



**Office of the
Māori Climate Commissioner**
mata māori, āhuarangi ora

Submission on Proposed Amendments to Climate Change Response Act 2002

28 September 2018

The Maori Climate Commission was established because it is important that in a world beset by climate change, the Māori voice is heard and considered at the highest levels of decision making.

- The Commission has been tasked to provide independent Māori-focused research and advice that will contribute to Aotearoa meeting its obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement on greenhouse-gas-emissions.
- That research and advice will be based on a Māori world view, and will be available to Māori, to politicians, government agencies, media, other New Zealanders, and to the global community.
- The Commission will facilitate opportunities for Māori to learn about climate change, and programmes that will help Māori play their part in the campaign to avert climate catastrophe in Aotearoa and across the globe.
- The Commission will promote movements that heal the mauri of Papatuanuku, such as the acceleration of full canopy native forests and restoration of the mauri of the wai.
- The Commission will initiate a World Indigenous Climate Commission that works to transform country practices contributing to climate catastrophe into practices rooted in local indigenous tikanga.

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed amendments to the Climate Change Response Act 2002, both in terms of the proposed forestry and the general ETS settings.

New Zealand is experiencing unprecedented impacts from global warming. Our seas are getting warmer¹, impacting our fisheries, we are experiencing more extreme weather events² particularly more severe storms and droughts³ it is now impacting the way we live⁴ and climate related insurance events are growing year by year⁵.

Despite this, New Zealand still continues to plan to make an inadequate contribution in terms of our climate reduction efforts⁶. In addition, our polluters continue to do little in terms of making reductions⁷ and the government continues to develop policy that protects these parties from the consequences of their limited actions.

¹ <https://www.niwa.co.nz/sites/niwa.co.nz/files/SCS-joint-2017-18-tasman-sea-heatwave-final.pdf>

² <https://www.niwa.co.nz/climate/summaries/annual-climate-summary-2017>

³ <https://www.niwa.co.nz/climate/information-and-resources/drought-monitor>

⁴ <https://royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/our-expert-advice/all-expert-advice-papers/climate-change-implications-for-new-zealand/>

⁵ https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11969389

⁶ <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/new-zealand/>

⁷ <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/climate-change/what-government-doing/emissions-reduction-targets/understanding-our-targets>



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We have not answered the set questions outlined in this consultation as the focus of this consultation is wrong. The fundamental problem is that the focus of the discussion documents is still on protecting polluters from paying for the full cost of their pollution and making working people foot the bill.

It is particularly unacceptable that many of the proposed policy positions in this consultation, if in acted, will have the impact of limiting both:

1. the return Māori landowners can receive from their land, and
2. delivering a healthier Papatuanuku for future generations.

It's bad enough that Māori were left with much marginal land, but now that there is a clear use for this land, it is a further colonial act for government to limit the return on those lands in ways that benefit polluters.

The proposal in this document hits Māori landowners in four ways:

1. Price management and the Cost Containment Reserve: The proposal to implement a cost containment reserve and to manage the price pathway is in effect a proposal for the Government to contain prices for the benefit of polluters. Any actions that constrain prices will disproportionately disadvantage Māori landowners investing in permanent carbon forestry by holding down the returns that our people receive.

In effect, this proposal is a tool that protects polluters from the full costs of their pollution allowing them to pollute for a known and contained cost. In effect, they are rewarded for polluting as the costs are contained.

Conversely this proposal, if implemented, will be at the cost to the environment, taxpayers, future generations and our people 's ability to gain full income when committing their land to permanent carbon forestry.

In our view, the current \$25 cap must be immediately removed and the cost containment reserve and any price management activities should not be implemented.

2. Averaging: Averaging is an artificial accounting methodology that seeks to give additional income in an easy and certain manner to the rotational foresters (70% of whom are overseas investors). While this no doubt improves the economics for investment in rotational forestry projects and assists getting rotational tree planting, averaging does nothing to enhance planting of permanent carbon forests.



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There is no place for averaging in the permanent carbon forestry sector. It doesn't recognise the credit yield on each hectare of land. And, as proposed in the discussion document, our people would only receive credit for the first 50 years of growth on this intergenerational asset. So for the next 30 – 40 years of sequestration by exotics and the increasing sequestration of the underplanted podocarps over the second 50 years there is no recognition of this contribution to carbon healing. This is totally unfair to Māori who are more likely to leave the forest to grow.

Each landowner must be recognised for their efforts in terms of planting, land management and each credit earned on their land over time, must be recognised.

Our people's focus is intergenerational and as such we expect to continue to earn a return off our lands for as long as that land yields these returns and not be impacted by the artificial government construct of an averaging regime that defines a theoretical yield for a self-imposed period of time.

3. Auctioning: As proposed, this is an attempt by Government to both earn money and to manage prices.

We are particularly concerned that international credits could be imported and auctioned into the market. This does nothing to support local efforts within Aotearoa to ensure environmental, social and economic benefits are delivered to our communities.

Furthermore, we are deeply opposed to international units being utilised as a tool to manage prices. This uses taxpayer's funds and does nothing for our environment, communities and landowners.

We believe there is only room to auction additional units held by Government for its allocation.

As we do not believe that government should profit from pollution and if implemented, proceeds should be returned to the community to deliver pollution reduction action and auction reserves must be set above NZU market price.

4. Sale of credits overseas: It is unethical for government to buy credits from overseas while preventing Māori from selling their credits overseas. Our landowners are disproportionately impacted by this proposal as they are intergenerational owners not investors who can choose the country that they commit their funds.

We support permanent carbon forestry being recognised as a separate category in the ETS. This ensures the long-term development and growth in the amount of regeneration native forestry in New Zealand. As outlined above, this category must have all its sequestration counted over the long term so the landowner gains the benefits of



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their investment. In addition, should exit be required, this should not occur at a premium above the cost of exit that the rotational forestry sector experiences.

In summary, we ask that Government moves away from constraining returns for investors in emissions reduction planting by introducing the measures detailed in this consultation document. To persist is to penalise those working to heal our environment and mitigate climate change impacts. If you do persist, then in the least we ask that you form a policy partnership with us and we co-design policy mechanisms that so severely impact our people.

We look forward to working in partnership with the Government to develop the ETS and improve New Zealand's climate action response.

Donna Awatere Huata
Maori Climate Commissioner