

Climate Change Policy: the two-pronged response

- Mitigation “what we do to the climate”
(= reducing emissions)
- Adaptation “what the climate does to us”
(= preparing for the impacts of climate change)

Adaptation

- Adaptation needed even if emissions reduced
- Effects not new (but may be more extreme)
- Adaptation not new
- Links with sustainable development

Adaptation – local drivers

- Local temperature rise
- Change in local rainfall patterns
- Local sea-level rise
- Change in local weather extremes

... impact depends on sensitivity to change,
local vulnerability and ability to adapt

The Case for Adaptation

- Proactive approach offers much greater scope for:
 - reducing the costs & impacts
 - spreading costs over time
 - recognising new opportunities that can partially offset losses from activities that are no longer sustainable.
- Reduces vulnerability
- ‘Wait & see’ approach often more costly e.g. for irreversible impacts like species extinction

Other potential impact areas

- International trade
 - Markets change
 - NZ agricultural sector changes
 - Adaptation technology/expertise export
- Immigration
 - Pacific island communities
 - Others

Adaptation Challenges

- **Impacts** – priority with regard to social, environmental and economic criteria
- **Sensitivity/resilience** – how will systems respond?; critical thresholds?
- **Adaptive capacity** – what is the system's capacity to adapt to a changing climate?