commission to advise government on its policies and hold whoever is in power accountable. This makes the issue of climate change less politicised by having an authoritative independent voice in the debate.

I want a New Zealand climate law that holds the government accountable for reducing emissions, and an independent Climate Commission.

We need political parties to work together.

This issue needs cooperation across the political spectrum and efforts to engage all New Zealanders in the solutions. Climate policy can't go on being a political football with major policy flip-flops every time there's a change in government. We need stable climate policy that

steers us clearly towards a zero carbon society. This will allow businesses to make good long-term decisions and New Zealand will benefit by attracting investment in low carbon industries and innovation.

I want the Government to establish a cross-party climate working group and an ongoing programme to engage meaningfully with New Zealanders on climate change solutions.

We can't wait.

An exciting zero carbon future is waiting for us if we choose it. We need to start building it today. Previous generations didn't understand the gravity of the problem and didn't have the technologies to solve it, but the current generation in charge has neither excuse. Delaying action makes it harder to meet our targets and lumps more costs onto young people to deal with in the future. There are many beneficial actions the Government could take now together with businesses and communities to kick-start the transition.

I want to see meaningful policy changes that will start cutting New Zealand's emissions, during this term of government.

In particular:

Please increase education in this area. More people need to know about the gravity of this situation. Please also go to the Paris talks with ambitious goals designed to get results, and not merely tread water. Let's be leaders, not followers, in the march towards lower emissions and stopping climate change.