



New Zealand Psychological Society Submission To the Climate Change Commission - prepared by members of the NZPsS Climate Psychology Task Force. March 2021.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are writing this submission in response to the Climate Change Commission's first draft advice package, a roadmap on how the country is to achieve emissions reductions and the first of several expected advice packages. We urge the Commission to impress on the Government the urgency of prompt action in this and the other areas on which advice will be sought, recognising the imperative to begin planning and preparation for adaptation to inevitable effects of climate change on our communities, activities and environment. Delaying necessary preparations could mean the implementation and funding of interventions is left to less committed governments, dashing the expectations of millions and destroying the prospect that most of our people can be supported through the momentous changes we can anticipate current and future generations to experience.

The NZ Psychological Society Climate Psychology Task Force members have faced a challenge in deciding what the Team should raise in this submission compared with what we might cover in commenting on the next packages of advice to be given to government (i.e. the national risk assessment and the national adaptation plan), and also which ideas should be presented here and which should be written up in articles that can be more easily referred to outside of this submission.

In our submission on the Zero Carbon legislation we stipulated that justice be the central theme of the legislation. Partnership is an essential part of this and to some extent this is acknowledged in the present draft advice. We initially wondered whether we should build on this theme (as Enabling a Just Transition: Psychological Perspectives) in this present

submission, but have decided it is best to emphasise the positive, noting that we can achieve a far more encompassing change than is envisaged in the CCC report. The “team of 5 million” have worked to combat Covid and with the right encouragement and appropriate skill in the messages, the “team” can do this again. As psychologists, we can help to engage people; we can involve them in the change and the experience of that can contribute to a collective resilience. Working to achieve collective societal change with wellbeing as the central theme is what we can offer as psychologists and also what we need to focus on as a country if we are to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for the next generations.

Achieving positive change is something that almost all New Zealanders could be involved in voluntarily, with the aim of reducing emissions. Examples of possible collective projects range from wetland restoration to buying carbon offsets and taking part in “Carbon Conversations” about ways to make changes that, in combination, are significant. At the moment the Commission’s focus seems to be on the business paradigm, which alone will not be effective. Our approach is focused on how to maximize positive behavioural change on a broad scale; otherwise we face the injustices that will result from not doing this.

We recognise Partnership as an umbrella under which change can occur. It is through effective partnerships that we can enable a just transition. The roadmap provided by the Commission still has the inherent potential for injustice, as it fails to fully embrace the potential of the partnerships that can be developed and empowered to produce change.

We see a need to encourage positivity from those people who have power and currently control most of the resources (e.g., leaders in the business, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, media, science, academic and government sectors). They are vital allies in supporting and enabling action by all those in our society who wish to be part of the change. Currently, those who have little access to resources or influence on the powerful, are relatively disinterested in climate change and their need to be informed and assisted is opposed by many of those who do have influence/resources.

We ask the Climate Change Commission to urge the Government to work on establishing empowered communities with an interest in collectively achieving behavioural change and enhanced wellbeing, through effective partnerships. As a profession, psychology has a major contribution to make in this endeavour.

In our concluding comments in this submission, we present a list of recommendations for the Commission to consider.

Please note: The Society is willing to represent this submission in person at any hearings the Commission might decide to convene.

SUBMISSION

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Introduction:

The New Zealand Psychological Society is appreciative of the opportunity to respond to the Climate Change Commission's first package of advice to the Government on how the country may best enact the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act. This includes how we reach its climate emissions goals for 2035 and 2050, while ensuring we contribute to the global effort to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5°C rather than the 2°C mark. We understand this is the dividing line between warming which is just about tolerable and that which is dangerous. We also understand that 1.5°C may be as close as 5-7 years away¹. So, this is undoubtedly the only goal we can have if we are to develop a just and inclusive transition for Aotearoa.

For this reason, we as psychologists are inevitably involved in the response to climate change. We know the causes of climate change are a direct result of human behaviour, therefore the responses to climate change inevitably lie in human behaviour change. We also know that if we as a society are to successfully adapt and mitigate the anticipated climate breakdown, we will need to make the most radical and comprehensive shift of our history². As the Canadian Professor Robert Gifford has said... "Climate Change is... the result of 7.6 billion people making decisions every single day. That right there makes it a psychological problem."³ In Aotearoa/New Zealand, this could be translated to "Five million people making decisions every day that affect emissions and the climate IS a problem for psychology to address". Psychologists are uniquely positioned to understand and help address human behaviour and attitudes, and this is crucial to a zero carbon future... and yet this reality is being resisted.

The need for immediate and decisive action is very clear. Further delay and prevarication are no longer tolerable as we have been reminded by the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, in stating that the interim report of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is "a red alert for our planet" and that 2021 is a "make-or-break year"⁴. His call for immediate action to launch a decade of transformation is a stark warning of the urgent need for early and effective action by our government. The implementation of actions this

¹ See Climate Reality Check on <https://www.breakthroughonline.org.au/>

² See Naomi Klein, in: *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs The Climate* (2014) and [Attenborough 10 July 2019 The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jul/10/naomi-klein-this-changes-everything)

³ [apa.org/monitor/2018](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018)

⁴ See Matthew McKimmon's 'Degrees of Disaster' in *New Zealand Listener*, March 13 2021

Government decisions are needed and the strategies it adopts must therefore commence **this** year if they are to have the desired effect on emissions reduction and any chance of meeting our target commitments. A necessary and significant part of this will be thinking and planning how people can be engaged and encouraged to change behaviour (theirs and that of the organisations they are part of or can influence). The Psychological Society can help identify the sources of expertise and experience that the Commission, the Government and regional/local government will have to draw on to expedite their decision-making regarding the support and information people will need to engage effectively.

New Zealand Psychological Society (explained briefly)

We make this submission as psychologists whose professional lives are centred on the well-being of people. We represent the New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS), the professional and scientific association for the country's psychologists. We are fortunate to have many members who have worked at the interface of people and their environment and many more, who, understanding the nature of the changes we are to navigate, are keen to be involved in the work of a just transition. In the last six years, the Society has taken steps to ensure that understanding and working with the causes and effects of climate change is a core element and responsibility of our work.

The NZPsS is a valued participant in the Global Psychology Alliance (GPA)⁵, an Alliance that enables us to be part of an extensive network of resource-sharing with access to influential decision-makers at the UN and on the IPCC with regard to human behaviour change. The NZPsS is also a member of the International Union of Psychological Science, an organisation of 82 member countries. An example of the potential benefit of our international collaboration is the support that has provided for the establishment of an Asia-Pacific sub-group⁶ to address the roles of psychology in climate issues affecting the region. This work has major implications for Aotearoa and is highly relevant to the implementation of the Zero Carbon strategies.

Our Theme: Partnership, Protection and Participation

We appreciate that a great deal of work has gone into the Draft Advice Report and support many of the recommendations being made to the Government. The wealth of information provided has given us opportunity to reflect, as a discipline, on how we might best address the country's challenge of reducing carbon emissions... of keeping carbon in the ground... and how the energy of communities can best be mobilised to address the tasks of decarbonisation.

⁵ <https://www.apa.org/international/networks/global-psychology-alliance> and <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2019/climate-change-summit>

⁶ Includes members from Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Korea and the Western American and South American seaboard who are now seeking broader Pacific representation and collaboration.

It's clear we need a new way of looking at the world and our place within it. The old story on which so many of us have based our lives, one of an energy-rich world that fossil fuels enabled, no longer works. We need a new story to help shape our lives. A new story that has us embracing a non-carbon future... In a nut-shell, as the CCC has so aptly outlined, we need to slow down the speed of global warming and reduce the risk of climate breakdown by reducing emissions.

The Climate Change Commission has given submitters the option of addressing "one big thing" in their submission or answering a number of big issues or detailed questions. While addressing "one big thing" in our submission our responses will cover some of the CCC's "big issues" and "detailed questions" asked of their advice.

Our theme centers on **partnership** and **participation**, as it is through effective partnerships that we enable a just transition. Our focus is on 'people', their communities and the rich relationships that can be established that build capacity and motivate change. We believe that the country can aim for a far more encompassing change than is envisaged in the CCC report. We have already shown with the team of 5 million that behavior can undergo rapid change. The 'Team' have worked to combat Covid and with leadership they can do this again. With examples we will show that we can engage people, we can involve them, and their experience will contribute to a collective resilience. Such voluntary work can be expected to contribute directly to the wellbeing of the country – a needed focus if we are to ensure the best for the next generation.

We understand that many believe that having a "cap on carbon" within the workings of the ETS will mean that people, as consumers, will adjust to the higher costs of consuming carbon-based products... a trickle-down cost rather than a trickle-down dollar gain. The argument is that people will change. We don't need to do any more. But that belies the collective spirit of many who are calling for more. There are networks of climate or environmentally driven activists' throughout the country who already actively encourage decarbonisation. The faster and more effectively we can meet their needs, the faster we can expect their adaptation to emission reductions. People want to understand the changes that they can make for themselves and their communities in response to the climate disruptions they experience.

As research by Ipsos Ltd (2019) has indicated, 79% of Kiwis felt the issue of climate change was important to them personally; 85% expected coastal locations to flood from sea level rising, with many believing that people would be on the move as a result; and 80% expected the loss of ecosystems and the extinction of animal and plant species. On the other hand, only 41% thought the country's approach to the problem was on the right track, and only a third believed that Aotearoa New Zealand would be able to reduce its emissions to reach its current targets. A large proportion (79%), though, made it clear they wanted the government to respond to climate change by providing guidelines to councils on what they could do to reduce and avoid the impacts of climate change, and most of these people wanted local councils to provide information on the local impacts of climate change.

So we address partnership because it is through partnership that we will achieve the voluntary gains that can catapult the country through to a healthier zero-emissions future. We believe there are pockets of concerned citizens throughout the country who are

already highly motivated “climate activists” who can be called to accept the climate challenge. We note also that Partnership is a central theme throughout the advice, with the CCC recommending Government, “...*work in partnership with local government and regional economic development agencies, iwi/Māori, local communities, businesses, civil society groups and stakeholders.*”

We ask, then, whether indeed the CCC would have come up with different recommendations if their guiding principles had included partnership as a guiding principle? Would this not have led to very different questions being asked of the public when submitting on the CCC’s advice package? Our concern is, as a result, that the advice is skewed towards working with business and alleviating the troubles vulnerable groups may face, instead of urgently moving to **involve** all New Zealanders in the tasks of reducing emissions and preparing for a new future. This is more than ensuring more people walk or bike and buy electric cars or use public transport. What if some of the questions had been: *How can we inspire and empower people to work together to reduce our carbon footprint? What can we do so people understand the urgency with which we need to act? What can we learn from our Covid response? How can we bring the team of 5 million on board again?*

In regard then to Consultation question 1, as to whether there is anything that should be changed regarding the principles that have guided the CCC analysis, **we ask** that an eighth principle on Partnership be included with reference to the fact that it would be an integral consideration in relation to all seven other principles.

In this context, the rest of our submission talks to the relevant partnerships that have been addressed in the CCC advice, including our relationships with:

- Iwi/Māori as Partners
- Government as Partners
- The Public as Partners
- Our Global Partnership with other countries...
- Our Partnership with future generations: Fairness and paying forward
- Our Partnership with science, business and industries

Iwi/Māori as Partners: Creating a genuine, active and enduring partnership with iwi/Māori

We appreciate the concerted effort and attention the CCC has given to Māori values and we look forward to seeing how the Government considers these values in relation to all policy developments, etc. In regard to Consultation question 7 regarding creating a genuine, active and enduring partnership with iwi/Māori **we support** the points covered in enabling recommendation 3 and appreciate the efforts the Commission has taken to draw on *He Ara Waiora* to help New Zealanders understand wellbeing from a framework that incorporates some aspects of Te Ao Māori into a future-focussed tax system. We also

encourage the Commission to explore the utility of Kaupapa Māori perspectives that are “wellbeing-centric”, which may provide not only a more intimate understanding of the inter-relativity between climate change and Māori well-being, but also how Indigenous Māori perspectives may provide a valuable contribution to informing behaviour change strategies with regards to climate change.

Our rationale is based on the fact Indigenous peoples comprise only 5% of the world’s population, but manage or hold tenure over a quarter of the world’s land surface, and support 80% of global biodiversity. Consequently, how and why this is done so effectively becomes important to explore. Indigenous or Traditional Ecological Knowledge is a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief that has and continues to inform behaviours and practices that enable Indigenous peoples to sustain their immediate environments in non-exploitative and non-damaging ways, ensuring a natural equilibrium is maintained for generations to come.

This body of knowledge that informs these sustainable practices, is itself informed by worldviews that acknowledge the inherent interconnectedness of all material and non-material things, across time, place and space, including of course humans and the wider ecosystem that we dwell within. For example, Māori cultural beliefs, values and practices are intimately connected to te taiao – the natural environment - and are a function of one of the most important ontological assumptions of Māori, that of whakapapa. While often referred to as genealogy, whakapapa translates as the ‘layers of descent from one point to another’, and denotes a system of organization that binds all living beings together through a common lineage that descends back to the creation of the universe, and ascends forth to those beings yet to come. All things are physically and spiritually connected, existing in a state of ongoing inter-relativity with each other.

As Māori scholar, Ani Mikaere explains, whakapapa combined with whanaungatanga, “connects us to everything there is, creating a myriad of relationships that speak to us of reciprocity, of responsibility and of the need for respect.”⁷ What happens to one, ultimately affects all others. The significance of this is that destruction of any part of the system will impact on the welfare of people and undermine the integrity of the whole. This is a belief system that inherently understands the value of our planetary life and provides us with a strong building block from which to develop and enact our obligations to care and sustain our environment.

Many in Aotearoa already appreciate this perspective and are encouraged by developments to weave these understandings together with those of Western Science. An example is the adoption of a 'waka hourua', which effectively is a double-hulled canoe, to guide working relationships and knowledge-acquisition in the biodiversity space. One hull represents Indigenous knowledges as epitomised by mātauranga Māori. The other hull represents Western science perspectives. The platform joining each hull, the papa noho, is a space where the navigators come together – each with their own specific skills and expertise.

⁷ Mikaere, A. (2011). *Colonising myths: Māori realities. He rukuruku whakaaro*. Wellington, NZ: Huia Publishers.

The papa noho represents the ‘interface’, where mātauranga Māori and Western science can exist side-by side, respecting the relative strengths and drawing on the potential of each to create new knowledges – neither is subsumed under the other. In that sense, the waka hourua approach encourages a drawing together of “energy that comes from the two systems of understanding in order to create new knowledges that can then be used to further development.”⁸

Another example is the Braided Rivers approach⁹, which speaks to the analogy of a river that flows and converges at different points. The tributaries of the river represent Western science and Te Ao Māori. While each tributary is fed from its own source and is able to be sustained from that source, the points at which the tributaries flow into one river represents the points of convergence or blending of Western science and Te Ao Māori. Rather than being a place of assimilation, the points of convergence become a place of learning and nourishment for all.

What it implies is that both knowledge systems have legitimacy in terms of offering solutions to biodiversity management.¹⁰ The partnership with Māori we speak of here would and could ideally reflect this same analogy as a means for drawing on the best and most effective knowledge in seeking solutions for the climate change issues we face in this country.

Government as Partners

Our main concerns are that the advice is not ambitious enough. The pace of change as outlined indicates that we may not meet our 2030 international commitments and this may further our risk of not meeting our 2050 emissions targets.

We ask that the Commission make a more compelling case for addressing a **climate crisis** and the necessity for us to act with urgency. While we are totally in support of the portrayed vision, our reading of the advice indicates a message to the business community of appeasement with no panic! The advice, therefore, reflects an unexpected lack of urgency, despite the country’s declaration of a climate emergency. Our concern is that there are businesses and communities around us, and countries around us that are already suffering. We cannot waste time. As readers of this advice know, the problem of human induced climate change has been conveyed by scientists for over forty years. Many in government positions, in business and in our wider community have had long enough to reflect and start acting on the changes required. Stalling can no longer be an acceptable option. It is past time. Change is urgently needed...

⁸ Durie, M. (2005). Indigenous knowledge within a global knowledge system. Higher Education Policy, 18, 301-312.

⁹https://www.researchgate.net/figure/He-Awa-Whiria-a-braided-rivers-approach-Macfarlane-Macfarlane-Gillon-2015_fig1_336730267

¹⁰ Note that this concept has been adopted within the Biological Heritage National Science Challenge in its focus on the human dimensions of forest well-being.

The Government has declared a Climate Emergency but we note that there has been little follow through. In relation to the CCCs Consultation question 13 as to whether enough has been done to ensure an equitable, inclusive and well-planned climate transition, **we ask** that the CCC add the following step to Necessary action 1: That Government takes immediate steps to communicate clearly to the people of this country the nature of the crisis we face, what we intend to do to avert risks (where practicable) and how we are to play our part in reducing the main causes (i.e., reducing emissions, etc.). In this context we also stress the importance of cross-party support (Enabling recommendation 1)¹¹; coordinating efforts to address climate change across government (Enabling recommendation 2) and central and local government working in partnership (Enabling recommendation 4).

Further, we believe the information available in the Commission's advice is a high value contribution to the climate change and carbon reduction deliberations. We therefore urge the CCC to recommend to the Government that the information in the advice be more widely distributed in formats that are more easily understood by a diversity of audiences. Clear messages from the Government will start us focusing on the problem and the "solutions". At the moment we are anything but, for at all levels of society, we are working with many balanced priorities, our resources are distributed and we save for the future. Likewise, our focus is also distributed across priorities. We need to move people in the direction of acknowledging the crisis and seeing a role for themselves in developing responses. As it is, most of us take on our daily lives with some level of denial, avoiding thought of personal responsibility for the problem and the solutions.

Learning from our Covid response and other emergencies we have faced...

What we have done for Covid we can do for Climate... or can we?

Covid has increased our awareness of how vulnerable we are in the face of global problems, attributable to circumstances well beyond our control. Faced with a potentially deplorable situation (to be seen in the media on a daily basis) we trusted the Government and their advice from experts to do what was needed. Throughout 2020 many suffered appalling devastation to years of work or a lifetime of health... lives were harshly dismantled. And yet there were benefits, people were involved - they rallied to help one another, buckled down, worked and schooled from home and showed amazing innovation to adjust to their sudden circumstances. Enjoyment came from time for family and space for nature... and for the environment a positive, cutting emissions produced environmental, economic and health benefits.

¹¹ This is particularly important given the comments on the opposition spokesperson on Climate Change, *i.e.* to the effect that it is imperative that the Government does not meddle with the freedoms of New Zealanders and finds solutions to achieving net zero carbon emissions using effective and rational policy. See <https://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/300216332/plans-to-reduce-emissions-must-not-meddle-with-personal-freedoms> The issue of personal freedom versus the responsibility to the common good could do with some parliamentary and public debate!

In his recent book on how we can learn from the Covid response and apply that to our climate emergencies, Tim Flannery has argued how well Australia has done in addressing COVID but not, as yet, the climate crises. He describes how Australia can build on that government leadership and the public willingness to cooperate to bring about the very changes that are necessary to reduce climate impacts and protect the population from the consequences.¹²

But in 2020, there were limitations to how well we could foresee and plan for the major disruption to our lives from the pandemic... while we were able to make rapid and radical changes there are now concerns that the costs of these changes have been borne inequitably. The Covid risk was greatest for the older members of society, so many made sacrifices for the few. The parallel with the climate crisis is we are asking for altruistic collaboration for the safety of our younger and future generations; for those at greatest risk. Despite the fact that the climate crisis is more encompassing, it is less tangible for most... something still in the distance and difficult to believe that one's own actions will impact. Quite different from Covid where clearly defined physical actions like keeping distance and wearing masks gave a sense of control. There is no doubt now that the country will need to be better prepared to ensure a just transition.

So, while research results indicate that we have many passionate people working towards a low emissions future, does this imply that the Government has enough of a mandate to move decisively on the climate crisis? The government is clearly faced with a dilemma. Yes, we have a crisis and the country needs to be told about the risks faced and the urgency with which changes need to be made. But will the team of five million be again prepared to come on board. Will they comply or will they resist? Will they accept that the primary responsibility of Government is the well-being of our people? Clearly, the establishment of the CCC is in an effort to determine a consensus going forward... to give the Government the mandate to make the necessary changes. **The key issue will be how to provide for a just transition... what does the Government need to do and what do we need to do?** For this reason it is understandable that they are interested in the public's view of citizens' assemblies. We come to this later...

Never has there been a more compelling argument for developing true partnerships between the levels of government across Aotearoa. As Rod Oram has cogently argued¹³, the most effective implementation of climate mitigation and adaptation policies must be at regional and local levels, where people live. In an article in February this year¹⁴, he is critical of the CCC for assuming urban life will continue largely unchanged, suggesting instead that our cities could be very different if we act on the opportunities to “respond effectively to the climate crisis while improving our lives physically, socially, culturally, environmentally and economically” by having a bolder vision of how our “urban forms and built environments (can be changed) so they are more beneficial to people and the climate.”

¹² Flannery, T. (2020) *The Climate Cure. Solving the Climate Emergency in the Era of COVID-19*

¹³ Rod Oram, *Three Cities: Seeking Hope in the Anthropocene*

¹⁴ <https://www.newsroom.co.nz/rod-oram-how-nature-can-save-our-cities>

Central government must facilitate the ability of regional and local government, Iwi authorities, DHBs etc to address the major challenges they face in effectively planning and providing for the wellbeing of their people as we enter an era of escalating climate crises. Regional and locally-based services will require support and resources, as will the councils in implementing the new ways of managing their processes (increased community involvement, engagement, participation and education, for example) and planning frameworks that set climate change mitigation and adaptation and sustainability principles as the highest priority considerations. As we have previously advocated, the involvement of psychologists as advisers and consultants in communicating with the public and involving people in decisions and action will be essential to the successful introduction and implementation of the necessary changes.

The Public as Partners

There are several points we would make re the CCC consultation question concerning inclusive and effective consultation, engagement and public participation that considers incorporating the views of all New Zealanders. We note that consultation, engagement and public participation are very different methods of involving the public¹⁵ with participatory processes being the most effective in achieving change. Participatory processes have featured in calls for climate action (since the Rio Declaration developed in 1992 Principle 10, and more recently^{16 17}).

There are two avenues along which we can consider our partnership with the wider public: one in relation to assisting the Government decide on the course best taken by Aotearoa towards a low emissions future, and two, how to involve New Zealanders in the work of voluntarily lowering carbon emissions.

Worldviews are entrenched ways of perceiving the world, which may be changed across the lifespan, often as a consequence of exposure to different forms of social messaging. Worldviews are typically unconscious, enculturated ways of being, which develop from the combined and cumulative influence of historical events and circumstances that individuals and their wider social group have been exposed to. They shape the specific types of knowledge valued, views about the nature of reality and existence, and understandings of the nature of the universe that cultural groups endorse.

Worldviews become important when considering the framing or messaging of public campaigns. By developing and advocating alternative worldviews, social movements expand the range of ideas available for people to consider, and when framed in a way that aligns with existing values, such alternative worldviews assist the successful adoption of transformative social movements. Several significant events over the past few years in Aotearoa New Zealand have demonstrated that embedding mātauranga Māori in public campaigns and responses has permeated the psyche of Aotearoa New Zealand society in

¹⁵ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.weadapt.org/knowledge-base/governance-institutions-and-policy/participatory-processes>

¹⁷ <https://www.climate-kic.org/insights/participatory-processes-for-decision-making-in-policy-learning/>

powerfully transformative ways, and thus provides a promising avenue for future messaging regarding climate change and how to bring the 'team of 5 million' on board once more.

Assessing the best way forward:

A Citizens' Assembly (People's Forum/Wānanga/Talanoa)

We note that as a public forum the citizens' assembly (CA) is being considered by many around the country and has been extolled by Extinction Rebellion as a 'must' do for Governments. There is considerable value in this approach particularly in that, in other countries this mechanism has been used to facilitate the Government's ability to fast track legislation for needed change. As we indicated before, the establishment of the CCC may well be in an effort to determine a consensus going forward... to give the Government the mandate to make the necessary changes. We note also that the fundamental question about the social mandate is that it requires deliberation, an exchange between citizens and state¹⁸ and certainly this is what can be provided by the many forms in which CAs are delivered. They can provide for and facilitate deliberative engagement¹⁹ and they can result in community and more general societal learning.

But... among the many characteristics of CAs that we could comment upon, we find that they involve (i) a European process that may not be culturally appropriate here; and (ii) the upskilling/informing of participants so they can take part in the deliberative process. In the latter we note that while science and social science play a key role in this process, research of CAs has indicated that it is who the scientists and nonscientists are, and how they present information to the assembly that can determine what information is accepted and acted upon. And further that the resulting recommendations may not be popular with the Government or the public.

However, for us in Aotearoa, it is the first of these points that is the most relevant and the one that requires our attention. As one of our members asked, "Can you imagine Maori or Pacific Islanders flocking to hear about what a 'Citizens Assembly' is on about?" and another reflected that the word 'citizen' still brought up images of communism and the associated way of life. Point taken!

So if the Government decides to take the opportunity to establish a CA **our recommendation** is that the terminology reflects more culturally appropriate practices. The term ***wānanga*** - which implies a forum for dedicated discussion and debate on a specific kaupapa/topic, may be useful. This would be guided by culturally appropriate practices such as kaumātua presence, incorporating tikanga to ensure all voices are given opportunity, Māori processes of building relationships and consensus. A close equivalent term in many Pacific languages (e.g., Tongan, Samoan, Fiji) is ***talanoa***. We suggest that these terms will resonate more with Māori and Pacific than 'citizens assembly' - which for some, also expresses colonial overtones.

¹⁸ See Dryzek, J.S. (2002) *Deliberative democracy and beyond: liberals, critics, contestations*. Oxford Uni. Press, Cambridge

¹⁹ Howarth, C. et. al. (2020) *Building a Social Mandate for Climate Action: Lessons from COVID-19*. *Environmental and Resource Economics* 76:1107-1115.

Do we need, though, a clearer social mandate between Government and the public to ensure that the required behaviour changes we have to make for a carbon resilient future be more acceptable? Are there other ways this mandate can be achieved for government other than through a process like a citizens' assembly? Of interest is to ask ourselves: to what extent do we need the voice of all New Zealanders to be heard? Does it not depend on the nature of the crisis? If we were at war, we would not expect leaders to go out to everyone to find out how we should fight our war. Or does the fact that we are in a long slow emergency rather than an acute one mean that more of this consultation is possible?

We also need to be clear that "hearing" the voices of all does not necessarily mean all views can be accommodated; a 'consensus' on emissions targets, for example, might be very different in a dairying community from that in an urban one. Furthermore, seeking a national agreement might well involve arriving at an "average" position, a compromise that is not going to help us meet our climate targets or provide for future security. It also needs to be acknowledged that there are "voices" other than human ones that may need to be heard; for example those of Nature, the environment, culture and science. How do we amplify the voice of the Te Urewera, and Whanganui Awa? Should we not amplify the messages of those who "represent" the environment as a necessary partner in existence, a focus that dramatically changes the narrative. That concept reflects an Indigenous perspective where the environment is viewed as a parent, especially a mother.

Supporting emissions reductions through behaviour change ... 'going with the energy'...

So how can we actively encourage decarbonisation? How do we get the team of five million on board again? There is an old adage in the work of clinical psychologists called "Going with the Energy" that suggests that when wanting people to change, it is best to work with where they 'are at' in terms of their key desires, their key concerns or present skill level. Knowing what makes people passionate about climate change provides a basis for also understanding the underlying drivers... the motivations of why people do, or do not engage in behaviours that better care for and protect the environment, and who and what are the supports available to them to enable that change.

Psychology is the science that, more than any other, informs us about what motivates people to take action or to change their behaviour. It is focused on understanding people's thinking, feelings and behaviour, and how and why they react to their physical and social environment and what mediates their responses. We all understand the importance of rewards and incentives in influencing behaviour change and realise the role these have in encouraging more sustainable practices such as providing subsidies for electric vehicle purchases, making clean energy more affordable, encouraging the uptake of more efficient "newer technologies", subsidising the use of public transport, funding research into low-emission options, enabling solar/wind power conversions and providing fair payments for energy contributed to the national grid.

However, it is important that we not only see people as individual or collective consumers (e.g. purchasers of food, electricity, and fossil fuels for cars and home heating) whose behaviour change will reduce emissions if their choices are more sustainable ones. The

“marketplace” is not the only sphere of influence for the people; a recent article provides an insight into how psychology can assist in understanding the power of people to change emissions through actions that go well beyond their activities as consumers, such as through their collective ability to influence decision-makers in levels of government and those in industry.²⁰

Previous research has indicated that individual and collective actions oriented toward environmental sustainability (in whatever form that might take) are strongly associated with community identity. Our social context and the groups we belong to have a powerful influence over our attitudes, beliefs and behaviour. As group members we adopt similar attitudes and beliefs and often engage in behaviours that overtly align with our in-group norms, conveying our membership status to others. Creating a sense of collective ‘Kiwi’ identity related to climate change, which also includes Māori and non-Māori perspectives, is pertinent to engaging people to ‘change’ their behaviour to reduce or mitigate the effects of climate change.

So, while citizens’ assemblies are potentially a valuable tool (if our respective cultures are visible and active participants) we believe we can do more than incorporate views... we can implement change processes that are based on wider social dialogue. We already have a strong climate change movement within Aotearoa: conservation networks, landcare networks, Transition Town networks, energy descent networks, community garden networks, organic farmer networks and many more. Much could be gained by mapping their existence. To then use the power of these existing social networks for wider national dialogue on climate change would enable communities and regions particularly affected by climate change to tackle their unique challenges. We note that such actions are in alignment with the advice to be given the Government as outlined in Necessary action 1.

We can *involve* people by ensuring their access to information and their opportunities to participate in decision making processes are equitable. We can facilitate the efforts of iwi, hapū and whānau, and city and town networks to coordinate mitigation actions - working to construct bottom up rather than top down solutions to their emissions targets... at the same time working in ways that acknowledge their diversity... In this way, economic development paths and priorities can be determined locally and planning processes can become more transparent and more inclusive²¹ while facilitating change (capacity building and climate action).

For this reason, we:

(i) are in whole hearted agreement with Necessary action 16: Support behaviour change, that recommends that the Government embed behaviour change as a desired outcome in its climate change policies and programmes in order to enable New Zealanders to make choices that support low emissions outcomes; and

²⁰ Nielsen, K. S., Clayton, S., Stern, P. C., Dietz, T., Capstick, S., & Whitmarsh, L. (2021). How psychology can help limit climate change. *American Psychologist*, 76(1), 130–144.

²¹After Atteridge, A., & Strambo, C. (2020). Seven principles to realize a just transition to a low-carbon economy (p.19). Stockholm Environment Institute. <https://www.sei.org/publications/seven-principles-to-realize-a-just-transition-to-a-low-carbon-economy/>

(ii) give our enthusiastic support for Necessary action 18, Building a Māori emissions profile and the urgency with which you are recommending this, i.e. that the Government facilitate a programme to support Māori-collectives (particularly at an iwi level) to capture and control their emissions profiles within their respective takiwā. Their leadership in achieving climate positive goals we are sure will be welcome.

Our Global Partnership with other countries...

The CCC's advice does recognize that on the present trajectory, we will meet the emissions reductions as specified in our Zero Carbon Act but we will be unable to meet our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commitment made for the 2015 Paris Agreement. We are concerned that this is a major shortcoming of the CCC's plan that may contribute to further injustice. We do not agree that overseas credits be bought to address the discrepancy between the modelled emissions trajectory and that of our international commitment.

We submit therefore, in regard to Consultation question 4: Limit on offshore mitigation for emissions budgets and circumstances justifying its use, that we do not support the budget recommendation.

As one of the most fortunate countries in terms of resourcing, benevolent climate, etc., we should be leading the way in emissions reductions. If we can't do it then how can we expect countries with far less enviable circumstances to do their bit? This is particularly concerning as it seems the more vulnerable are experiencing the impacts of climate disturbance that others generated. Our understanding is that only two countries are on schedule to meet their international commitments, so it would appear that overseas credits, if accessed, would be at the expense of the 'other' country meeting its commitments. It would seem that we would be engaging in a modern form of colonialism... where the resources of vulnerable countries are exploited for the benefit of another.

Meeting our international commitments is one of the most important things we can do immediately for our Pacific neighbours. It is also the most valuable step we can take for those in our society who are expected to be more vulnerable to the consequences of climate breakdown. It is they who are among those who will be saddled with the debt we have incurred through our carbon-rich lifestyles. Aotearoa/New Zealand needs to honour the commitment we made to reduce our emissions to levels that, if collectively achieved, provide the world's people with some hope of limiting global heating to less than the potentially devastating 2°C and preferably closer to the "safer" 1.5°C level.

Our Partnership with future generations: Fairness and paying forward

Under what circumstances is leaving any work to be done by future generations fair? We believe that the Commission's balance between requiring the current generation to take action and leaving future generations to do more work to meet the 2050 target and beyond

is not fair. It is important for this generation to achieve (as much as possible) if we are to honour our commitment to intergenerational justice. A relevant question is, 'what kind of ancestor do we wish to be?' Our generation has done well, having had opportunities that will be only dreamt of by the millions that follow us. It is time for us to 'pay forward', acknowledging our virtual partnership with the future.

This is particularly the case, as at the moment and in most instances, the initial reductions in emissions are likely to be the more easily achieved (the "low hanging fruit") and subsequent incremental reductions will become more of a challenge and more expensive. Greater reductions achieved earlier will also make it more likely that we can meet global targets and reduce the extent and risk of catastrophic climate change impacts.

There are also concerns around IPCC conservatism given the nature of their consensus driven process²². Additionally, new information is emerging on a regular basis to indicate that the science information we are receiving veers on the conservative side. Climate change is occurring far more rapidly than we have expected. We are concerned that the emissions budgets in their current state will not limit warming to 1.5°C. We believe a far more precautionary approach is essential.

Our relationship in partnership with future generations is largely one-sided; most of us cannot expect to enter a dialogue with those who will exist on the planet at the end of the century. So, we have a moral and ethical obligation to plan to achieve the major repair and mitigation mahi while we have that opportunity, in the hope that we can avert the worst outcomes of climate change and shift the delicate balance towards restoration.

Indigenous perspectives provide a useful philosophical foundation for addressing this partnership. For example, the iwi Te Arawa have a hashtag called *#mokopunadecisions*, which reminds, reinforces and acknowledges that all Te Arawa iwi initiatives, especially when it comes to climate change, must be developed and conducted with the best interests of the coming generations in mind. The Cherokee Nation offers a similar perspective, through always looking seven generations ahead with regard to climate change, thus ensuring the environment is suitably sustained for those who will be here seven generations into the future. These perspectives create a mindset that implores a beneficial and sustainable environmental legacy for future generations.

Our Partnership with science, business and industries

Like many, we are concerned about the changes businesses face as they adjust to the reality of climate disruption. Our concern here though, as psychologists, is with the **growing inequality** we experience in Aotearoa and how this may well contribute to increasing civil unrest. Our understanding is that this will be of particular concern as food and energy security are threatened. While as a discipline we anticipate we will direct our attention to

²² Salvador Herrando-Pérez, Corey J A Bradshaw, Stephan Lewandowsky, David R Vieites. Statistical Language Backs Conservatism in Climate-Change Assessments. *BioScience*, 2019; 69 (3): 209 DOI: 10.1093/biosci/biz004

this more fully in the near future, we take the opportunity to raise some quite different issues that may impact on how we tackle inequality and improve our chances for a just transition.

On reading the advice, and reflecting on the more Western style of delivery, it is apparent that the CCC have been concerned by the questions of “What?” and “How?” but have come less to the deeper question of “Why?”. That is, for example, we are asked *what* needs to happen to ensure the vulnerable are protected and *how* it is to be done but the question of *why* we have the vulnerable is not covered. While this is best explained by the terms of reference that the CCC are to work within, it is still an important part of ensuring a just and inclusive transition that we ask these questions.

A systems approach to understand the cause of these problems seems important to their solution. What are we doing about a system that is creating this... what system changes are required? We cannot deal with the climate crisis without addressing the root causes of the problem. So **we ask** that the CCC negotiate their terms of reference/engagement with the Government so as to include an extended brief that includes a systems analysis to enable these more complex issues to be effectively addressed.

We note also that the Climate Change Commission assesses the impact of reaching the emissions budgets in terms of GDP and maintaining growth and yet GDP is part of an economic model that has led to the climate crisis. And despite best intentions, economic growth has not been decoupled from resource use. It would seem we can still use the planet’s resources in a way that outstrips its ability to replenish. Our experience is that many people do not understand what GDP measures and how it relates to their lives. They are not aware that the presently used economic model fails to take into account environmental and community health and wellbeing so their damage is not signaled.

Why, for example, do we still allow enterprise that contributes to ill health of people and planet? We are frustrated, as psychologists, at having to treat people who have in one way or another suffered in their working environments. So, we follow with interest the economic and business developments, primarily overseas at the moment that work to maximize the ability for people and communities to flourish. This concerns in particular the shifts within business to realign fiduciary duties^{23 24} to take into account planet as well as profit. As UK economist Jackson points out, our enterprises need to be repositioned to align with service... whether this be to people or planet ²⁵.

We understand there are GDP alternatives that more appropriately measure environmental and human health and well-being. Alternative measures of wellbeing, already developed by the Treasury, are a welcome step in this direction and can involve wider transparency, awareness, and participation. In this regard the use of the He Ara Wairoa framework is an exciting development. **We ask** that the CCC encourage the Government to further develop

²³ Kelly, M. & Howard, T. (2019) *The Making of a Democratic Economy: Building Prosperity for the Many, Not Just the Few*. Berrett-Koehler Pub., Oakland, California, USA

²⁴ https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/24/b-corps-capitalism-for-an-environmentally-endangered-age?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

²⁵ Jackson, T. (2017) *Prosperity without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow* 2nd Ed.

and urgently adopt economic metrics enabling effective assessments of the health and wellbeing of people and planet²⁶.

Climate patterns and predictability: We understand that business leaders have asked for certainty.. we all want to know what is ahead... but there will be no certainty and this increased uncertainty will not be a failure of our Government policies or the science that guides us. It is a byproduct of our climate crisis. We are being warned by the dangerous extremes that are hitting us and our Pacific neighbours. The reality is that businesses have to take this matter seriously, far more seriously than at present. This is the certainty message they need right now. Our natural response to uncertainty is to take precautions and businesses are no exception. Businesses must be planning and budgeting for dramatically better sustainability practices and low-carbon emission processes and products. While that imposes a burden, likely to be transferred to consumers, the impact can be much less costly than is often claimed by those opposing change²⁷.

Support and Recommendations

We ask the Climate Change Commission to urge the Government to work on establishing empowered communities with an interest in collectively achieving behavioural change and enhanced wellbeing, through effective partnerships.

Understanding, establishing and engaging in partnerships is essential to the successful achievement of climate change goals and emissions reduction targets.

In regard to Consultation question 7 regarding creating a genuine, active and enduring partnership with iwi/Māori **we support** the points covered in enabling recommendation 3 and appreciate the efforts the Commission has taken to draw on *He Ara Waiora* to help New Zealanders understand wellbeing from a framework that incorporates some aspects of Te Ao Māori into a future-focussed tax system.

We encourage the Commission to explore the utility of Kaupapa Māori perspectives that are “wellbeing-centric”, which may provide a more intimate understanding of the inter-relativity between climate change and Māori well-being, and how Māori perspectives may provide a valuable contribution to informing behaviour change strategies with regards to climate change.

²⁶<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-20/-years-of-good-life-is-the-latest-measure-of-global-warming-s-impact>

²⁷ For example, the government’s 2025 emission reduction targets for agriculture have been calculated (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/consensus-reached-reducing-agricultural-emissions>) to produce increases of only 1c per kg of milk solids and 1c per kg of beef, 3c for lamb and 4c for venison, hardly problematic for consumers if not passed on at inflated rates that boost company profits. Fonterra's and beef & lamb price announcements can fluctuate by margins over a dollar so increases of a small number of cents is insignificant. Furthermore, any inequitable carbon costs transferred to consumers need to be offset by compensatory payments by government from carbon levies on less sustainable activities.

In regard then to Consultation question 1, as to whether there is anything that should be changed regarding the principles that have guided the CCC analysis, **we ask** that an eighth principle on Partnership be included with reference to the fact that it would be an integral consideration in relation to all seven other principles.

In relation to the CCCs Consultation question 13 as to whether enough has been done to ensure an equitable, inclusive and well-planned climate transition, **we ask** that the CCC add the following step to Necessary action 1: That Government takes immediate steps to communicate clearly to the people of this country the nature of the crisis we face, what we intend to do to avert risks (where practicable) and how we are to play our part in reducing the main causes (i.e., reducing emissions, etc.).

In this context **we also stress the importance of**

- (i) cross-party support (Enabling recommendation 1)²⁸;
- (ii) coordinating efforts to address climate change across government (Enabling recommendation 2) and
- (iii) central and local government working in partnership (Enabling recommendation 4).

Further, we believe the information available in the Advice is a high value contribution to the climate change and carbon reduction deliberations. **We therefore urge the CCC to recommend** to the Government that the information in the Advice be more widely distributed in formats that are more easily understood by a diversity of audiences.

If the Government agrees to establish a citizen's assembly, **our recommendation** is that the terminology uses more culturally appropriate practices. The term wānanga - which implies a forum for dedicated discussion and debate on a specific kaupapa/topic, may be useful. This would be guided by culturally appropriate practices (e.g., sometimes but not always kaumātua presence, incorporating tikanga to ensure all voices are given opportunity, etc). A close equivalent term in many Pacific languages (e.g., Tongan, Samoan, Fiji) is talanoa.

In regard to Consultation question 4: Limit on offshore mitigation for emissions budgets and circumstances justifying its use, **we submit that we do not support** the budget recommendation. We do not agree that overseas credits be bought to address the discrepancy between the modelled emissions trajectory and that of our international commitment. We are concerned that this is a failure and major shortcoming of the CCC's plan.

²⁸ This is particularly important given the comments on the opposition spokesperson on Climate Change, *i.e.* to the effect that it is imperative that the Government does not meddle with the freedoms of New Zealanders and finds solutions to achieving net zero carbon emissions using effective and rational policy. See <https://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/300216332/plans-to-reduce-emissions-must-not-meddle-with-personal-freedoms> The issue of personal freedom versus the responsibility to the common good could do with some parliamentary and public debate!

We ask that the CCC encourage the Government to further develop and urgently adopt economic metrics enabling effective assessments of the health and wellbeing of people and planet²⁹.

We ask that the CCC negotiate their terms of reference with the Government so as to include an extended brief that ensures these more complex issues are effectively addressed, *i.e.* why we have the problems that contribute to our climate crisis as well as what and how to be dealt with.

We

(i) are in whole hearted agreement with Necessary action 16: Support behaviour change, that recommends that the Government embed behaviour change as a desired outcome in its climate change policies and programmes in order to enable New Zealanders to make choices that support low emissions outcomes; and

(ii) give our enthusiastic support for Necessary action 18, Building a Māori emissions profile and the urgency with which you are recommending this, *i.e.* that the Government facilitate a programme to support Māori-collectives (particularly at an iwi level) to capture and control their emissions profiles within their respective takiwā. Their leadership in achieving climate positive goals we are sure will be welcome.

Note:

The Society's Climate Psychology Task force is willing to meet with the Commission and/or members of Government to explain or expand upon points and issues identified in our submission. We can arrange to do that in person or online (or a combination of those modes).

We are also available to advise on matters related to the implementation of the Commission's advice and recommendations, particularly where that entails communication and decision-making processes requiring collective and collaborative engagement of people.

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²⁹<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-20/-years-of-good-life-is-the-latest-measure-of-global-warming-s-impact>