

Real action on climate change

Climate change is the greatest challenge facing the world. If we do not urgently reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases, warming will disrupt the climates our agriculture and other industries depend upon, sea-level rise will affect our coastal cities, and ocean acidification will affect the marine food chain.

We have built our infrastructure, our society, and our farming practices around a certain set of climatic conditions. Abrupt change would carry with it huge costs.

The cost of doing nothing is far higher than the cost of mitigating climate change. In fact, many of the actions that reduce climate pollution also have other positive impacts and create jobs.

New Zealand must do its part, along with the rest of the world, in reducing climate pollution. It is not good enough to say we are too small to matter – most countries individually could claim the same. We must take our share in the effort however small, just as we did when dealing with CFCs, or opposing apartheid, or fighting fascism. Kiwis are not shirkers.

New Zealand's net emissions have risen 64% since 1990 and 21% since 2008. In 2013, National promised to reduce emissions to 5% below 1990 levels by 2020 but, with no actual plan to achieve that, emissions have continued to rise. Making pledges for emissions reductions is not enough. There needs to be meaningful policy to back it up.

▶ Labour will:

- **set a target of net zero for greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 compared to 1990 levels, with legally binding emissions reduction targets, and carbon budgets to keep New Zealand on track to this goal**
 - **establish an independent Climate Commission to recommend interim emissions reduction targets and provide advice on the ramifications of not achieving them**
 - **encourage young people to take part in the effort to end our climate pollution through a Youth Climate Change Challenge**
 - **show government leadership by requiring state-owned enterprises and other government organisations to actively pursue low-carbon options and technologies including all future purchases of all Government vehicle fleets to be electric vehicles unless there is an exceptional reason otherwise**
 - **restore the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), including bringing agriculture into the ETS by the end of our first term, with 90% of emissions free**
 - **ensure that farmers operating at best practice are recognised so they can be directly credited for emissions reductions they achieve**
 - **support a just transition for workers in industries that need to reduce emissions and the creation of jobs in sectors that are carbon-free or carbon sinks, such as forestry**
 - **establish a Transitions National Science Challenge to consider the science, research and development required for the transition to a low-carbon economy.**
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Let's do this.



Labour will do more than set targets. The Climate Commission will look at what can practically be achieved by each sector and recommend emissions reductions targets. The Government will then set emissions reductions targets in law. The Commission will publish emissions budgets so that business can know what each sector needs to achieve for New Zealand to meet its goals. Government will need to take a leadership role in favouring low-carbon options in its investment and purchasing decisions.

Agriculture is able to do its part in reducing emissions. As our largest source of climate pollution, it is essential that it does.

Over the last decade, agriculture's emissions have been stable, even as the sector has continued to grow. Agriculture's emissions intensity (dollars of GDP per tonne of CO2 equivalent emissions) has improved by 33% since 1990 and 17% since 2008, but progress has stalled recently. Government-backed science has made impressive advances in methods to reduce farm emissions without reducing output.

A gradual introduction of the price signal from the ETS, starting with giving the sector 90% of emissions free, will help bring emissions down without hurting agriculture's contribution to the economy. We will take a farm-level approach where possible so that low-emissions farmers are rewarded with a lower cost through the ETS, rather than the current approach that assumes each cow, for instance, has the same emissions on every farm.

It's important that the next generation is involved in the effort to tackle climate change – they are the ones who will inherit what we leave. Labour's Youth Climate Change Challenge will see children from Year 7 upwards, who want to take part, develop ideas for addressing climate change. The children from around the country who develop the best ideas each year will be invited to meet the Prime Minister to discuss climate change.

With a plan, and with all of New Zealand working together, we can do our part to fight climate change.

Let's do this.

