

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



Copy of your submission

Contact information

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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?

My main impetus from writing this submission is an issue which is absent from the discussion document concerning New Zealand's Climate change target. The issue is the absence of any commitment to educating our population and the population of the world as to the importance of the need to act on this issue. The document takes it as a given that Climate Change is a real and ongoing process triggered in its current form by human industrialisation. However in my day to day life I continued to meet people who's knowledge of the issue is either extremely limited or worse don't believe it is happening and that its all a hoax or some kind of conspiracy. If the general population continues to be ignorant of the importance of acting to mitigate, stop and eventually reverse climate change it won't matter what commitments New Zealand makes in Paris in December. In order for New Zealand to meet it's climate change targets, whatever they may be, those targets will need the support of every New Zealander. To this end I would like the government to include in its targets a commitment to an increased effort to educate the people of New Zealand as to the nature of climate change and why we must act against it.

Furthermore I would like to see a commitment to actively act against those promoting an Anti-Climate Change agenda. A recent episode of Last Week Tonight gave a figure of 97% of scientists agreeing that climate change is an ongoing human cause phenomenon versus 3% who argued that it wasn't happening or that even if it is happening, humans were not responsible. However despite this overwhelming scientific consensus media outlets continue to give a disproportionate amount of coverage to anti-climate change proponents giving the false impression to the general public that this is a 50/50 debate when in fact from a scientific point of view the case is largely closed. This needs to be changed and while I believe strongly that freedom of speech entails that everyone has a right to their say on the matter, the media should be obliged to point out that the views of the anti-climate change activists represent a tiny minority of the scientific community.

I believe the spread of this disinformation is proving to be crippling to any effort to combat climate change. I recently crossed the Southern Alps via the Gardens of Eden and Allah, two large ice plateaus high on the main divide. Prior to the trip I had seen photos of the area thirty years ago and five years ago. The extent of glacial retreat in the area even when compared to the photos from five years ago was alarming. Large areas marked on topographical maps as being covered by permanent ice/snow are now exposed rock. Yet despite this clear evidence that the climate is changing and changing fast I have people refuse to believe that this is the case despite my seeing it with my own eyes. This is most concerning.

It's these twin issues of a lack of information and the spread of disinformation that I would like to see added to any targets the New Zealand government will be putting in its contribution to combat climate change. Until everyone in this country is committed to action any targets we set are doomed to fail.

What would be a fair contribution for New Zealand?

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

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?

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?

Summary

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

Other comments

6. Is there any further information you wish the Government to consider? Please explain.
I would like to thank the government for the opportunity to submit on this important issue. To achieve the goal of the public consultation process I ask that submitters are given the opportunity to give their submissions in person after the submission closing date, with at least two weeks notice for each hearing. Due to the very short time frame between being given notice of the consultation and the date of the public meetings, many people were unable to make well founded conclusions as to what they believe should be New Zealand's post 2020 climate change target by the time of the public meeting. For the government to fully understand what New Zealanders believe on this issue, the public must be given more time to be heard.

Sincerely,

Enda Walsh