



Environment and Climate Change

All New Zealanders have a responsibility to protect and care for our environment.

A pristine natural environment is one of New Zealand's defining features, and also one of our most valuable strategic assets. National knows that New Zealanders want a cleaner and greener future and will make this an important part of our economic recovery. We will take a balanced and pragmatic approach to caring for and protecting our environment, so that all New Zealanders can continue to enjoy it. We will also make sure New Zealand plays its part in the long-term global effort to reduce the impacts of climate change.

National is the party of practical environmentalism. Our Bluegreen approach takes a long-term view that by making smart, strategic decisions today, we can leave our environment in a healthier state for future generations.

Policy highlights

National will:

- Introduce a range of policies to incentivise the uptake of electric vehicles, with a target of 80,000 on our roads by 2023 – four times the current level.
- Take a pragmatic approach to meeting our international climate change commitments, and continue to incentivise decarbonisation through the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).
- Repeal the Resource Management Act (RMA) in our first term and replace it with new legislation, including an Environmental Standards Act that sets clear environmental bottom lines.
- Commit \$5 million over three years to work with schools and community groups to help clean up our beaches.
- Begin work to establish two new National Parks – one on the Coromandel Peninsula and one in the Catlins, and build two new Great Walks.

- Provide an additional \$15 million over four years to DoC for predator-free ecological sanctuaries and other programmes to enable them to continue to protect plant and animal species and support species re-introduction and breeding programmes through the disruption caused by Covid-19.

Electric vehicles

National believes the future of transport in New Zealand will be zero emissions. New Zealanders use private motor vehicles for 95 per cent of their land transport needs and we drive an average of 29 kilometres a day. Reducing emissions doesn't mean stopping cars; our zero emissions future will be one where we use cars to get to work, visit our family and take our kids to sports games, but these cars will be emissions-free.

Transport emissions are the largest driver of increasing greenhouse gas emissions in New Zealand, having doubled since 1990. We can reduce our transport emissions right now through the electrification of our fleet.

National believes that future technology development will increasingly make electric vehicles (EVs) the natural choice for many Kiwis.

National will:

- Exempt EVs from fringe benefit tax until 2025 to encourage fleet uptake.
- Exempt EVs from Road User Charges until at least 2023.
- Allow EVs to use bus lanes and high-occupancy lanes to incentivise consumers by shortening commute times and increasing driver benefits.
- Introduce an EV licence plate for ease of identification.
- Target a third of the government light vehicle fleet to be EV by 2023.
- Set a target of 80,000 EVs on our roads by 2023 – four times the current level.



Climate change

National is committed to tackling climate change in a measured and responsible way that achieves the commitments we've made internationally and in the Zero Carbon Act. We believe in using new technology to reduce our emissions – a key pillar of our Bluegreen approach, drawing on smart solutions and incentives rather than taxes and bans on key industries.

Focusing on pricing before being able to access reliable technological advances is only a rational approach if other countries follow suit. The agricultural sector has developed a programme to reduce agricultural emissions and potentially price agricultural emissions from 2025 called He Waka Eke Noa. National will continue to work with the He Waka Eke Noa framework, but would only introduce agricultural emissions into the ETS if farmers have technological solutions available to reduce emissions, and our trading partners are taking similar action.

New Zealand's response to meeting carbon reduction targets must be based on science rather than ideology. We can play our part by focusing on long-term, stable incentives – rather than short-term punitive directives that create economic pain and job losses for New Zealand, without actually making a difference or impacting long term global temperatures.

National will:

- Be guided by advice received from the independent Climate Change Commission, including the emissions reduction plan scheduled to be released in 2021.
- Continue to use the Emissions Trading Scheme to incentivise decarbonisation of the economy over time.
- Continue to work with the agricultural sector through the He Waka Eke Noa framework, and remove the review process around introducing agriculture into the ETS.

Q. What is National's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

A. National supported the passing of the Zero Carbon Act. The key elements of this Act were to establish an independent Climate Change Commission, emissions reduction targets for 2050 and a "carbon budget" approach. A carbon budget approach sets the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that can occur in the economy in any one year and uses this budget to inform the amount of emissions units available in the emissions trading scheme.

The Zero Carbon Act also set the Climate Change Commission the task of developing an emissions reduction plan for the period 2022 – 2035. This plan is due for completion in 2021.

National supports this framework and is committed to it. This framework forms the basis of a bipartisan plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It relies on the independent Climate Change Commission to provide guidance on the policy we implement and how we reduce our emissions. The framework puts the emissions trading scheme at the centre of our national response.

One of the first inquiries the Climate Change Commission undertook was consideration of a 100 per cent target for renewable electricity. The inquiry found it was better to take a broad approach, aiming to increase the use of renewables across industry, transport and electricity, rather than to focus only on electricity. The inquiry noted New Zealand was likely to achieve 95 per cent renewable electricity generation under the policy settings National put in place, but achieving a 100 per cent renewable target would be incredibly expensive.

National listened to this independent advice while ironically Labour has ignored it. Labour is being driven by politics and ideology rather than the independent Climate Change Commission.



Zero Carbon Act

The Zero Carbon Act established a Climate Change Commission, new climate change targets for 2050, and a 'carbon budget' approach that would limit the amount of greenhouse gas emissions able to occur in the New Zealand economy. The new climate change targets are to achieve net zero long-lived greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and

a 24 to 47 per cent decrease in short-lived methane emissions. National supported the Zero Carbon Act but stated we would make the following changes to the legislation when in Government:

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| <p>Biogenic methane target</p> | <p>The 24 to 47 per cent biogenic methane target is not grounded in robust science. While the figure does come from a UN report, the report stated that the figures "do not represent central estimates, national strategies, and do not indicate requirements."</p> <p>We would immediately ask the Climate Change Commission to review the methane target.</p> |
| <p>Include reference to greenhouse gas mitigation not threatening food production</p> | <p>The legislation quotes the aim of the Paris Agreement including the aim of limiting temperature increases to 1.5°C.</p> <p>The Paris Agreement also aims to achieve low greenhouse gas development "in a manner that does not threaten food production." This part is omitted from the legislation. National would insert this key Paris Agreement element into our climate change legislation.</p> |
| <p>Review the use of forestry offsets</p> | <p>National would require an immediate review of the level of forestry offsets able to be used to achieve climate change targets.</p> |
| <p>Strengthen provisions that consider the level of action being taken by other countries</p> | <p>National has concerns that the Act locks in New Zealand's level of action for 30 years without an ability to adjust our targets to what is occurring in the rest of the world.</p> <p>National would amend the legislation to require the Climate Change Commission to review the level of action taken by other countries and advise if New Zealand's action remained in line with our developed countries.</p> |
| <p>Strengthen the consideration of economic impacts of greenhouse gas mitigation</p> | <p>National would amend the way carbon budgets are set to provide greater consideration of the economic impact of a restrictive carbon budget.</p> |
| <p>Separate emissions budgets for biogenic methane</p> | <p>The Zero Carbon Act established separate targets for long-lived carbon dioxide and short-lived methane emissions. The carbon budgets in the bill would however be a single budget for all gases.</p> <p>National would ensure biogenic methane is not included in a single carbon budget.</p> |
| <p>Greater commitment to research and development</p> | <p>National believes that technology will be the key to achieving future emissions reductions – not taxes and banning things. We want to see a greater emphasis in the legislation on supporting new technologies and investment in research and development.</p> |



Forestry offsets

Forestry is an important part of New Zealand's economy, bringing \$5 billion in export earnings into our economy each year – roughly the same amount as international education in 2019.

Forestry has an important role to play in achieving our net-zero 2050 climate change target, but we need to be careful that our policies encourage a range of emissions-reducing activities.

Modelling by the Climate Change Commission indicates that, under current policy settings, 80 per cent of our 2050 target could be met by forestry rather than reduced use of fossil fuels. Such a reliance may jeopardise efforts to encourage innovation and uptake of new renewable technology by our industrial, transport and electricity sectors. Too great a reliance on forestry may also reduce rural employment.

National believes current policy settings need to be reviewed to ensure that our rules around carbon offsets are fit-for-purpose, and driving a reduction in emissions through improved performance, rather than distorting land-use decisions too heavily towards conversion of productive land to forestry purely for carbon credits.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has recommended taking forestry out of the ETS and establishing a separate sustainable land use scheme. National is interested in exploring this idea.

National will:

- Review the treatment of forestry in the ETS in our first term.
- Remove the streamlined process for forestry applications in the Overseas Investment Office test.
- Request the Climate Change Commission to recommend an appropriate long-term treatment of forestry in working towards our 2050 zero carbon target.

Energy

Affordable and secure energy underpins New Zealand's economy. National believes competitive and well-regulated energy markets support households and the transition to a low-emissions economy.

National signed New Zealand up to the Paris Agreement. In Government, National increased renewable electricity production from 65 to 85 per cent of supply. We have and will continue to be committed to reducing New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions.

National believes that greenhouse gas policy needs to be fuel neutral, unlike the current Government who have banned offshore oil and gas exploration. The Government should regulate greenhouse gas emissions, through mechanisms like the Emissions Trading Scheme, rather than regulating individual fuels and fuel usage.

We believe it is critical that New Zealand is open to all technologies that support a transition to a net-zero emissions economy. Technologies like carbon capture and storage will be critical to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from processes such as steel and concrete manufacture.

National will:

- Take a fuel neutral approach to government policy, while focusing on reducing all energy emissions.
- Reverse the ideological ban on oil and gas exploration which will result in New Zealand importing dirtier fuel and exporting jobs.
- Allow carbon capture and storage to be recognised in the Emissions Trading Scheme.

Protecting our flora and fauna

Dedicated work from DoC and the wider community has seen many of our native species brought back from the brink of extinction. Over the last 25 years, we have established numerous predator-free areas, from small islands to large-scale enclosed areas of many thousands of hectares.



Many of these sanctuaries are now thriving with abundant bird and animal life, many of which are open to the public to enjoy. Building on this, the previous National Government announced the Predator Free 2050 initiative – an audacious goal to eradicate predators from our country that just a decade earlier most would have said was a pipe dream.

We invested millions in new traps, poisons and lures and in our next term, we will continue this vital work to ensure our threatened native species are once again able to thrive.

National will:

- Re-affirm our commitment to a Predator Free New Zealand by 2050, and fully resource efforts to keep us on track towards this goal.
- Provide an additional \$15 million over four years to DoC for predator-free ecological sanctuaries and other breeding programmes to enable them to continue to protect plant and animal species and support species re-introduction and breeding programmes through the disruption caused by Covid-19.
- Recommence work to develop new biotechnology tools and techniques to help reduce the impact of pests and predators on our native species.
- Recognise iwi have concerns and work with them to progress the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary, while exploring options for the establishment of new marine reserves.
- Commit to the control of Kauri dieback disease, including through further investments in track and facility upgrades where needed to prevent its spread.

Clean up NZ's beaches

National wants to work with schools and community groups to clean up New Zealand's beaches. Tidying up our beaches, rivers, lakes and forests is expensive work, and is currently done almost entirely by volunteers. We will commit \$5 million over three years to work with schools and community groups to help clean up our environment. This fund will give local groups the ability to manage and

purchase services needed to aid in clean-ups. The National Party believes in sensible, evidence-based environmentalism and it is practical policies like this that gets results. We will partner with Keep NZ Beautiful and assist organisations like Sea Cleaners to help fund the planning, tools and gear required to make team clean-ups easy, effective and fun.

National will:

- Commit \$5 million over three years to work with schools and community groups to help clean up our beaches.

Access to our outdoor environment

As New Zealanders, we are all rightfully proud of our pristine natural environment. National will ensure that all Kiwis continue to enjoy access to our great outdoors, and we will prioritise upgrading and expanding our walking tracks, huts and camp grounds. National will also work to expand the opportunities available for New Zealanders to enjoy our own backyard, by building new Great Walks and expanding our National Park network.

National will:

- Guarantee freedom of entry to all public conservation land, and ensure that DoC huts, walking tracks and camping grounds are maintained to a high standard.
- Begin work to establish two new National Parks – one on the Coromandel Peninsula and one in the Catlins.
- Build two new Great Walks, including one along the Kaimai Range from Mt Te Aroha to SH29.

National supports a strong, sensible approach to conservation. We want a conservation system that is capable of managing the many competing demands for land use in New Zealand and can make sensible, pragmatic decisions about the long-term conservation of our natural resources, the promotion of biodiversity and the protection of our native flora and fauna. A National Government will continue to support the outstanding



work carried out by the Department of Conservation (DoC) and will work to ensure the system is functioning as efficiently and effectively as it can to benefit all New Zealanders.

National will:

- Ensure DoC remains focused on its core conservation functions of land management, pest and predator control, and the promotion of biodiversity.
- Amend the National Park management plans to allow for more recreational and commercial activities where these deliver a net conservation gain.
- Provide an opportunity for limited grazing on Crown pastoral lease land that has been through tenure review, provided there is a net conservation benefit from that activity and a net financial benefit to the Crown.

The Resource Management Act

The Resource Management Act (RMA) manages physical resources such as water and air, and human resources like amenity, heritage and character. There is now widespread consensus that the RMA is failing to deliver the environmental, social, economic and cultural outcomes that New Zealanders want. It has grown to become complex, incoherent, inaccessible and expensive. National believes we need separate frameworks for the physical and human environment. Legislation for the physical environment needs to set clear rules and environmental bottom-lines. Rules should ensure we avoid environmental harm by regulating activities like discharges to water and air.

National will:

- Repeal the RMA and replace it with an Environmental Standards Act that establishes environmental bottom lines, along with a Planning and Development Act to govern the human environment.

Biosecurity

Our geographic isolation affords us many natural advantages, but that must be supported by a continued vigilance to ensure we maintain our unique environment. National will invest in strong border protection, and improve responses to biosecurity incursions. When exotic pests and diseases do arrive in New Zealand, it's vital that the response to those incursions ensures they are rapidly eliminated.

National will:

- Give biosecurity officials the same powers as immigration officials to deport any visitor if they have knowingly concealed biosecurity risk items.
- Ensure that importers are liable for knowingly signing false documents (including import health statements) that involve biosecurity risk material.
- Increase potential infringement fines from \$400 per person to \$1000 if a passenger has brought in a biosecurity risk item.

Water quality

National has had a long commitment to improving the quality of our waterways – both in urban and rural areas. We will work with local authorities around the country to develop better water infrastructure and continue to lift the quality of our urban waterways. Similarly, we will work with farmers, industry organisations, regional councils and other interested parties to set appropriate freshwater rules for farming that balance environmental concerns with the viability of our primary sector.

National will:

- Implement a regional approach to freshwater regulations, giving different parts of the country some autonomy in setting appropriate and workable rules.
- Continue to develop freshwater rules for farming that balance environmental concerns with viability of the sector.



- Invest in drinking water infrastructure to deliver better quality drinking water to our towns and cities, and improve urban resilience.

Water storage

Water storage can improve environmental outcomes by improving summer river flows and reducing the impacts of drought on freshwater ecosystems (water is captured during times of high rainfall and released during dry periods).

In many regions around New Zealand, water storage will enable higher value and lower emission land use choices. Water storage can also ensure strong environmental processes are followed by those using the water. As a condition of accessing the water, farmers and growers can be required to undertake comprehensive farm environment planning, tailored to the environmental risks of that farm and the surrounding area or catchment.

For the farmers and growers, the overall benefit of access to water far outweighs the additional cost of meeting the higher environmental standards that are a requirement of receiving the water. This can make water storage a win-win, allowing farmers and growers to capture productivity gains, while improving environmental outcomes, and would be required under our proposed National Policy Statement for Water Storage.

National will:

- Instruct our proposed National Infrastructure Bank to develop a long term plan for water infrastructure and storage, and provide it with \$600 million for investments over three years.
 - Develop a National Policy Statement on Water Storage to provide certainty around the strategic use of water, streamline consenting for these projects, and set minimum environmental standards to manage the effects of new irrigation development from new storage projects.
- Encourage innovative pricing structures that incentivise the adoption of smart water technologies that reduce unnecessary use.
 - Amend the RMA in the short-term to enable investment in water storage, and ensure that the legislation replacing the RMA facilitates investment in water infrastructure over the long-term.
 - Reduce red-tape restrictions that limit the ability to store water in urban areas, to increase resilience during low-rainfall years.