

3 May 2020

Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance
Hon James Shaw, Associate Minister of Finance
Hon Shane Jones, Associate Minister of Finance

Dear Ministers,

Re: 2020 Budget

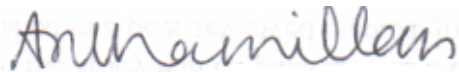
We would like to acknowledge your use of our country's finances to support the wellbeing of everyday New Zealanders in this time of crisis. As you prepare the 2020 budget, we urge you to prioritise funding for a just transition to a climate-resilient, sustainable and low-emissions economy.

In the past few weeks New Zealanders have shown their commitment to protecting public health by staying home to keep each other safe. Both the government and the public have recognised the importance of public health expertise and acted on that advice. Public health advice for many years has been that climate change is a growing major health threat, even while we face the COVID-19 pandemic. In Aotearoa, climate change is already amplifying patterns of infectious disease; causing deaths from heat waves, increasing the risk of water borne illnesses and threatening food security through drought. The loss of livelihoods from farming and fishing are significantly impacting New Zealand. Climate change, like COVID-19, disproportionately impacts Māori; low-income households; Pacific peoples; people with disabilities including chronic illness; and gender and sexual minorities. The pandemic has also shown us the importance of integrated planning across government sectors covering health, social wellbeing, the economy, and the built and natural environment.

In keeping with public health advice, the Government must recognise climate change as an urgent public health threat and our lack of resilience to it. We now have the opportunity to reshape an integrated, wellbeing-focused economy, enabling investment to do triple duty by equitably supporting economic wellbeing, addressing climate change, and improving people's health. Investments in healthy, zero emissions transport, housing, energy and food systems that centre the rights of marginalised communities will achieve benefits for wellbeing and address the underlying drivers of injustice.

In Appendix 1, we have identified specific actions that the Government could take to demonstrate its commitment to social justice and reversing the impacts of climate change.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Alexandra Macmillan, Co-convenor,
OraTaiao: NZ Climate and Health Council**



**Dr Felicity Dumble, President,
New Zealand College of Public Health
Medicine**



**Dr Jeff Brown, Aotearoa NZ President of
the Royal Australasian College of Physicians**



**Dr Nicola Hill, Chair,
New Zealand National Board of the Royal
Australasian College of Surgeons**



**Dr Kate Baddock, Chair,
New Zealand Medical Association
Te Hauora mō ngā iwi Katoa**



**Dr Samantha Murton, President,
The Royal New Zealand College of General
Practitioners, Te Whare Tohu Rata o Aotearoa**



**The Royal New Zealand
College of General Practitioners
Te Whare Tohu Rata o Aotearoa**



**Dr Kathryn Hagen, President,
New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists**



**Selah Hart, Chief Executive Officer,
Hāpai Te Hauora, Māori Public Health**





**Sione Tu'itahi, Executive Director,
Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand
Runanga Whakapiki Ake I Te Hauora o
Aotearoa**




**Runanga Whakapiki Ake i te Hauora o Aotearoa
Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand**



**Professor Jenny Carryer, Executive Director,
College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc**



**Dr John Fitzgerald, President,
New Zealand Psychological Society
Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa**



**Dr Prudence Stone, Chief Executive Officer,
Public Health Association of New Zealand
Kāhui Hauora Tūmatanui**



**Alison Eddy, Chief Executive,
New Zealand College of Midwives
Te Kāreti o ngā Kaiwhakawhānau ki Aotearoa**



**Kerri Nuku, Kaiwhakahaere,
New Zealand Nurses Organisation**



**Dr Rhys Jones on behalf of the leadership team of
Te Rōpū Whakakaupapa Urutā,
National Māori Pandemic Group**



Appendix 1: Evidence-based public health recommendations on post-COVID recovery for people, prosperity and planet

A government stimulus package must:

1. **Comply with the Articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi**
2. **Address our responsibility to mitigate and adapt to climate change**
3. **Enhance health and wellbeing**
4. **End social and health inequities, prioritising structurally oppressed communities**
5. **Improve economic resilience**

Further, projects should be excluded from investment if they will increase greenhouse gas emissions, or worsen health and social inequities

We provide some specific examples of investment that do triple duty by equitably improving economic wellbeing, meeting our obligations to address climate change, and improving people's health. These suggestions have been tested previously, including in New Zealand, through real projects or in research, and have demonstrated win-win outcomes for people, prosperity and the planet.

Housing and buildings

- Government buy-back of private rental houses as they come on the market
- Major investment in new zero carbon, healthy, accessible social housing
- Complete the retrofitting of insulation and clean heating in existing housing stock
- Improve the energy efficiency of public buildings

Energy

- Invest in small- and large-scale renewable energy projects that enhance community resilience and energy equity, while eliminating fuel poverty
- Re-deploy savings from ending overt and hidden subsidies and financial support for fossil fuel exploration and extraction

Transport and urban planning

- Massive development of tactical and permanent infrastructure to make travel by walking, wheelchair use, biking, scooting and skating safe, convenient, inclusive and accessible for all
- Major investment in intercity electric rail
- Turn public transport into a free or very low cost, fully accessible and electrify it

Rural investment

- Support a just transition towards a climate resilient, healthy, plant-based food production system
- Subsidise zero carbon access to goods, services, education, health and employment

- Provide the financial resources to local government needed to implement *Action for Healthy Waterways*
- Invest in job creation via pest eradication, and native forest, wetland and riparian restoration

Health

- Make a significant investment in strengthening Public Health
- Equitably fund Māori-led health initiatives and services
- Invest to make health infrastructure and procurement zero emissions and resilient to climate shocks

Economic Resilience

- More committedly shift the goals and measures of the economy to wellbeing for people and planet
- Strengthen social safety nets in keeping with the recommendations of the Welfare Working Group
- End economic subsidies and investments in risky fossil fuel exploration and exploitation