

6 December 2024

Ministry for the Environment  
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Tēnā koutou

## **Canterbury Mayoral Forum Submission: Aotearoa New Zealand's 2035 international climate change target**

1. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum thanks the Ministry for the Environment for the opportunity to provide feedback on *shaping Aotearoa New Zealand's 2035 international climate change target*.
2. The following submission has been developed with input from across Canterbury Councils and focuses on matters of general agreement. Some of our Councils will make individual submissions, which while in general alignment with this submission, will be slightly different on some matters.

### **Canterbury context and existing climate action**

3. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum comprises the mayors of the ten territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury), supported by our chief executives. The purpose of the Forum is to promote collaboration across the region and increase the effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury's communities.
4. The eleven local authorities are: Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate and Waitaki District Councils, the Christchurch City Council and Canterbury Regional Council.
5. Canterbury is a bustling centre of urban landscape, agricultural lands, and has both international and domestic connections to top tourist destinations. Canterbury is known as an innovative, research-backed, forward-thinking region, actively supporting Aotearoa New Zealand's contribution to our own, and the world's, emissions reduction targets

### ***Mayors standing together for Canterbury.***

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6. The Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-25 identifies three priority issues for leadership and advocacy, all of which intersect with the purpose and focus of this feedback.
  - Sustainable environmental management of our habitats
  - Shared prosperity for all our communities
  - Climate change mitigation and adaptation
7. In August 2024, the Forum approved the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024-27 which sets out our vision of a thriving, climate resilient, low-emissions Canterbury. It outlines the six key outcomes and objectives we are seeking through the delivery of our ten primary actions and supporting sub-actions. This builds on and continues the work that was done in the Canterbury Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022.
8. Overall, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum
  - **Strongly supports** prioritising the continued alignment with the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement – to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and pursue efforts to limit global average temperature rise to 1.5°C.
  - **Supports** an ambitious international target for Aotearoa New Zealand and **recommends** the new target be suitably ambitious to help reach the 1.5°C temperature goal.
  - **Supports** the independent expert advice provided by the Climate Change Commission around the development of this target. The Climate Commission has clearly indicated where New Zealand can make robust and viable emission reductions, and we encourage the Government to prioritise this advice.
  - **Acknowledges** the outcome of the Global Stocktake, and the concerns we will not meet the internationally agreed limiting of global warming if we continue on this trajectory.
  - **Supports** bold climate leadership from central government and a clear plan to reduce domestic gross emissions.
  - **Recommends** the Government carefully consider the costs, including social costs, that will increase with inaction and also the cost savings of lower emissions alongside the capital and operational costs to deliver.
  - **Supports** an equitable transition for both our international partners and on our domestic shores.
  - **Supports** co-operation and co-ordination of central government, local government, mana whenua and community groups to enable and support ambitious emissions reduction shifts.

A more detailed analysis of the above points follows below.

## Submission points

9. We **strongly support** prioritising the continued alignment with the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement – *to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and pursue efforts to limit global average temperature rise to 1.5°C*. We are already seeing an increase in extreme weather events and the severity of these, the enormous costs of repair, and insurance companies are considering the future of cover and premiums in higher risk areas. There is a raft of evidence-based measures we can undertake to mitigate the impacts of climate change and avoid the worst impacts on communities, especially the people within these who are the most vulnerable.

10. We **recommend** the new target be suitably ambitious to help reach the 1.5°C temperature goal. The Global Stocktake analysed worldwide progress on meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. The results showed significant concern with how countries are tracking to limit warming to 1.5°C and highlighted the need for urgent action. Aotearoa New Zealand's future prosperity is greatly dependant on the climate actions of other countries, and as a highly innovative and well-respected country, we must set an example for others to follow.
11. We **support** the independent expert advice provided by the Climate Change Commission (Commission) around the development of this target. The Commission's report was developed under robust processes and principles and is based on significant underpinning analysis. We **recommend** that their advice be thoroughly considered as the Government moves forward setting this target.
12. The Commission's advice demonstrates that Aotearoa New Zealand can achieve greater net emissions reductions in the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2 period than NDC1 through domestic action alone, but only if we set ourselves up now. With respect to this increased capacity for reduction, and accounting for the need for urgent action to limit warming, we **recommend** that the new target be suitably ambitious to help reach the 1.5°C temperature goal.
13. We **support** a clear plan for action from Central Government to reduce *gross domestic emissions* over net reductions. In our submission on the draft second emissions reduction plan, we raised queries about relying too heavily on the Emissions Trading Scheme and offshore credits. This leaves us vulnerable to availability and changes in market pricing when those same funds could be used to invest locally. We **recommend** the Government carefully consider the substantial costs of inaction and the numerous and far-reaching benefits of acting, and acting early.
14. Local government is poised to connect with communities and is the governing body on activities that can support or negate change, for example public transport, city and district planning, and consenting. Having a strong national lead provides efficiencies and cost savings in evidence-based best practice, research and development, climate change mapping, and data collection and findings, to name a few.
15. While Aotearoa contributes less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, in 2021 we were ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the OECD for emissions per capita. The NDC2 consultation document acknowledges our large agricultural sector, and that we are a nation of car drivers. Rationalising this as a fault of our long narrow geography and dispersed population ignores our continued underinvestment in domestic coastal shipping infrastructure, rail (including Cook Strait rail ferries), and public transport, alongside the permitted sprawl of developments. To reiterate our point above, the Commission has demonstrated a pathway in which we can reduce domestic emissions, and we **recommend** the government explore and act on all options to rapidly reduce domestic emissions.
16. The United Kingdom (UK) has ceased burning coal for electricity generation and recently announced their next target of an 81% reduction of emissions. 'Green jobs' are increasing at a rate four times faster than that of overall UK employment. We **encourage** the government to consider the co-benefits of climate action, for example, as a way to stimulate the economy and employment, foster Kiwi ingenuity, and protect our unique indigenous biodiversity.
17. We **support** an equitable transition, both nationally and internationally. We would expect this to consider all forms and functions of land use, sectors, and sub-groups of society. Examples include, farming, industrial settings, seaside living, urban/rural commute patterns, demographics and socio-economic positions, availability of, and capital outlay on, new technologies. A particular area of

interest for parts of Canterbury is the consideration of reducing stock numbers. This must be fairly balanced with alternative land use to ensure that the reduction does not unduly affect the economy both locally and nationally. The more we can mitigate now, and share in our efforts of emissions reduction, the greater the options we will have to adapt in future.

18. With a comparatively high per capita emissions profile, we are well-placed to ease the burden on developing countries by focussing on reducing domestic emissions. Off-setting should be the last resort for countries and industry sectors that will struggle with technology to achieve a significant reduction in emissions.
19. Effective climate action relies on collaboration and partnerships. We must embrace our relationships with mana whenua, come together with central government, and tap into the existing grassroots movements to support a major shift.

## Conclusion

20. The Climate Commission has outlined a reasonable pathway to achieve emissions reduction and outlined a number of actions we can implement to achieve this. It is time to act. As a nation known for being 'Clean and Green' and handy with a bit of No. 8 wire, our size and resources should be tapped into. As generations of New Zealanders have paved the way for world leading action, we are prime candidates to do this again by setting, and achieving, our own bold targets.
21. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to help shape Aotearoa New Zealand's 2035 international climate change target. Our secretariat is available to provide any further information or answer any questions about our submission. Contact details are: Amelia Wilkins, Canterbury Mayoral Forum Secretariat, [secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz](mailto:secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz), 027 243 4304.

Nāku iti noa, nā



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