

Our district's emissions target

Engagement process

From 17 July to 14 August we invited people to provide their feedback on what emissions targets we should be adopting for our district. The engagement was framed as being part of a wider piece of work to develop the district's climate change strategy, with work still to come on how we'll plan and adapt to changes in the future, how we're planning to reduce our emissions, the importance of ensuring a just and equitable transition to a low greenhouse gas economy, and how we'll continue to care for our natural environment. We signalled that feedback from this engagement on emissions targets would help inform the targets we adopt for the strategy. Feedback from the climate change survey conducted in May 2019 will also help inform the climate change strategy.

We sent emails to more than 230 business and community stakeholders and groups, letting them know about the engagement and encouraging them to promote it through their networks.

There were four articles about the engagement on Council's online news channel, Newline – three of those articles let people know about the engagement as the decision to engage progressed through committee to Council. The final article ran a week before the engagement ended, reminding people to have their say. These articles were also posted on Facebook and reached a total of 18,496 people, with 141 'reactions' to the posts, and 138 people clicking the links provided.

Given the nature of the engagement, and also in recognition of the declining numbers of people who use hard copy forms to respond to our consultations, we made the decision not to print any engagement booklets or hardcopy feedback forms. Instead we printed posters advertising the engagement and put these up in Council service centres and libraries. As well as promoting the engagement, the posters let people know they could request a printed copy of the engagement material at the library or service centre front desk. The engagement material and feedback form were also available as downloads on the Have Your Say page.

Additionally, members of the Council project team promoted the engagement through their own networks, and we specifically promoted the engagement at a Youth Council-initiated event on Sunday 4 August.

Findings

In total we received 180 responses from residents, businesses and community groups, including CIAL, Orion, the Chamber of Commerce, staff and students at Canterbury, Lincoln and Victoria universities, Generation Zero, the Christchurch School Strike 4 Climate Change team and the Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust. (Note: four responses were received as hard copy feedback forms – the rest were via the Have Your Say page or email).

Overall, respondents were in support of a more ambitious approach than the Government target (87 percent – 157 respondents). This mirrors the feedback we received from the residents' survey on climate change where only 20 percent of the 2724 respondents thought that our targets should align with Government's targets. In that survey, 84 percent of respondents thought our targets should be based on robust science and 57 percent thought they should be achievable realistic and based on planned actions.

Of those respondents wanting a more ambitious approach, some suggested an alternative date. For those who did, there was a slight preference for 2030 (32 percent/ 57 respondents). Those supporting 2040 (24 percent / 43 respondents) had feedback that was aligned with the Generation Zero feedback:

- "I suggest the CCC district be net zero long-lived by 2040 and net negative long-lived by 2050."

Of the 104 respondents to the emissions target engagement who indicated **support for the Government target**, 15 percent (16 respondents) wanted Council's targets to be fully aligned. Reasons for support of the Government target included:

- “We as a country make up a minute part of the world's emissions, and as a result we must protect our economy and infrastructure by not imposing draconian limits on ourselves.”
- “All regions of the country are taking a unified approach to targets and measurements.”
- “To enable steady, certain adjustment.”

The vast majority of respondents (85 percent / 88 respondents) supported the Government target as a ‘bare minimum’, as we work towards a more ambitious approach. Comments included:

- “I think we should be more ambitious, but we should definitely not to less that aim to meet the national target.”
- “I don't think this plan is aggressive enough – but it's a start. Christchurch could do even more which will inspire other cities to jump onboard too.”
- “At a minimum, I think the Christchurch City Council should align with the proposed national target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.”

Of the 62 respondents who **did not support the Government target**, the majority (89 percent / 55 respondents) indicated their lack of support was because they felt that the Government target was not responsive or ambitious enough. Comments included:

- “No, I think we should aim to reduce gas emissions well before 2050.”
- “This is a weak target. It's nowhere near ambitious enough considering the recent UN report that says we need to reach net zero by 2030 to prevent catastrophic climate change.”
- “No, I think we need to be more ambitious. We are not doing enough - all we seem to be doing is counting our emissions, not reducing them.”

This lack of support for the Government target could be seen as a similar response to those who regarded the target as a bare minimum – in both cases respondents indicated a more ambitious approach is required.

Only seven respondents did not support the Government (or any target) at all – five of those disputed the validity of climate change, one felt there was insufficient research to support a fair and equitable transition and one did not support framing the target in terms of a timeframe.

Interim target

Respondents were also very supportive of an **interim target** (84 percent / 151 respondents). Comments included:

- “An interim target of zero carbon by 2030 is vital if the recent Climate Crisis declaration by the Council is to be recognised.”
- “The Government proposes that three emissions budgets of five years each (i.e. covering the next 15 years) be in place at any given time. We feel the council should mirror this with their own targets for the district.”
- “An interim target of zero carbon by 2030 is vital to engender action today, rather than allowing procrastination.”

Methane

In terms of how we should treat methane (a short-lived gas) 28 percent (51 respondents) felt it was important to include a single target for greenhouse gases, including methane.

- “Methane must be brought into the same time period, to speed our effectiveness in reducing emissions.”
- “Methane, although being ‘short-lived’, has far more warming potential than CO₂, and the warmer the climate becomes, the more methane will also be released from natural sources such as lakes and soils, which is why I believe it should have the same, if not more stringent targets than CO₂.”

The majority of those who wanted a separate approach to methane (14 percent – 26 respondents) showed their support for the Generation Zero advice:

- “To protect ourselves and future generations from the major disruptions of climate change, we need net zero across all gases by 2050, based on a policy framework which achieves (a) net zero long-lived as soon as possible (2040 is achievable); (b) negative long-lived by 2050; and (c) reduces short-lived gases to stable levels (the point at which there is no contribution to global warming). This will balance out to achieve net zero across total gases.”