

## **Parents for Climate Aotearoa submission to the Environment Committee on Emissions Budgets (2022) and first emissions reduction plan**

*For the purposes of its inquiry, the committee is particularly interested in:*

- *Is the emissions budget for 2022-25 achievable, and if not, what additional actions or changes to the key actions in the Emissions Reduction Plan would make it more likely the budget was achieved? Please state reasons.*
- *Any analysis of the costs and benefits of the actions in the Emissions Reduction Plan, the adequacy of the costs and benefits analysis, and any gaps.*
- ***Is the emissions budget for 2026-30 achievable and if not, what additional actions or changes to the key actions in the Emissions Reduction Plan would make it more likely the budget was achieved? Please state reasons.***
- ***What tools or initiatives would help implement the key actions in the Emissions Reduction Plan and why?***
- ***Are there other key actions which can better achieve the emissions budgets than those in the Emissions Reduction Plan, what are they, and why are they more likely to succeed?***
- *What type of monitoring and reporting would enable you to be confident that the key actions in the Emissions Reduction Plan are being implemented, and that emissions are falling in line with the emissions budgets? Please state reasons.*



27 June 2022

[Parents for Climate Aotearoa](#) is a group of largely parents and wider whānau, concerned with our families and particularly the future of our tamariki and mokopuna in a rapidly warming world. Our parents come from a range of backgrounds and experiences including climate science, social science and policy. We are also ordinary parents standing up for climate justice, in between our family and community commitments, to ensure all children have a safe climate and world to live in.

**We welcome the opportunity to submit directly to the Environment Committee on the first Emissions Reduction Budget.** We are in the midst of making and implementing major decisions on how we respond and adapt to a warming climate, including limiting that warming to below 1.5 degrees. **A major barrier to implementation of many of the proposed solutions is lack of plain language, accessibility, clear communication and public education.** These plans will have a long lasting impact on people's lives, particularly our tamariki and we continue to feel frustrated by the gatekeeping language and inaccessibility for everyday people. There have been a multitude of lost opportunities to properly engage with New Zealanders on climate change and solutions. As we have mentioned in many submissions before, people came together in 2020 to protect the people we love and our communities from Covid-19 because of the clear direct communication from our elected leaders. We knew the problem, the scale and we acted accordingly. **In a nutshell this submission calls for serious investment and resourcing into engaging, educating and empowering people and communities to act now on climate change.**

One of the major gaps in the final plan is clear Climate Communication and society wide Climate Education. **Education and engagement must be throughout our society, with true partnership at all levels.** We have done this with Covid-19 and we have seen the results in other countries that lacked leadership, consistent messaging and being upfront about what they did and didn't know. This left a vacuum, which was filled with misinformation and self interest, with catastrophic consequences. People did not know who to trust. For the last three decades this is what has happened with climate change, there has been a vacuum left by governments, filled by self interest and misinformation. People currently are operating with only a few pieces of the puzzle and



very few understand the full picture - this is because of inaccessible and incomplete information, connections not being made and people not understanding what a changing climate and the solutions means in their everyday lives.

**Trusted messengers within communities are key to helping people move through and understand the scale of change needed.** Right now there are a whole lot of steps between what people know now and where we need to be, for example, people may understand climate change and the need to do things differently and yet pushback on proposed cycleways and car park removals.

We recommend a long term public campaign like smoking and drunk driving to educate on climate change, actions we can take and what governments are empowering us to be able to do. **A well funded centralised cross agency communications department and full public education programme - not just focused on schools.**

We want to see funding for local councils, churches, community groups to run outreach and educational programmes - we want to see a focus on community change, not individual change - we need to bring everyone together on this.

**Our communities need information from the government that is more accessible. This final plan, for example, is still high level, technical, and inaccessible to most, except those already interested.** If the government wants to hear what communities think, they need to find new ways to engage and bring people onboard.

Currently, people need to actively seek out information on the government's climate strategy and what they can do. **Compare that to our Covid-19 response, where information was simple, clear, and hard to avoid.** This communication style helped us to achieve much broader engagement and stronger agreement and commitment to the required actions.

**From what we understand, there is an intent but currently no resourcing or ability to fund a central cross Ministry communications hub. Let alone funding and resourcing communities and groups (from all walks of life) to be these trusted messengers within their communities and beyond, to obtain the social capital needed to implement the Plan's proposed solutions.**



### **Trusted messengers**

People trust leaders in their local communities, as well as friends and family. Studies have shown that one of the strongest climate actions individuals can take is discussing climate change with friends and family (e.g. [Discussing global warming leads to greater acceptance of climate science](#)). **A behaviour change campaign centred around community discussions, rather than individual change, would help to bring more people along on the journey.**

We would support a fund that would embed the behavioural change campaigns in policies and programmes.

As mentioned above we want to see funding for councils, churches, community groups to run outreach and educational programmes. **Schools can play an important role in educating our tamariki and rangatahi about climate issues.** However, if our young people then go home and out into the community and find that these big issues are not being talked about and taken seriously, the disparity between education and action contributes to their anxiety about climate issues.

**Education campaigns also need to work with a recognition that people are in different stages of life, different communities, and different stages of their climate journey.** Communication plans could also include differentiated messaging for people already engaged, people firmly against, and people who can be persuaded.

### **Our view**

Much of the Emissions Reduction Plans focuses on individual choice which misunderstands the challenge that we face. **People can't choose what is not available and they can't choose what they can't afford.** And what is available and affordable is controlled by systems and governments, not by individual choices. **Again, we reinforce our concern that the social capital needed to implement proposed solutions is not there which may cause significant backlash and delay.**

Messages that are empowering, empathetic, future focused, collective, while also reflecting the urgency of making change.

Our communities need storytelling and a strong vision, brought to them with creativity and imagination. **Rather than technical detail, people need to see a positive vision for the better world we can create together.** Minds and hearts aren't changed by



facts and figures, they're changed by stories and values and discussions with trusted family and friends.

“Effective communication on climate action can build hope. It can improve people’s understanding of the causes and solutions, and motivate them to be agents of change. Motivating collective climate action at the right level requires more than communicating the facts and the dangers. As experts, advocates, and campaigners we need strategies grounded in the evidence of persuasive communication.” ([How to Talk About Climate Change: A toolkit for encouraging collective action, 2019 — The Workshop](#))

Our actions today are setting up what the world looks like in 2050, and people need help to draw the connection between how our actions today could change the path that we follow.

*“Behavior change is not just about communications campaigns, it's about understanding the real barriers and supporting people to take the required action. We need to halve consumption emissions by 50 percent by 2030 - probably more for NZ as a wealthy nation, yet there was only one idea on how to do this - setting up a behavior change fund which didn't give details about how it would be administered, how much, etc. This area needs much more focus. I feel like it's shifting the problem to our kids who will be the ones to clean up the mess we are continuing to create as the older population will not be here when things get challenging.”*

## CONCLUSION

Like Covid-19, there are many benefits of taking action and early we should follow that lesson with climate change and not delay or dither further. Many of the changes needed will improve most people's lives. The co-benefits however are not widely known, which creates a barrier to change as in the vacuum of information there are numerous assertions that reducing emissions will only hurt us and we have way too much to lose. **We asked for and did not see a more comprehensive section of the co-benefits in the final plan.**

We would like to see a comprehensive education campaign recommended addressing what the problem is, what we need to do about it and how. **Focus on systemic change in order to empower community led change including farmers through catchment groups and collective management of issues.** We want to see unpaid community



work and outreach valued by funding paid positions for people who know their communities well. **We want to see Māori and Pasifika being funded and resourced to lead.**

We want to see a well funded cross agency working group to implement these programmes effectively and in sync with each other, recognising the interconnections between each sector. Now.

At the moment it is up to largely volunteer community groups such as ours, youth and many others to constantly check that our councils and government are doing all they can to reduce emissions. Most projects are still not taking emissions or adaptation into account and it is not possible for our communities to cover all government activities at all levels. We are exhausted and the wall of work is soul destroying at times. We do this for our kids, yet we are not present enough for them now because of this unpaid work. We need clear leadership and communication, like demonstrated through the pandemic to do the right thing, which we can support.

**We want an Aotearoa New Zealand and wider world that values and cares for each other and our environment.** We want our tamariki and mokopuna to grow up with clean air, healthy rivers, safe streets, well planned 15/20 minute cities, healthy affordable homes, the easiest transport choice is climate friendly, affordable and accessible, and by ensuring we center our most vulnerable and marginalised communities - we are then looking after everyone. **We want a safe climate for our children and loved ones.**

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