



Climate Change Policy

Vision

The Green Party envisions an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Government at all levels, iwi, communities, industry, and research institutions are aligned and collaborate in taking urgent, informed and sustained action to decrease and manage the adverse effects of global climate change. Collectively we understand that human-induced climate change represents one of the greatest threats to our living world and - through its impact on the life-supporting capacity of our natural environment, specifically air, water, soil, and ecosystems - future human generations. We recognise that most responses to climate change also generate positive outcomes for environmental well-being and human communities. We act purposefully and responsibly, together and individually, to:

- Rapidly reduce our collective greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration, consistent with the urgency of the situation
- Adapt to the likely adverse social, cultural and environmental effects of climate change, using responsible decision-making to support desirable outcomes.
- Respond to climate change in a way that respects all living organisms, including all people, and provides for a just, equitable and resilient society.
- Lead the international response to climate change by example.

Successful climate change mitigation and adaptation will be achieved by the combined effect of multiple Green Party policies working in conjunction with this one. See our [Agriculture and Rural Affairs](#), [Conservation](#), [Economic](#), [Energy](#), [Environmental Protection](#), [Food](#), [Forestry](#), [Global Affairs](#), [Health](#), [Housing and Sustainable Communities](#), [Mining](#), and [Transport](#) policies.

Key Principles

1. We must act according to the scientific consensus and credible emerging science on climate change, which increasingly demands urgent action to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, and sustained action to safely remove excess greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, in order to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change.

2. Te ao Māori offers us a framework for a sustainable pathway forward. Our response to climate change should be founded upon the tikanga (values) and matauranga (knowledge) of tangata whenua, and must respect and express Te Tiriti o Waitangi to ensure that the effects of climate change and our response to it do not disproportionately impact upon the tangata whenua.
3. We have an obligation to act for the sake of vulnerable people, the wellbeing of current and future generations, the integrity of diverse ecosystems and the retention of a viable biosphere.
4. Because of the extensive lag time in climate effects, we must prepare for climate changes locked in by greenhouse gas emissions to date and act with greater urgency than current conditions would suggest.
5. Global agreements are crucial for concerted global action and we should play a constructive role in achieving, upholding, and implementing a fair, effective, binding and ambitious agreements.
6. We accept our historic and current contribution to global warming through greenhouse gas emissions and the common but differentiated responsibility to reduce emissions it implies, internationally, so that, as a high-emitting nation, we should move further and faster towards a sustainable level of global emissions with broadly equal emissions per person, and support less developed countries to develop sustainably.
7. Social equity and ecological sustainability must be inherent in the way we respond to climate change; we must lead and foster a Just Transition¹.
8. Climate change is a complex problem. A range of mechanisms at all levels is needed to successfully respond to it. These include: legislation and regulations, economic instruments (including emission pricing and public investment), community action, and initiatives by business and other organisations.
9. Management of greenhouse gases should, so far as practicable, recognise that these gases differ in their origin, chemical nature, climate changing effects, persistence and assimilation by natural systems.
10. Our response to climate change should ensure community wellbeing and resilience in the short- and long term, supported by thriving local democracies

¹ A Just Transition is a change which upholds the rights and dignity of all involved, with a focus on equity and justice. It requires a managed approach to employment and community wellbeing in areas that have traditionally relied on unsustainable industries. It involves communities being involved in planning for their own transition, and acknowledges that different people, families, communities, and regions will benefit from different approaches.

and resilient economies so as to minimise the impacts of climate change and our response to it on low income and other vulnerable sectors of society.

11. Transparency, credibility, education and participation are essential if all stakeholders are to accept and trust the policy framework and change their behaviour as a result.

Specific Policy Points

1. Targets and Agreements

A. Domestic

Policy Positions

- 1.1. Establish a clear strategy, action plan and carbon budget for a rapid transition to a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy, in line with keeping the average global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- 1.2. Take steps to rapidly achieve a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy in Aotearoa New Zealand in line with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees over pre-industrial levels, ensuring a long-term balance of its greenhouse gas emissions and its carbon sequestration.
- 1.3. Regularly review national interim timeframes and targets for achieving domestic greenhouse gas emission reductions, to ensure that New Zealand commits to deep, early reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Early reductions have a greater long-term net benefit to our environment, society and economy.
- 1.4. Regularly review Aotearoa New Zealand's progress towards these national targets at least every two years in order to keep up with the latest developments in our greenhouse gas emission profile, climate science and technology.
- 1.5. Work with local Government and economic sectors to encourage and support them to set targets in line with this policy and monitor progress toward them.

B. International

As a colonised nation grappling with realising indigenous rights and as a nation with opportunities created by its industrialised economy, Aotearoa New Zealand must use its influence and experiences to press for effective implementation of international agreements that aim to stabilise the global climate at a safe level and increasing the participation of and respect for indigenous people in international fora.

Policy Positions

- 1.6. Work with all countries to uphold, implement, and strengthen the UN bodies relating to climate change and the Paris Agreement, and support other international agreements that effectively achieve net zero emissions globally and are in line with this Climate Change Policy.
- 1.7. Ensure that the principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibility, and ecological sustainability are reflected in international climate change agreements, and that there are mechanisms to ensure compliance with commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within a Just Transition framework.
- 1.8. Seek to accelerate the international phase out of fossil fuels and an immediate end to fossil fuel subsidies, and support developing countries to move quickly to a low or zero emissions economy.
- 1.9. Ensure that international agreements for forests and other forms of carbon sequestration have ecological integrity and sound accounting rules.
- 1.10. Ensure that all our international trade agreements enable countries, including Aotearoa New Zealand, to implement low emission economic policies and practices, allowing, for example, a carbon tax on energy intensive imports from countries which have not set binding targets for reducing their greenhouse gas emissions in line with keeping the average global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- 1.11. Work with other countries, particularly those that are home to the world's remaining indigenous forests, to develop and support initiatives that protect the forests' ecological integrity and the rights of indigenous and forest-dependent peoples.
- 1.12. Advocate for binding international commitments that will allow vulnerable countries, particularly Pacific Island countries, to protect their peoples, cultures and biodiversity.

See also our [Global Affairs](#) Policy.

2. Reducing our Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Our nation as a whole must undertake a Just Transition to a net-zero emissions economy. This means all sectors whose activities contribute to greenhouse gas emissions must make changes to bring emissions down to sustainable levels, taking account of offsetting capacity.

Legislation and regulation, direct investment by central and local Government alongside strategic partnering, public education and community action, and initiatives by both business and organisations will deliver reduced emissions. Direct

investment by government (such as in afforestation on state land or public transport), regulation, support for research and development and public education are often important demonstrations of leadership and provide direct and powerful ways to reduce emissions to complement pricing mechanisms.

Policy Positions

- 2.1. **Research, Development and Innovation:** Partner with businesses and other organisations, invest in Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) for production methods and mitigation technologies to enable a successful greenhouse gas emissions reduction and sequestration programme, with an immediate focus on transport, industrial energy use, food and natural fibre systems and forest management (see our [Transport](#), [Energy](#), [Agriculture and Rural Affairs](#) and [Forestry](#) policies).
- 2.2. **Energy:** Ensure that all energy is used much more efficiently, phase out fossil fuels and develop new renewables (see our [Energy](#) policy). Take a whole of system approach to our energy usage, recognising the role of electrification and other emerging technologies in, for example, reducing transport greenhouse gas emissions, and recognising the increasing importance of energy resilience for our communities.
- 2.3. **Transport:** Reduce Aotearoa New Zealand's reliance on fossil fuelled vehicles by prioritising investment in active transport, public transport, and electric rail for both passenger and freight, as well as incentivising the electrification of the light vehicle fleet. For transport that cannot currently be electrified, such as domestic flights and shipping, support research and development to assist the development of alternatives (see our [Transport](#) policy).
- 2.4. **Agriculture:** Immediately begin a phase-in of greenhouse gas emission pricing for agriculture, along with suitable support for a Just Transition for affected communities. There are cost-effective ways to reduce agricultural emissions, many of which also boost on-farm productivity, biodiversity and resilience and reduce other forms of pollution (see our [Agriculture and Rural Affairs](#) policy).
- 2.5. **Forestry:** Reverse net deforestation trends and provide incentives for resilient afforestation and sound management of our indigenous forests, including through payments or tax credits for certified carbon sequestration, more support for the expansion of permanent forests, and improved pest control in indigenous forests (see our [Forestry](#) policy).
- 2.6. **The Wider Economy:** Ensure the transformation to a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy for Aotearoa New Zealand while building diverse,

resilient local economies, promoting business innovation and clean technology opportunities, re-building our international reputation for safe and environmentally sound products, and creating green jobs (see our [Economic](#) policy).

- 2.7. Legal Environmental Framework: Require the reduction of emissions by appropriate amendments to the Resource Management Act, the production of a National Policy Statement on greenhouse gases, and of regulations suited to the purposes of the Act and the Policy Statement (see our [Environmental Protection](#) policy).

3. Emissions Price

An economic instrument that puts a price on greenhouse gas emissions is needed to incentivise an economic transformation to a net-zero emission economy.

Policy Positions

- 3.1. Ensure the release of greenhouse gas emissions faces a price which, together with complementary measures, aims to deliver the level of emission reduction necessary to achieve the targets and timeframes set out in this policy and is:
 - a) Effective: Comprehensive, sufficient to drive immediate, significant emissions reduction and innovation and matched with national emissions budgets to ensure scaling down of emissions to sustainable levels and to keep building the momentum for change.
 - b) Transparent: clearly signals that all polluting sectors will, within a short, set time, pay for the environmental and societal impacts of their emissions
 - c) Responsible: Takes into account Aotearoa New Zealand's international responsibilities and obligations, the Crown's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its responsibility for the current and future wellbeing of all its people and natural environment, and be designed so as to manage short- and long-term fiscal risk to the Crown in a responsible manner.
 - d) Credible: Designed and tested using economic and scientific modelling.
 - e) Fair: Developed in partnership with tangata whenua and in consultation with communities and Local Government, to ensure it does not disproportionately impact upon Māori economic, environmental and cultural interests or communities, or the vulnerable communities and regions of Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 3.2. Improve the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to ensure this drives a reduction in emissions, while urgently working towards the replacement of the ETS with an effective emissions levy.
- 3.3. Establish the following features to complement emissions pricing, and ensure the overall approach will reduce emissions as quickly as needed:
 - a) A carbon budget to drive decisions on climate policy, with annual capped emissions budgets. These emissions budgets should, at a minimum, represent Aotearoa New Zealand's fair share of the global emissions reductions needed to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, and, moreover, should show international leadership in recognition of Aotearoa New Zealand's common but differentiated responsibility to mitigate this global problem.
 - b) A priority on government regulation, investment and programmes that will support and enhance the price signals described above.
 - c) An independent Climate Commission to advise Central and Local Government that respects and expresses Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
 - d) A transparent Climate Fund to manage the revenue from the economic instrument and report back to the public.
 - e) A Just Transition fund to protect vulnerable regions, businesses, workers and households to enable them to adjust during a transition period.
 - f) An outreach and education programme to raise awareness and enable producers and consumers to make low-emission choices.
 - g) A study of potential Border Tax Adjustments to equalise emission costs for foreign and domestically-produced products.
- 3.4. Ensure that appropriately calculated credit payments will be available for greenhouse gas sequestration, for example by afforestation.
- 3.5. Recycle emission revenues through equitable distribution to New Zealanders, and through funding emission abatement.

4. Adaptation

Adaptation to our changing climate will be essential for the wellbeing and survival of vulnerable communities, ecosystems and species. While central government action is key to our international engagement and overall policy development, the Green Party recognises that iwi, Local Government, communities, civil society and business will be key partners in co-creating and implementing adaptation strategies.

A. Social Adaptation

Policy Positions

Government leadership, inclusive policy processes and support for the vulnerable is essential to adapt our society to a changing climate. The Green Party recognises the importance of social responsibility as a crucial principle in adaptation strategies.

- 4.1. Assist low income and other vulnerable sectors of society to adjust to the resulting changes in the economy by a range of measures, including energy efficiency, transport affordability and improvements in local authority planning systems (see our [Energy](#), [Transport](#), [Housing and Sustainable Communities](#), [Local Government](#), [Food](#) and [Health](#) policies).
- 4.2. Work in partnership with iwi to respond to the specific impacts on Māori communities that rely on fisheries, shellfish and forests for food, employment and tikanga practice.
- 4.3. Provide guidance to local authorities to identify the threats to vulnerable people and communities, and develop inclusive plans to avoid social harm.

B. Environmental Adaptation

Climate change threatens the survival of many species and ecosystems.

Policy Positions

- 4.4. Fund research on the impacts of climate change on land, freshwater and marine ecosystems.
- 4.5. Create, resource and implement strategies to protect ecosystems and promote the survival of all species and ecosystems in Aotearoa New Zealand (see our [Conservation](#) Policy).
- 4.6. Support mechanisms, such as the protection and restoration of ecological corridors, to maintain and enhance the ability of indigenous species to respond or adapt to climate change.
- 4.7. Research impacts on primary production arising from emissions and climate change effects such as rainfall, pest abundance and ocean acidification.
- 4.8. Provide guidance to local authorities and vulnerable industries, such as primary industries, to plan long-term adaptation to sea level rises and other predicted changes in climate, such as drought and floods.
- 4.9. Ensure that DoC and other Crown assets are managed in a manner that supports ecosystem and species adaptation.

- 4.10. Apply the precautionary principle and rigorous analysis to any plan to apply geo-engineering or other technologies to combat climate change.

C. Economic Adaptation and a Just Transition

There are many sectors of society that will be affected economically as Aotearoa New Zealand moves to a net-zero emissions economy. It is essential that government takes a planned and active approach to facilitating a Just Transition. The Green Party recognises the interdependency of people and planet, and the need to live within the limits of our natural world and to ensure equitable sharing of resources.

Policy Positions

- 4.11. Create a high-level process, involving government, iwi, and industry sector and regional representatives to investigate and make recommendations on how to manage the transition to a net-zero emission economy and the adverse economic impacts of climate change.
- 4.12. Enable and support a shift in the economies of communities dependent on fossil fuel extraction and use towards sustainable alternatives (see our [Mining Policy](#) and [Energy Policy](#)).
- 4.13. Create a contestable fund for local government and community group adaptation projects.
- 4.14. Ensure affected communities and working people are involved in decision-making regarding economic adaptation.
- 4.15. Work with employers and unions to ensure adequate retraining, reskilling and redeployment opportunities are available for people who work in high-emissions industries (see our [Economic Policy](#)).

D. International Adaptation

Poor and vulnerable communities around the world are already suffering the impacts of climate change, especially indigenous peoples, those living in low lying areas and our Pacific neighbours.

Policy Positions

- 4.16. Provide funding support, and enable the mobilisation of financing from a variety of sources, for climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries, towards meeting the international community's global climate finance commitment of US\$100 billion per year by 2020.
- 4.17. Actively support Pacific nations to adapt to climate change as requested by the Pacific (see our [Global Affairs Policy](#)).
- 4.18. Support Pacific nations' proposals for loss and damage compensation.

- 4.19. Build international support for urgent action to prevent even worse impacts to some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities and environments.
- 4.20. Actively support Pacific states' advocacy on climate change internationally and, in particular, on raising security issues related to the future survival of low lying island states in the UN Security Council.