



**Parents for Climate submission to Auckland Council Annual Budget 2022/2023
Issue 1: Climate Action targeted Rate**

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Parents for Climate Aotearoa are **in support** of the proposal by Auckland Council to introduce a Climate action targeted rate from 2022/23

[Parents for Climate Aotearoa](#) is a group of largely parents and wider whānau throughout Aotearoa, including Tamaki Makaurau. We are deeply concerned for 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, who stand for climate justice, to ensure all children have a safe climate and world to live in. We are very concerned for those already vulnerable, marginalised and whose voices are ignored in our society. They are most at risk of the consequences of climate change and by poorly thought out mitigation measures. Our society's role, led by the central and local government, is to ensure that no one is left behind. Our lack of urgency and action is being felt today with worsening mental health of our tamariki, rangatahi and parents and will be felt by our children tomorrow - many people, particularly women and children are hurting today around the world, from the consequences of global warming.

We need more climate action across Tamaki Makaurau to ensure we have a safe future for our children and future generations. Council declared a climate emergency nearly 3 years ago - we must invest in action now or it will be too late. We need to keep temperatures to 1.5 degrees if we are to minimise the impact of climate on our health, jobs, homes and way of life across the motu. Paying a little now to reduce emissions will mean we will have less adaptation costs in the future. We support this targeted rate as a good first step, although it is likely that it will need to be expanded in the future to include a wider range of mitigation initiatives across the region to reduce emissions and minimise climate impacts.

Climate justice should be a criteria for spend - not everyone across the region has equitable access to public transport, active transport networks or a similar level of greenways and tree canopy cover. This needs to be addressed in the allocation of spending this targeted rate.

Front-load the delivery of initiatives as much as possible so significant cuts to emissions can happen before 2030. We cannot delay this package - it should not be deferred to future years - the cumulative effect of emissions heating our planet, means we will not only miss council and government targets, but we will have missed an opportunity to stop irreversible damage to our children's futures.

Councils have begun to lead action across our communities and with that comes with significant challenges. Some of these challenges are funding and resources and crucially, a widespread lack of public understanding of the issues and the need for solutions. Councils cannot do this alone. We encourage you to continue to work with community groups and organisations, who can support community-led climate action, which is essential to the success of the initiatives that the targeted rate proposes to fund, i.e. public and active transport, planting and community gardens. Auckland council must be a leader in climate action, as it has a significant influence and impacts a large proportion of the nation's population.

Areas for investment

Public transport

We support this action.

Reducing transport emissions is critical to slowing climate change. Funding to increase public transport options, more frequent bus routes, free fares, rapid decarbonisation of buses and ferries is necessary.

There are a wide range of users of our streets. It is important that this rate funds a disability and accessibility centred approach to transport services. By designing our cities and transport systems for children, for parents, and for disabled people, we can ensure that our transport systems work for everyone, not just able-bodied commuters. Transport services must not only be geared for peak commuter users - but also for parents, grandparents and caregivers. This means including services on weekends and non-commuter hours like pre and post school times, to cater for things like travel to sports, after school activities or shift work.

In addition to funding the transport infrastructure and services required we must also invest in supporting Aucklanders to overcome real and perceived barriers to accessing these services - beyond education, using clear evidence-based strategies informed by behavioural insights to improve service design and communications to get families out of their cars.

Active network

We support this action.

Schools and child travel

Our children are some of the most vulnerable street users. There needs to be access to safe cycleways and pathways to increase active transport and ensure our kids can safely cycle and

walk around our motu. This rate should help to reduce risk and empower kids and youth to travel with increasing independence. We hear again and again safety concerns and near misses our families have around schools. Many just do not feel it is safe for their kids to walk, scooter or bike to school. Many parents do not feel safe biking themselves.

We recommend prioritising infrastructure around schools as soon as possible. These include increasing the number of crossings on the most used routes into schools, reducing car parking in high risk areas such as adjacent to intersections and crossings and traffic calming that reduces and slows traffic in school zones and those adjacent streets. Wide shared paths on the main routes to schools are ideal for families and groups of kids traveling to school by foot, scooter and bike. Travel planning is good, though many parents and caregivers will not change their travel mode until they see safety improvements. Children's experience of walking and cycling is not the same as that of adults, and parents' and childrens' perspectives should form a key part of the development of these strategies.

Shared paths and footpaths in particular need close attention with the range of modes and age ranges of users. These paths that have different users need to be wide enough for families and mobility scooters to use safely. Community education on how to safely use them is critical.

Urban ngahere (forest)

We support this action.

Funding needs to go to the local board areas and parts of the region with lowest canopy cover and fewer green spaces. Create more public māra kai and plant even more native trees in town centres, parks, berms and public areas - not only to reduce emissions, but provide shade and cool areas that will be needed as our planet warms.

An additional 14,000 urban trees is a good start. In the future heat stress will be more prevalent and will affect children and the elderly the most. Places for kids, grandparents and families to stop in the shade while using footpaths, cycleways, pushing prams and waiting for public transport will be a necessity, not a luxury.

We support the planting of over 4,000 trees and plants for tiny forests, food forests, māra kai (food gardens) and bush remnants. It is good to see grants for rongoā planting included but we feel that council should have more dedicated funding for Maori-led and Community-led initiatives for community gardens, teaching gardens and mara kia both on marae, for papakainga, kura and schools.

In addition to planting more trees there must be a focus on retaining existing trees and increasing the overall canopy cover in areas. There must be regulations and bylaws in place to prevent mature trees from being removed and lost as more development and infill housing takes place. All trees planted must also have an adequate maintenance budget and programme in place, so they are looked after in the long-term.

Additional focus required

Education

While we acknowledge the challenges councils face, councils are leaders in their community and so have an important role in community education. There is currently a lack of investment in climate education, behaviourally informed campaigns and effective climate action communication - need to support the proposed targeted rate package.

Education and effective climate communications are a fundamental part of change. The council needs to make public education a focus and partner with its community in a range of ways. 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. A behaviour change campaign centred around community discussions, changing social norms and collective action, not just individual change, would help to bring more people along on the journey.

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 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 climate change communications and climate action education and engagement initiatives need to:

1. start with why change is needed. A vision of a climate-positive future. This must be translated to regular public communication through a variety of mediums.
2. Highlight the positive health, resilience, well being and financial co-benefits need to be clearly communicated.
3. Map a clear direction of travel. Many people are worried that the solutions to climate change may be worse for them than the impacts of climate change. This is why it is important to keep explaining how the current situation for example - how increasing vehicle travel is affecting the community, like increasing times to destinations, increasing health effects from pollution and unsafe streets for our kids. And at the same time keep on explaining why the solutions will make life better for everyone, etc.

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Nga mihi

Thank you for the opportunity to submit.