

Committee Secretariat

Finance and Expenditure Committee

Parliament Buildings

Wellington

27/01/2022

Re: Budget Policy Statement 2022

Dear Committee Members,

OraTaiao: NZ Climate and Health Council wishes to provide feedback on the Budget Policy Statement 2022.

We acknowledge and support the “overarching goals” of the Budget Policy Statement, namely

- continuing to keep Aotearoa safe from COVID-19
- accelerating the recovery and rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19 and
- laying the foundations for the future, including addressing key issues such as our climate change response, housing affordability and child poverty

OraTaiao recognises that recovery from COVID-19 is crucial. However, as health professionals, we recommend that the focus of the 2022 Budget (and subsequent Budgets) have Aotearoa’s response to climate change as **the** main point. We also note this is the fourth Wellbeing Budget overseen by a Labour-led government and , there is a stark gap between the expressed aims of the government and results to date.. This period has been characterised by insufficient investment and action to transition to a climate-resilient, sustainable and low-emissions economy. New Zealand’s per capita greenhouse gas emissions are high and increasing, while those of other OECD countries are being reduced.

Insufficient investment and action to date means **Aotearoa’s climate change response** must be the overriding element in all Government Budgets for the foreseeable future.

We would like to make the following comments and recommendations:

1: We support the two “policy areas of focus” (“embedding health reforms” and “addressing climate change”). The order in which they are presented should be reversed, **in order to highlight their relative importance, with climate change being the significantly greater concern..**

2: We strongly support the establishment of a Climate Emergency Response Fund and the ring-fencing of funds therein to “support our transition to a low-emissions and climate resilient economy in a way that protects vulnerable communities”. However, we consider the framing of the outcomes of the CERF to be inadequate and recommend that the fund be ring-fenced solely for projects that

**deliver demonstrable and significant reductions in emissions, put Te Tiriti o Waitangi at their centre, and significantly improve the position of vulnerable communities and the health of New Zealanders (as distinct from simply “protect”).**

3: We acknowledge the ongoing progress in reform of our health sector, and are conscious that this is a **once-in-a-generation opportunity to embed decarbonisation within the health sector** (responsible for approximately 4% of Aotearoa’s climate emissions). Funds must be earmarked and clearly protected for the development of a **dedicated Sustainability Unit working together with and within the Māori Health Authority and Health New Zealand**. A similar unit has overseen rapid decarbonisation and sustainability improvements in NHS England for relatively little cost. We recommend joining other countries in adopting and supporting the [WHO COP26 Health Programme](#). Further details are available in our submission on the [Pae Ora \(Healthy Futures\) Bill](#).

4: We are conscious that this Budget will be an important one for the adoption of Aotearoa’s Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP). Our recent [submission](#) on this outlines its inadequacies and our insufficient planned response. The Budget must be used to drive a more ambitious ERP, with particular stress on low-hanging fruit and the areas where the ERP is particularly deficient. **Examples include more rapid phasing out of coal-mining and coal-use, immediate transitioning away from coal-boilers in public-sector buildings, and a rapid increase in provision of well-designed walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure.** Reductions in agricultural emissions are urgently required and **we recommend incorporating agricultural emissions within the ETS immediately with a phase-out of free allocations in both industry and agriculture by 2030**. This will help increase the available CERF funding while simultaneously incentivising emission reduction in our biggest emitting sectors.

5. Finally, OraTaiao urges: (i) fast full funding for behaviour change research and public outreach to scale up the understanding and changes urgently needed for Aotearoa to fairly transition to net zero emissions in the near future; and (ii) recognition that investing in health-based climate protection creates a double dividend of both better health, productivity and health resource use, and avoiding unaffordable costs of average global temperatures rising above the humanly adaptable 1.5 degrees.

Further information on recent overlapping and interlinked government policy areas can be found in our submissions on the [Pae Ora \(Healthy Futures\) Bill](#), the [Emissions Reduction Plan](#) and the [Consultation to our Approach to COP26](#).

Nāku nou, nā

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'COFFEY', with a large, stylized loop above it.

**Dr Dermot Coffey,**

**Co-convenor, OraTaiao: New Zealand Climate & Health Council**

Mobile 021 0267 5452

[Co-convenor@orataiao.org.nz](mailto:Co-convenor@orataiao.org.nz)

[www.orataiao.org.nz](http://www.orataiao.org.nz) | [www.facebook.com/OraTaiao](https://www.facebook.com/OraTaiao) | <https://twitter.com/orataiao>

**OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council** is an organisation calling for urgent, fair, and Tiriti based climate action in Aotearoa; we recognise the important co-benefits to health, well-being and fairness from strong and well-designed mitigative policies. We honour Māori aspirations, are committed to the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, and strive to reduce inequities between Māori and other New Zealanders. We are guided in our practice by the concepts of kaitiakitanga (guardianship), kotahitanga (unity), manaakitanga (caring), and whakatipuranga (future generations). OraTaiao has grown over a decade to more than 700 health professionals concerned with:

- The gains to health, well-being, and fairness that are possible through strong, health-centred climate action.
- The negative impacts of climate change on health, well-being, and fairness.
- Highlighting the impacts of climate change on those who already experience disadvantage or ill-health (i.e., equity impacts).
- Reducing the health sector's contribution to climate change.

As well as individual and organisational members, we are backed by 19 of New Zealand's leading health professional organisations for our Health Professionals Joint Call to Action on Climate Change



and Health (see [https://www.orataiao.org.nz/friends\\_and\\_supporters](https://www.orataiao.org.nz/friends_and_supporters)). This support includes the New Zealand Medical Association, the New Zealand Nurses Organisation and the Public Health Association, plus numerous specialist colleges. Together, these organisations represent tens of thousands of our country's health workforce.

As a member of the Global Climate & Health Alliance, we work with a worldwide movement of health professionals and health organisations focused on the urgent health challenges of climate change - and the health opportunities of climate action. OraTaiao signed the Doha Declaration on Climate, Health and Wellbeing of December 2012, which reflects this international perspective.