



Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust
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16 July 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission on the Zero Carbon Bill 2018

Please find enclosed the submission on the Zero Carbon Bill from the Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust (BRCT). BRCT is a registered charitable trust formed in 2008 to work collaboratively on local climate solutions. Jeanette Fitzsimons is our patron, and we are governed by a volunteer board of community leaders: Jacinta Ruru (Chair), Charles Abraham (Treasurer), Metiria Turei, Craig Marshall, Anna Marsich and Dell McLeod (Trustees). Scott Willis is Trust Manager and Camilla Cox policy analyst.

Thank you for this opportunity to be present our submission on this very important piece of legislation. We would also welcome any opportunity to participate in any ongoing discussions or reference groups that might emerge from the Zero Carbon Bill.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Cox', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

ff Jacinta Ruru (Chair)

2050 Target

1 *What process should the Government use to set a new emissions reduction target in legislation?*

The Government should set a 2050 target in legislation now.

Reducing our emissions is going to require focussed effort. We need to know what our target is if we are to have any hope of achieving it.

2 *If the government sets a 2050 target now, which is the best target for New Zealand? Net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by 2015.*

We have sufficient scientific evidence to show that a difference will only be made if all GHGs are controlled. If we are going to do this, it needs to be science-based and it needs to be done right.

3. *How should New Zealand meet its targets?*

Domestic emissions reductions only (including from new forest planting.)

4. *Should the Zero Carbon Bill allow the 2050 target to be revised if circumstances change?*

Yes, but only in response to climate science, not economics or political whim.

Emissions Budgets

5. *The government proposes that three emissions budgets of five years each (ie covering the next fifteen years) be in place at any given time. Do you agree with this proposal?*

Yes

6. *Should the government be able to alter the last emissions budget (ie furthest into the future)?*

Yes, the third emissions budget should be able to be changed, but only when the subsequent budget is set and only in response to climate science.

7. *Should the government have the ability to review and adjust the second emissions budget within a specific range under exceptional circumstances?*

Yes, but only in response to climate science.

8. *Do you agree with the considerations we propose that the Government and the Climate Change Commission take into account when advising on and setting budgets?*

Yes, but with a caveat about the weight given to these considerations.

It needs to be recognised and accepted in the CCCs brief that achieving zero emissions will have an impact on every aspect of our lives. The impact on the economy has been modelled, but unexpected events may change the future in profound ways. There will always be a temptation—

for decision makers, for business, for individuals—to defer the difficult decisions until later (have we not been doing this for decades?). To avoid just repeating the mistakes of the past, the objective of reducing emissions needs to be prioritised. We can no longer buy our way out of this slow emergency by having good economic returns today. We have to bite the bullet and the weighing of the considerations needs to reflect this unpalatable fact.

Government responses

9. *Should the Zero Carbon Bill require Governments to set out plans within a certain time frame to achieve emissions budgets?*

Yes

10. *What are the most important issues for the Government to consider in setting plans to meet budgets? For example, who do we need to work with, what else do we need to consider?*

BRCT considers there is a need to engage with groups like ours that are already working on climate change related projects in a local area, including a local renewable energy network and our Climate Safe House project, to make sure Government leverages off existing know-how, builds on flax roots initiatives and supports practical, community driven projects that are already gaining traction.

Setting plans to meet emissions targets is going to require broad inclusion of Government agencies and institutional arrangements including supportive legislation. For us to succeed with the zero carbon goal, planning cannot occur in a silo. The job of zero carbon cannot just be the purview of one agency—it needs to be a target for all, including local bodies and government agencies like transport, housing, agriculture, and business development.

Legislation and government procedures that impact on the ZCB objectives should be reviewed. The BRCT urges that one important initiative would be the creation of a National Environmental Standard for Small Scale Wind as recommended by the 2011 Board of Inquiry on the National Policy statement for Renewable Energy Generation. As the legislative environment is currently, the national importance of local wind is not adequately recognised and no clear framework exists to guide applicants or communities, with the result that opportunities for clean, renewable local energy are being missed.

Government processes that affect investment decisions should also be examined, including the practices of economic analysis used in budgeting. For example, when conducting cost benefit analyses on investments from school buildings, to roads, to pest eradications we have historically omitted emissions as a cost. This is a common practice, but it is a practice that has delivered us to the place we are now as one of the highest per capita carbon emitters on the planet. Investment decisions across government (local and central) need more accurately to reflect the full cost of the options, both for now and for future generations.

Climate Change Commission

11. *The government has proposed that the Climate Change Commission advises on and monitors New Zealand's progress towards its goals? Do you agree with these functions?*

Yes

12. *What role do you think the Climate Change Commission should have in relation to the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme?*

Either role could be effective. The critical issue is that: (1) the purpose of the ETS needs to be clearly defined as achieving a zero carbon economy and (2) decisions about the number of units, pricing etc, are made to achieve that purpose of zero carbon. If giving the CCC the role of determining ETS units gives the ETS more credibility and independence, then this would be a good choice.

13. *The Government has proposed that Climate Change Commissioners need to have a range of essential and desirable expertise. Do you agree with the proposed expertise?*

Yes, but with some addition.

To achieve zero carbon there will need to be new approaches to our day-to-day decision making. If we keep doing things the same way, we'll end up with the same outcomes. The membership of the CCC and its skill mix should reflect this need for a break from approaches and paradigms that have dominated Governance in New Zealand for the past few decades. It cannot be business as usual and the CCC needs to embody the new direction.

Because achieving zero carbon will require change, the CCC may need expertise in science communication and education. For example, the Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust has experience trying to establish a small scale wind farm in the local area. One of the common objections to wind farms is their impact on visual amenity. Unfortunately, without understanding of the context of alternative and renewable energy and the need for a move to clean energy, objection on the grounds of visual amenity became an absolute refusal to compromise and a roadblock on the zero carbon pathway.

Similarly, the need to refocus society and its functions in order to respond adequately to climate change indicates that expertise in wellbeing economics or circular economy would be beneficial on the CCC.

Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change

14. *Do you think the Zero Carbon Bill should cover adaptation to climate change?*

Yes

We are already seeing the effects of climate change in our local community in Blueskin Bay. After several flood events, a flax roots response emerged from the Blueskin community resulting in the formation of the BRCT. This response includes the Climate Safe House project and the Blueskin Energy Network. As community practitioners we understand that the journey will be messy and that it will be a challenging task to build collective action for responding to climate change, but that it is also necessary to start. We recommend the following principals for government in its approach to climate adaption.

- Embrace risk and experimentation in evaluation of actions (**practice Adaptive Governance**)
- Work with the community sector to build deeper community engagement and create opportunities to share knowledge and build capacity (**invest in Community**)
- Recognise the value of the government as 'honest broker' to sponsor and broker relationships across different sectors (**practice good Stewardship**).

15. *The government has proposed a number of new functions to help us adapt to climate*

change. Do you agree with the proposed functions?

Yes

16. *Should we explore setting up a targeted adaptation reporting power that could see some organisations share information on their exposure to climate risk?*

Yes.