

Working Paper 2024/04

Existing climate strategy of Aotearoa New Zealand as at December 2023

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1.0 Introduction

This strategy map is intended to be a comprehensive overview of the wider strategy the government has in place to address climate change as at December 2023, including adaptation strategies and instruments, mitigation strategies and instruments to meet international obligations, and national and international key players. The new coalition government may alter some aspects of the existing strategy.

Durable and stable policy is important for business. It is therefore important to note that on 8 April 2024, the Prime Minister released nine targets during his post-Cabinet press conference, saying they will require the public sector to think differently and do deep dives into the root causes of key issues. The last of these targets is:

Reduced net greenhouse gas emissions: On track to meet New Zealand's 2050 net zero climate change targets, with total net emissions of no more than 290 megatonnes from 2022 to 2025 and 305 megatonnes from 2026 to 2030.¹

We also note that the 2023 Blueprint for a Better Environment states:

National is absolutely committed to New Zealand's climate change targets, including:

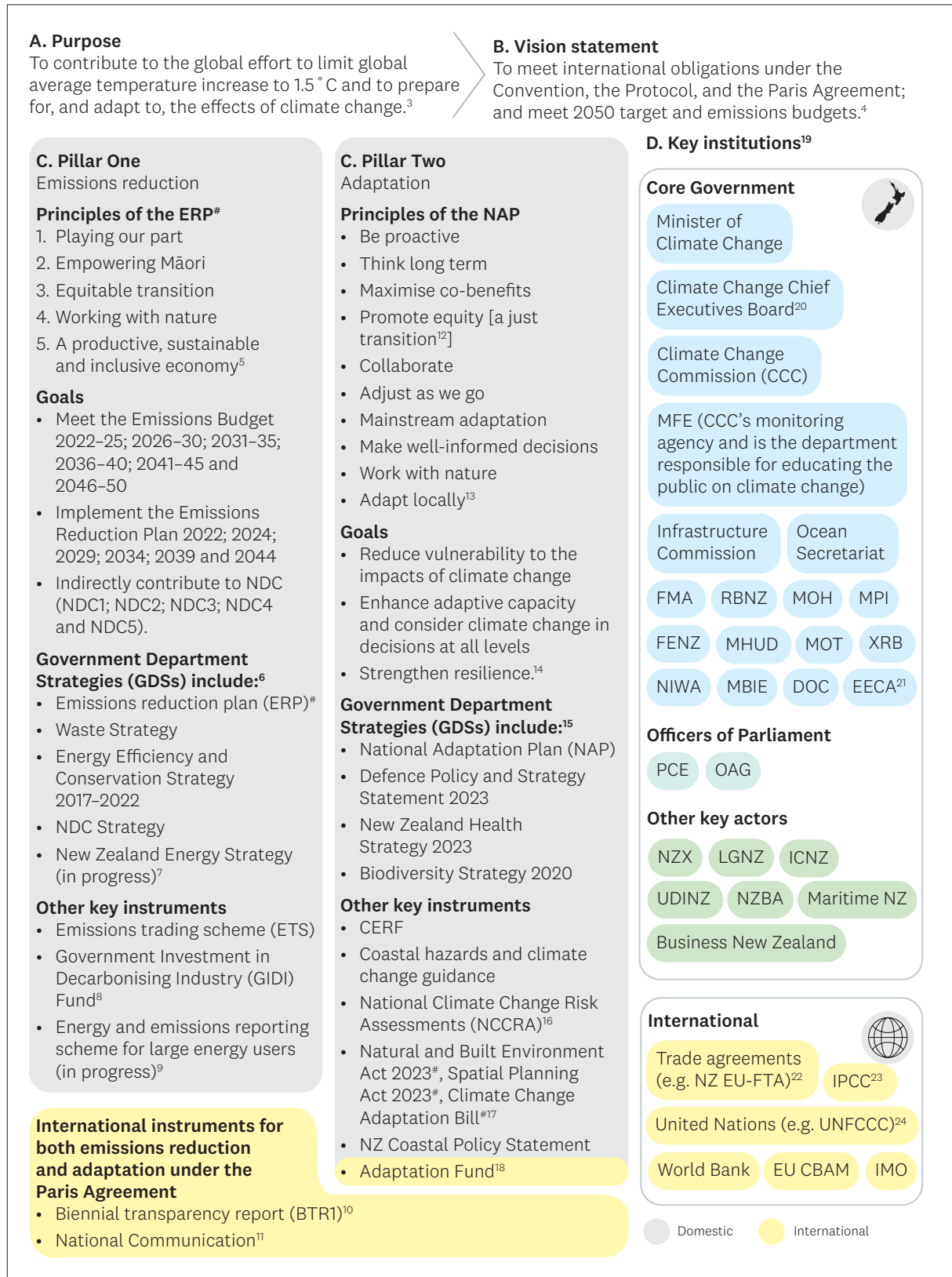
- Net zero greenhouse gas emissions excluding biogenic methane by 2050;
- Biogenic methane reduced by 10% by 2030 and 24–47% by 2050 compared to 2017 levels; and
- New Zealand's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Climate Agreement to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to 50% below gross 2005 levels by 2030.²

The purpose of this strategy map is to clearly summarise New Zealand's climate strategy as at December 2023, to be used as a tool for discussions about New Zealand's climate strategy going forward.

2.0 Existing climate strategy of Aotearoa New Zealand as at December 2023

Figure 1: Existing climate strategy of Aotearoa New Zealand as at December 2023

Note: A hash (#) refers to areas where the new government has indicated a change in strategy may occur. See Note, overleaf.



Appendix 1: Abbreviations

BTR1	Biennial transparency report
CCC	Climate Change Commission
CERF	Climate Emergency Response Fund
DOC	Department of Conservation
EECA	Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority
ERP	Emissions reduction plan
ETS	Emissions trading scheme
EU CBAM	European Union Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
FENZ	Fire and Emergency New Zealand
FMA	Financial Markets Authority
GIDI	Government Investment in Decarbonising Industry
GDS	Government Department Strategy
ICNZ	Insurance Council of New Zealand
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LGNZ	Local Government New Zealand
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
MfE	Ministry for the Environment
MfW	Ministry for Women
MHUD	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBE	Natural and Built Environment
NCCRA	National Climate Change Risk Assessment
NDC	Nationally determined contributions
NIWA	National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research
NZBA	New Zealand Banking Association
NZ EU-FTA	New Zealand-European Union Free Trade Agreement
NZX	New Zealand's Exchange
OAG	Office of the Auditor-General
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
RBNZ	Reserve Bank of New Zealand
UDINZ	Urban Development Institute of New Zealand
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
XRБ	External Reporting Board

Endnotes

1 See the New Zealand Herald (April 2024). PM Christopher Luxon unveils nine new public service targets by 2030 at post-Cabinet press conference. Retrieved 10 May 2024 from www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/pm-christopher-luxon-unveils-nine-new-public-service-targets-by-2030-at-post-cabinet-press-conference/VUQR5B6VTZEV7JDS6BKSXXAF74

2 The National Party's 2023 Blueprint for a Better Environment states:

National is absolutely committed to New Zealand's climate change targets, including:

Net zero greenhouse gas emissions excluding biogenic methane by 2050;

Biogenic methane reduced by 10% by 2030 and 24–47% by 2050 compared to 2017 levels; and

New Zealand's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Climate Agreement to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to 50% below gross 2005 levels by 2030.

and

Fixing planning laws

The RMA has buried the economy in red tape but failed to deliver the environmental protection we need. The Government's RMA 2.0 legislation is even worse.

National will:

1. **Repeal the Natural and Built Environment Act** and related legislation by Christmas 2023 with planning to revert to previous RMA rules.
2. **Amend existing rules to support rapid investment in infrastructure while protecting the environment**
 - National will introduce or update National Policy Statements and National Environmental Standards for freshwater, housing, energy, transport, and water infrastructure to support investment within environmental limits.
3. **Commence work to replace the RMA** with a planning act and a natural environment act. The replacement legislation will go back to basics to make it easier to build housing and infrastructure. First readings for both bills will be in the first term. As part of the RMA replacement programme, National will consider ways to rebalance Te Mana o te Wai to better reflect the interests of all water users.

See National Party of New Zealand. *Blueprint for a Better Environment (2023)*. pp. 6, 10. Retrieved 7 March 2024 from assets.nationbuilder.com/nationalparty/pages/18458/attachments/original/1697152275/Blueprint_for_a_Better_Environment.pdf?1697152275

3 See for example:

Section 3 (1)(aa)(i) and (ii) of the Climate Change Response Act 2002.

3 Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Act is to—

(aa) provide a framework by which New Zealand can develop and implement clear and stable climate change policies that—

(i) contribute to the global effort under the Paris Agreement to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels; and

(ii) allow New Zealand to prepare for, and adapt to, the effects of climate change:

(a) enable New Zealand to meet its international obligations under the Convention, the Protocol, and the Paris Agreement, including (but not limited to)—

(i) its obligation under Article 3.1 of the Protocol to retire Kyoto units

- equal to the number of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent of human-induced greenhouse gases emitted from the sources listed in Annex A of the Protocol in New Zealand in the first commitment period starting on 1 January 2008 and ending on 31 December 2012; and
- (ii) its obligation to report to the Conference of the Parties via the Secretariat under Article 12 of the Convention, Article 7 of the Protocol, and Article 13 of the Paris Agreement:
- (b) provide for the implementation, operation, and administration of a greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme in New Zealand that supports and encourages global efforts to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by—
 - (i) **assisting New Zealand to meet its international obligations under the Convention, the Protocol, and the Paris Agreement; and**
 - (ii) **assisting New Zealand to meet its 2050 target and emissions budgets:**
 - (c) provide for the imposition, operation, and administration of a levy on specified synthetic greenhouse gases contained in motor vehicles and also another levy on other goods to support and encourage global efforts to reduce the emission of those gases by—
 - (i) assisting New Zealand to meet its international obligations under the Convention, the Protocol, and the Paris Agreement; and
 - (ii) assisting New Zealand to meet its 2050 target and emissions budgets. [bold added]

This is further supported by Article 2.1(a) of the Paris Agreement:

Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;

See also the Climate Change Response Act 2002, Part 1B, Subpart 1 – 2050 target

5Q Target for 2050

- (1) The target for emissions reduction (the 2050 target) requires that—
 - (a) net accounting emissions of greenhouse gases in a calendar year, other than biogenic methane[*], are zero by the calendar year beginning on 1 January 2050 and for each subsequent calendar year; and
 - (b) emissions of biogenic methane in a calendar year—
 - (i) are 10% less than 2017 emissions by the calendar year beginning on 1 January 2030; and
 - (ii) are 24% to 47% less than 2017 emissions by the calendar year beginning on 1 January 2050 and for each subsequent calendar year.
- (2) The 2050 target will be met if emissions reductions meet or exceed those required by the target.
- (3) In this section, 2017 emissions means the emissions of biogenic methane for the calendar year beginning on 1 January 2017.

Note: [* directly above] See also the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). (2022). Pricing agricultural emissions: Report under section 215 of the Climate Change Response Act 2002. Retrieved 4 March 2023 from environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Pricing-agricultural-emissions-report-under-section-215-of-the-CCRA.pdf

4 See Endnote 3.

5 See the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). (May 2022). Te hau mārohi ki anamata: Towards a productive, sustainable and inclusive economy: Aotearoa New Zealand’s first emissions reduction plan. (p. 11). Retrieved 3 March 2024 from environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Aotearoa-New-Zealands-first-emissions-reduction-plan.pdf

6 Explicit and Implicit mentions of climate change in operational Government Department Strategies (GDSs) as at 31 December 2023

See full list in the 2023 GDS Index operational GDSs table our *GDS Index* page. Please note that this is not the complete list and the table is frequently updated on our website as new information becomes available. The table can be retrieved from www.mcguinnessinstitute.org/research-projects/civics-nz/gds-index

Definitions:

- Explicit – a detailed mention of climate change with discussion of how the department is responding. There are 44 out of 295 GDSs that explicitly mentioned climate change.
- Implicit – a minimal mention of climate change with little or no discussion of how the department is responding. There are 45 out of 295 GDSs that implicitly mentioned climate change.

Explicit mentions of ‘climate’, in operational Government Department Strategies (GDSs) as at 31 December 2023:

1. Adapt and thrive: Building a climate-resilient New Zealand – New Zealand's first national adaptation plan (MfE)
2. Advanced Manufacturing Industry Transformation Plan (MBIE)
3. Agritech Industry Transformation Plan (MBIE)
4. Antarctic and Southern Ocean Research Directions and Priorities 2021–2030 (LINZ, MPI, MBIE and MFAT)
5. Aotearoa New Zealand Aerospace Strategy 2023-2030 (MBIE)
6. Aotearoa New Zealand Freight and Supply Chain Strategy (MoT)
7. Aotearoa New Zealand International Climate Finance Strategy – Tuia te Waka a Kiwa
8. Aquaculture Strategy (MPI)
9. Biosecurity Science Strategy for New Zealand – Mahere Rautaki Putaiao Whakamaru (MPI)
10. Building for the Future: Building System Regulatory Strategy (MBIE)
11. Charging Our Future: National electric vehicle charging strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand 2023-2035 (MoT)
12. Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (DOC)
13. Critical Ecosystem Pressures on Freshwater Environments (CRESP) 4 year research strategy (DOC)
14. Customs Strategy 2023–2028 (NZCS)
15. Defence Capability Plan 2019 (MoD)
16. Defence Policy and Strategy Statement 2023 (MoD)
17. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy 2017–2022 (MBIE)
18. Framework for Shaping our Transport System (MoT)
19. Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021/22–2030/31 (MoT)
20. He Puna Hao Pātiki: 2022 Investment Statement (Treasury)
21. Heritage and Visitor Strategy – He Rautaki Taonga Tuku Iho, Manuhiri Tūarangi hoki (DOC)
22. MAIHI Ka Ora: The National Māori Housing Strategy (HUD & TPK)
23. Maritime Security Strategy (MoT)
24. Mātauranga Whakauka Taiao – Environmental Education for Sustainability (DOC & MfE)
25. New Zealand Health Strategy 2023 (MoH)
26. Ngā Awa river restoration programme (DOC)
27. Our Economic Plan: Supporting Aotearoa New Zealand to become a high wage low emissions economy that provides economic security in good times and bad (MBIE)
28. Our Science Strategy – Rautaki Pūtaiao (MfE)
29. Pacific Employment Action Plan (MPP)
30. Primary Sector Science Roadmap – Te Ao Tūroa (MPI)

31. Rail Plan (MoT)
32. Responsibly Delivering Value: A Minerals and Petroleum Resource Strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand 2019–2029 (MBIE)
33. Rural Health Strategy 2023 (MoH)
34. Secure Together – Tō Tātou Korowai Manaaki (DPMC)
35. Small Business Strategy (MBIE)
36. Sustainability Strategy (MfE)
37. Te hau mārohi ki anamata – Transitioning to a low-emissions and climate-resilient future (MfE)
38. Te Kaweka Takohaka mō te Hoiho 2019–2029 (DOC & MPI)
39. Te Mana o te Taiao: Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 (DOC)
40. Te rautaki para – Waste strategy (MfE)
41. Te Tai Waiora: Wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand 2022 (Treasury)
42. Te Tauāki Kaupapa Here a te Kāwanatanga mō te Whakawhanake Whare, Tāone anō hoki – Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
43. Towards a productive, sustainable and inclusive economy: Aotearoa New Zealand's first emissions reduction plan (MfE)
44. Transport Evidence Base Strategy (MoT)

Implicit mentions of ‘climate’, in operational Government Department Strategies (GDSs) as at 31 December 2023:

1. A Strategy for New Zealand Food Safety: Strategy Refresh 2022 – 2024 (MPI)
2. A structured decision-making approach for the recovery of kuaka/Whenua Hou diving petrel (DOC)
3. Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030: 2023 Refresh (MoE)
4. Aotearoa New Zealand’s Employment Strategy (MBIE)
5. Archives 2057 Strategy (DIA)
6. Better Late Life – He Oranga Kaumatua 2019 to 2034 – Super Seniors (MSD)
7. Biosecurity 2025 Direction Statement (MPI)
8. Child & Youth Well-Being Strategic Action Plan 2021–2025 (MFAT)
9. Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy 2019 (DPMC)
10. Connected Ako: Digital and Data for Learning (MoE)
11. Digital Strategy for Aotearoa (DIA)
12. Employment and Social Outcomes Investment Strategy 2022–2025 (MSD)
13. Future Force Design Principles 2023 (MOD)
14. Government Tourism Strategy (DOC & MBIE)
15. Harvest Strategy Standard for New Zealand Fisheries (MPI)
16. Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan (MPI)
17. He Mahere Tiaki Kaimahi Better Work Action Plan (MBIE)
18. Health Research Strategy 2017–2027 (MBIE & MOH)
19. Hector’s and Maui Dolphin Threat Management Plan 2020 (DOC)
20. Hei Raukura Mō te Mokopuna | A Te Reo Matatini and Pāngarau Strategy (2021) (MoE)
21. Human Rights Strategic Action Plan for International Development Cooperation 2021–2025 (MFAT)
22. International Education Strategy 2022 – 2030 (MoE)
23. Karst Management Guidelines (DOC)
24. Kia Manawanui Aotearoa – Long-term pathway to mental wellbeing (MoH)
25. Kiwi Recovery Plan 2018–2028 (DOC)
26. MBIE’s Regulatory Systems Stewardship Strategy 2023-2028 (MBIE)

27. A Nation of Curious Minds – He Whenua Hihiri i te Mahara: A national strategic plan for science in society (MBIE)
 28. New Zealand Geographic Board Strategy 2020-2025 (LINZ)
 29. New Zealand sea lion/rapoka Threat Management Plan 2017–2022 (DOC & MPI)
 30. New Zealand’s Updated National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants 2022 (MfE)
 31. Open Government Partnership: New Zealand’s Fourth National Action Plan (PSC)
 32. Pacific Languages Strategy 2022 - 2032 (MPP)
 33. Pae Tū: Hauora Māori Strategy (MoH)
 34. Predator Free 2050 Strategy (DOC)
 35. Procurement Strategy for Roading Activities 2021/22 to 2023/24 (DOC)
 36. Regulatory Services Group Strategy 2021–2026 (DIA)
 37. Regulatory Stewardship Strategy (LINZ)
 38. Strategy for a Digital Public Service (DIA)
 39. Subantarctic Islands Research Strategy (DOC)
 40. Te Mahere Whai Mahi Māori - the Māori Employment Action Plan (MBIE)
 41. Te Mahere Whai Mahi Wāhine Women’s Employment Action Plan (MfW)
 42. Te Mana Ola: the Pacific Health Strategy (MoH)
 43. The Leadership Strategy for New Zealand’s Public Service (PSC)
 44. Women’s Health Strategy 2023 (MoH)
 45. Youth Plan: Voice, Leadership, Action (made up of (i) Youth Plan - Strategic Framework (ii) Youth Plan - Rolling Suite of Actions (iii) Youth Plan - Measurement Framework) (MSD)
- 7 ‘New Zealand Energy Strategy. The Government is developing the New Zealand Energy Strategy to support the transition to a low emissions economy, address strategic challenges in the energy sector, and signal pathways away from fossil fuels.’ See Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). (November 2023). New Zealand Energy Strategy. Retrieved 6 March 2024 from www.mbie.govt.nz/building-and-energy/energy-and-natural-resources/energy-strategies-for-new-zealand/new-zealand-energy-strategy
- 8 On 22 May 2023, it was announced the Government ‘is partnering with New Zealand Steel to deliver New Zealand’s largest emissions reduction project to date, with half of the coal being used at Glenbrook steel to be replaced with electricity to recycle scrap steel ... This partnership agreement is with EECA (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority), with support from the Ministry for the Environment, and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.’
- The conditional deal with NZ Steel will be part funded up to \$140 million from the \$650 million Government Investment in Decarbonising Industry (GIDI) Fund, which enables partnerships with industry to reduce their emissions. The rest will be funded directly by NZ Steel.
- The deal will eliminate 1% of the country’s total annual emissions and reduce 800,000 tonnes of carbon per year. This is equivalent to taking approximately 300,000 cars off the road.
- It is also estimated to contribute 5.3% of the emissions reductions needed under New Zealand’s second emissions budget (2026 to 2030), and 3.4% within the third emissions budget (2031 to 2035).
- See also Endnote 21.
- 9 ‘Develop a mandatory energy and emissions reporting scheme for large energy users by mid-2024. The scheme will require large energy users to provide energy end-use and emissions information to the Government and the public’ (p. 219). Retrieved 7 March 2024 from environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Aotearoa-New-Zealands-first-emissions-reduction-plan.pdf

This is likely to be along the lines of the Australian National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER). Retrieved 7 March 2024 from www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/NGER

- 10 See United Nations Climate Change. (n.d.). Preparing for the Enhanced Transparency Framework. Retrieved 15 January 2024 from unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/transparency-and-reporting/preparing-for-the-ETF
- 11 See the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). (December 2022). National Communication and Biennial Report 2022 Snapshot. Retrieved 6 March 2024 from environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/National-Communication-and-Biennial-Report-2022-Snapshot.pdf
- 12 See the term ‘just transition’ in the Paris Agreement. The agreement is cited in the Climate Change Response Act 2002, Schedule 2A Paris Agreement. Retrieved 6 March 2024 from www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2002/0040/latest/LMS371433.html?search=sw_096be8ed81dfb3ce_just_25_se&p=1&sr=1
- 13 See the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). (May 2022). Urutau, ka taurikura: Kia tū pakari a Aotearoa i ngā huringa ahuarangi Adapt and thrive: Building a climate-resilient New Zealand. (p. 34). Retrieved 3 March 2024 from environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/climate-change/MFE-AoG-20664-GF-National-Adaptation-Plan-2022-WEB.pdf
- 14 See the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). (May 2022). Urutau, ka taurikura: Kia tū pakari a Aotearoa i ngā huringa ahuarangi Adapt and thrive: Building a climate-resilient New Zealand. (p. 14). Retrieved 3 March 2024 from environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/climate-change/MFE-AoG-20664-GF-National-Adaptation-Plan-2022-WEB.pdf
- 15 See Endnote 7.
- 16 The National Climate Change Risk Assessments (NCCRA 1; NCCRA 2; NCCRA 3; NCCRA 4; NCCRA 5 and NCCRA 6) inform which risks are most urgent to enable goals to be prioritised every six years..
- 17 Two of these pieces of legislation were passed in 2023, but a third never reached a first reading. The Climate Change Adaptation Bill aimed ‘to address questions around processes for communities to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate’. See the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). RM reform update - May 2023, Thirteenth edition. Retrieved 7 March 2024 from environment.govt.nz/news/rm-reform-update-may-2023
- 18 ‘The World Bank serves as the interim trustee of the Adaptation Fund by invitation of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. On behalf of the Fund, the World Bank performs two core functions: it sells the Certified Emission Reduction certificates that help support the fund and manages the Adaptation Fund trust fund.’ See Adaptation Fund. Retrieved 7 March 2024 from www.adaptation-fund.org/about/governance/trustee
- New Zealand has contributed a grand total of USD \$11,210,000 as at 7 March 2024. See also Adaptation Fund. Retrieved 7 March 2024 from www.adaptation-fund.org/about/contributors/new-zealand
- 19 Other relevant institutions include: Aotearoa Circle, Business New Zealand, Climate Leaders Coalition, Environmental Defence Society, Forest & Bird, Generation Zero, Greenpeace and Motu.
- 20 See the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). (2023). Climate Change Chief Executives Board. Retrieved 4 March 2023 from environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/climate-change/about-new-zealands-climate-change-programme/climate-change-chief-executives-board
- 21 ‘Support businesses to decarbonise through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority’s (EECA) business programmes and funds, including the energy transition accelerator, large energy user partnerships, sector decarbonisation plans and technology demonstration funding.’ Retrieved 7 March 2024 from environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Aotearoa-New-Zealands-first-emissions-reduction-plan.pdf
- The purpose and desired outcome of the EECA is ‘to mobilise New Zealanders to be world leaders in clean and clever energy use’ and a ‘sustainable energy system that supports the prosperity and wellbeing of current and future generations’ respectively. Retrieved 7 March 2024 from www.eeca.govt.nz/about/our-role/what-we-do
- 22 See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). (n.d.). European Union Free Trade Agreement. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from www.mfat.govt.nz/en/trade/free-trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements-concluded-but-not-in-force/new-zealand-european-union-free-trade-agreement/nz-eu-fta-overview/#:~:text=On%209%20July%202023%20New,the%20first%20half%20of%202024

- 24 See the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). (n.d.). About the secretariat. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from unfccc.int/about-us/about-the-secretariat
- 23 See the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2024). About the IPCC. Retrieved 3 March 2024 from www.ipcc.ch/about

See also Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). (August 2023). Advancing New Zealand's Energy Transition. Retrieved 6 March 2024 from www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/26910-advancing-new-zealands-energy-transition-pdf#:~:text=The%20Energy%20Strategy%2C%20due%20for,energy%20transition%20out%20to%202050.&text=A%20discussion%20paper%20on%20the,the%20end%20of%20the%20year



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