

Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration

In 2015, Mayors and Chairs of New Zealand declared an urgent need for responsive leadership and a holistic approach to climate change. We, the Mayors and Chairs of 2017, wholeheartedly support that call for action.

Climate change presents significant opportunities, challenges and risks to communities throughout the world and in New Zealand. Local and regional government undertakes a wide range of activities that will be impacted by climate change and provides infrastructure and services useful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing resilience.

We have come together, as a group of Mayors and Chairs representing local government from across New Zealand to:

1. acknowledge the importance and urgent need to address climate change for the benefit of current and future generations;
2. give our support to the New Zealand Government for developing and implementing, in collaboration with councils, communities and businesses, an ambitious transition plan toward a low carbon and resilient New Zealand;
3. encourage Government to be more ambitious with climate change mitigation measures;
4. outline key commitments our councils will take in responding to the opportunities and risks posed by climate change; and
5. recommend important guiding principles for responding to climate change.

We ask that the New Zealand Government make it a priority to develop and implement an ambitious transition plan for a low carbon and resilient New Zealand. We stress the benefits of early action to moderate the costs of adaptation to our communities. We are all too aware of challenges we face shoring up infrastructure and managing insurance costs. These are serious financial considerations for councils and their communities.

To underpin this plan, we ask that a holistic economic assessment is undertaken of New Zealand's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and of the opportunities and benefits for responding. We believe that New Zealand has much at stake and much to gain by adopting strong leadership on climate change emission reduction targets.

We know that New Zealanders are highly inventive, capable and passionate about the environment. New Zealanders are proud of our green landscapes, healthy environment and our unique kiwi identity and way of life. Central and local government, working together with communities and business, can develop and implement ambitious strategies based on sound science, to protect our national inheritance and security.

Council Commitments

For our part we commit to:

1. Develop and implement ambitious action plans that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support resilience within our own councils and for our local communities. These plans will:
 - a. promote walking, cycling, public transport and other low carbon transport options;
 - b. work to improve the resource efficiency and health of homes, businesses and infrastructure in our district; and
 - c. support the use of renewable energy and uptake of electric vehicles.
2. Work with our communities to understand, prepare for and respond to the physical impacts of climate change.
3. Work with central government to deliver on national emission reduction targets and support resilience in our communities.

We believe these actions will result in widespread and substantial benefits for our communities such as; creating new jobs and business opportunities, creating a more competitive and future-proof economy, more efficient delivery of council services, improved public health, creating stronger more connected communities, supporting life-long learning, reducing air pollution and supporting local biodiversity. In short, it will help to make our communities great places to live, work, learn and visit for generations to come.

Guiding Principles

The following principles provide guidance for decision making on climate change. These principles are based on established legal¹ and moral obligations placed on Government when considering the current and future social, economic and environmental well-being of the communities they represent.

1. Precaution

There is clear and compelling evidence for the need to act now on climate change and to adopt a precautionary approach because of the irreversible nature and scale of risks involved. Together with the global community, we must eliminate the possibility of planetary warming beyond two degrees from pre-industrial levels. This could potentially threaten life on Earth (Article 2 of the UNFCCC). Actions need to be based on sound scientific evidence and resourced to deliver the necessary advances. Acting now will reduce future risks and costs associated with climate change.

2. Stewardship/Kaitiakitanga

Each person and organisation has a duty of care to safeguard the life-supporting capacity of our environment on which we all depend and to care for each other. Broad-based climate policies should enable all organisations and individuals to do all they feasibly can to reduce emissions and enhance resilience. Policies should be flexible to allow for locally and culturally appropriate responses.

¹ These Guiding Principles are established within the: Treaty of Waitangi, Resource Management Act 1991, Local Government Act 2002, Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act 2002, Oslo Principles 2014, Principles of Fundamental Justice and Human Rights.

3. Equity/Justice

It is a fundamental human right to inherit a habitable planet and live in a just society. The most vulnerable in our community are often disproportionately affected by change and natural hazards. Approaches need to consider those most affected and without a voice, including vulnerable members in our community, our Pacific neighbours and future generations.

4. Anticipation (thinking and acting long-term)

Long-term thinking, policies and actions are needed to ensure the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations are met. A clear and consistent pathway toward a low carbon and resilient future needs to provide certainty for successive governments, businesses and communities to enable transformative decisions and investments to be made over time.

5. Understanding

Sound knowledge is the basis of informed decision making and participatory democracy. Using the best available information in education, community consultation, planning and decision making is vital. Growing understanding about the potential impacts of climate change, and the need for, and ways to respond, along with understanding the costs and benefits for acting, will be crucial to gain community support for the transformational approaches needed.

6. Co-operation

The nature and scale of climate change requires a global response and human solidarity. We have a shared responsibility and can not effectively respond alone. Building strong relationships between countries and across communities, organisations and scientific disciplines will be vital to share knowledge, drive innovation, and support social and economic progress in addressing climate change.

7. Resilience

Some of the impacts of climate change are now unavoidable. Enhancing the resilience and readiness of communities and businesses is needed so they can thrive in the face of changes. Protecting the safety of people and property is supported by sound planning and a good understanding of the risks and potential responses to avoid and mitigate risk.

THE FOLLOWING MAYORS AND CHAIRS SUPPORT THIS DECLARATION



Mayor Dave Cull
Dunedin City Council



Mayor Lianne Dalziel
Christchurch City Council



Mayor Grant Smith
Palmerston North City Council



Mayor Ray Wallace
Hutt City Council



Mayor Rachel Reese
Nelson City Council



Mayor Steve Chadwick
Rotorua Lakes Council



Mayor Wayne Guppy
Upper Hutt City Council



Mayor Don Cameron
Ruapehu District Council



Chris Laidlaw, Chair
Greater Wellington Regional Council



Mayor David Ayers
Waimakariri District Council



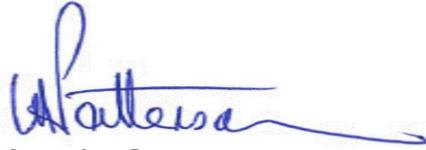
Mayor Winston Gray
Kaikoura District Council



Mayor Bill Dalton
Napier City Council



Mayor Gary Tong, JP
Southland District Council



Mayor Lyn Patterson
Masterton District Council



Mayor Andy Watson
Rangitikei District Council



Stephen Woodhead, Chair
Otago Regional Council



Mayor Allan Sanson
Waikato District Council



Mayor Tony Bonne
Whakatane District Council



Mayor Justin Lester
Wellington City Council



Mayor K (Guru) Gurunathan
Kāpiti Coast District Council



Mayor Phil Goff
Auckland Council



Mayor Bryan Cadogan
Clutha District Council



Mayor Sam Broughton
Selwyn District Council



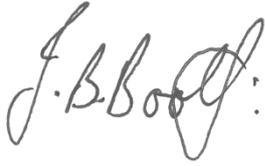
Mayor John Tregidga
Hauraki District Council



Rex Graham, Chair
Hawke's Bay Regional Council



Mayor Neil Holdom
New Plymouth District Council



Mayor John Booth
Carterton District Council



Mayor Viv Napier
South Wairarapa District Council



Mayor Alex Walker
Central Hawke's Bay District Council



David MacLeod, Chair
Taranaki Regional Council



Bill Shepherd, Chair
Northland Regional Council



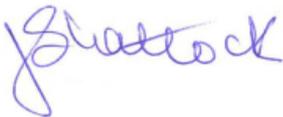
Mayor Tim Cadogan
Central Otago District Council



Mayor Tracy Hicks
Gore District Council



Mayor John Leggett
Marlborough District Council



Mayor Jenny Shattock
South Waikato District Council



Mayor Hamish McDouall
Whanganui District Council



Mayor Tim Shadbolt
Invercargill City Council



Acting Mayor Sandra Hazlehurst
Hastings District Council



Mayor Brian Hanna
Waitomo District Council



Steve Lowndes, Acting Chair
Environment Canterbury



Doug Leeder, Chair
Bay of Plenty Regional Council



Mayor Jan Barnes
Matamata-Piako District Council