

Inquiry into Climate Adaptation



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

October 2023

Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Inquiry into Climate Adaptation. We strongly support the kaupapa to further understand and manage the impacts of climate change, especially on the communities most prone to impact.

Taunakitanga | Recommendations

We raise the following points and recommendations for consideration:

Item One

The Ministry for the Environment currently recognises that there are no current nationwide mechanisms in place for risk-assessments by councils¹. Where risk-assessments are made, there is often little consideration made for consistency between councils or for the national integration of emergency management. Standardising testing processes across Aotearoa with consideration for the unique issues faced in different regions, would ensure climate risk is both effectively managed and that emergency responses can be coordinated between regions.

Recommendation One:

Climate risk-assessment should be standardised across Aotearoa, taking into consideration regional differences and linking emergency responses.

Item Two

Aotearoa must be a world leader in managing the impacts of climate change and supporting those directly impacted by it. Pacific nations will be most acutely impacted by climate change. As a powerful ally we must ensure that our expertise in natural-disaster planning is available for those who need it. We must also ensure that we are supportive of those who will inevitably need to leave their homes due to these impacts.

Aotearoa is well placed to teach state of the art climate risk assessment approaches and assist with their implementation in the Pacific. The creation of a stable space for those displaced by climate change is crucial.

Recommendation Two:

Aotearoa must support the Pacific by sharing our approaches to climate risk assessment and creating pathways for those displaced by climate change to relocate and live here.

Item Three

While we recognise the need for a robust nationwide plan for the adaptation to the impacts of climate change, we also stress that this must not replace the ongoing efforts to reduce the human

¹ Ministry for the Environment, (2023). Community-led Retreat and Adaptation funding: Issues and Options 33–34. Wellington.

impact on the climate. Delegating emission reduction to the “too hard” basket will have a devastating impact on both Aotearoa and our Pacific neighbours and will inevitably have a much higher human and economic cost than the alternative of reducing emissions.

Recommendation Three:

A robust nationwide climate adaptation plan needs to be implemented alongside continued and reinforced efforts to reduce national emissions.

Item Four

Current approaches to climate risk assessment on the local level often do not support the ability for Māori land to be assessed using a Māori framework and by Māori assessors. This is an extension of the inequities and cultural sidelining that Māori have experienced since colonisation began and means that currently assessment may not take into account the important relationship between Tangata Whenua and the land which they are kaitiaki of. Māori are not a monolith, and as such regional iwi and hapū should be considered and consulted with in this process.

Recommendation Four:

Māori assessors should be an option for the assessment of Māori land, to ensure the distinct cultural importance of the whenua is considered. This should be implemented alongside options for iwi to train assessors and provide locally relevant services under a national authority.

Item Five

Current policy around climate change and its potential impacts are mostly informed and voiced by adults who currently make the choices which contribute to the crisis. One set of voices which is under-represented is that of young people. Young people are currently a minor consideration in the conversation and policymaking on climate issues, even though they will need to deal with the negative consequences of inaction. We must incorporate young people’s voices and allow them to have a choice in the world they inherit.

Recommendation Four:

We ask that tamariki and rangatahi are engaged with and listened to in the climate policymaking process.

Ko wai tātou | Who we are

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 230 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. We believe in working to achieve a just and compassionate society for all, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website www.nzccss.org.nz.

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