



# PSA Submission

## Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill

July 2019

## About the PSA

The New Zealand Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi (the PSA) is the largest trade union in New Zealand with over 70,000 members. We are a democratic organisation representing members in the public service, the wider state sector (the district health boards, crown research institutes and other crown entities), state owned enterprises, local government, tertiary education institutions and non-governmental organisations working in the health, social services and community sectors.

The PSA has been advocating for strong, innovative and effective public and community services since our establishment in 1913. People join the PSA to negotiate their terms of employment collectively, to have a voice within their workplace and to have an independent public voice on the quality of public and community services and how they're delivered.

The PSA is an affiliate of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi (CTU) and supports the submission of the CTU on the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill.

## The PSA's position

*'The climate emergency we are now facing will change the way we live. Where we live. How we travel and how we work, how we raise our children.'* (Minister James Shaw)

The PSA agrees with Minister Shaw (as quoted above) and supports the **purpose** of the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill (hereafter: Zero Carbon Bill) which is to provide a framework by which NZ can develop and implement clear and stable climate change policies to limit the global average temperature increase above pre-industrial levels. This framework is based on the guiding principles of

- taking leadership in climate change policy at home and abroad;
- creating a productive, sustainable, and climate-resilient economy; and
- ensuring a just and inclusive society.

The PSA supports the **key proposals** to achieve the desired purpose:

- establishing a new independent Climate Change Commission (the Commission) to provide independent expert advice and monitoring, to help keep successive governments on track to the long-term mitigation and adaptation goals:
- setting a new greenhouse gas emissions reduction target
- establishing a series of emissions budgets to act as stepping stones towards the 2050 target
- establishing a range of climate change adaptation measures to make sure New Zealand understands the risks and has a plan to address them.

The PSA wishes to highlight the importance of **policy coherence** and policy inter-relations with regards to climate change. Environmental risks can only be eliminated, mitigated or adapted to, when the necessary consideration has been given to contributing drivers and (un-)intended outcomes especially in the social and economic sphere.

The 17 United Nations (UN) **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** intend to achieve sustainable development through bringing the economic, social and environmental dimension together. As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlights on its website, the SDGs are achieved through domestic action (and other forms of international engagement). The proposals in the Zero Carbon Bill will contribute to that. The PSA supports the importance of cross-Government effort for achieving the SDGs. The concept of **Just Transitions** is just as crucial for considering the bigger picture to ensure no one is left behind. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment highlights the importance of a fair, equitable and inclusive process moving towards a low emissions economy. This means that a focus needs to be placed on

- Impacts on households, communities, industries and regions
- Support from government in partnership with employers and unions, iwi, regions and communities.

**Public Services** are crucial to support the successful development and implementation of climate change policies to facilitate a just transition to a low-emissions net-zero-carbon economy.

- People on low incomes will find it hard to make contributions to reduced carbon emissions, for example being unable to afford to buy a low-emission car. Public services such as public transport and income support will be critical in supporting low income people through the transition.
- People employed in high carbon industries who face job loss will need financial support to re-train and survive a potential spell of unemployment as well as access to publicly funded and/or provided education and training services.
- The likely health impacts of climate change will create increased pressure on our public health system.

In summary, to deal with the various drivers and potential outcomes of climate change the concept of Just Transitions and the SDGs' socio-economic and environmental framework must be considered when developing policies and adaptation measures. Any attempt to cut carbon emissions needs to develop a social and economic strategy to bring people, communities and iwi along. The Zero Carbon Bill is a first step within a needed integrated and coherent socio-economic and environmental system that works for the people and the planet. To ensure the realisation of the purpose of the Zero Carbon Bill please consider the PSA's recommendations below.

## Recommendations

As a democratic organisation that has been advocating for strong, innovative and effective public and community services since its establishment in 1913, the PSA believes in engaging, enabling and empowering people to initiate, contribute to and be the change- individually and collectively. An intact environment is in the **public interest** and a **public good of irreplaceable value**. Therefore, inter-generational collaboration to preserve the environment and life of and within it are essential for the well-being of people living in NZ, the Pacific region and the planet at large.

We believe that the preservation of a public good as valuable as our environment is in the public interest. Preserving our environment cannot be realised when at the whim of competitive market forces. As mentioned above intensive cooperation is required between and within the private and public sector to realise the vision of a flourishing environment in which people and communities can thrive. The wide participation of workers and communities in the Commission and in the design of adaption measures is essential.

## Recommendation 1: Climate Change Commission

The PSA **recommends** including representatives of the social partners (employers and unions) to the Board as experts of industry development and planning, decent work, social dialogue and just transitions.

If the proposed reform of the State Sector Act comes to pass the State Services Commission requires the public service to provide long-term insight briefings to parliament periodically. The PSA also **recommends** that the Climate Change Commission contributes to this advice. The public sector is a crucial stakeholder (including the PSA as a representative of its workforce) in relation to protecting a public good and ensuring just transitions to a carbon neutral economy.

Further to the above, the PSA **recommends** that the Bill will not only have economic effects (see 5L (c) of the Bill). As suggested above the Bill will also have social and cultural effects which spread across sectors, industries and regions. The Commission needs to consider those effects as impacts and not simply circumstances. Due to the potential effects and their mitigation civil society organisations (including unions) need to be a mandatory voice to be heard on a regular basis. The Commission could consider holding a regular, possibly quarterly forum -online or offline- to raise awareness, share information and discuss particularly relevant matters at the time with the public.

The Commission's contribution shall be based on cooperation with other government agencies that play a role in reducing carbon emissions and ensuring just transitions especially the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

## Recommendation 2: Adaptation measures to increase NZ's resilience to changing climate

The PSA **recommends** that any adaptation measure must acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the role of Māori and iwi in protecting the environment.

Just transition policies must involve Māori workers and communities to ensure the Māori workforce are prepared for change and are not falling further behind (in relation to their labour market outcomes).

In preparing concrete adaptation plans, the PSA also **recommends** adding a point g) to points 5 ZQ (4) a)-f):

- g) the increased demand for services and funding on the public sector to foster and realise a just transition for people through realisation of active labour market policies.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change through just transitions requires investment in more and better public services be it directly through funding public transport or indirectly through social support services. Ensuring policy coherence around climate change is at the core of a successful implementation of *changing the way we live; here we live; how we travel; how we work; and how we raise our children*.

Thank you for considering our submission.

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