

21 October 2021

OraTaiao: New Zealand Climate & Health Council
Auckland, New Zealand
co-convenor@orataiao.org.nz

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Private Bag 18888
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

Tēnā koe Rt Hon Ardern,

Re. Aotearoa NZ at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)

OraTaiao: New Zealand Climate & Health Council, The College of Nurses Aotearoa, New Zealand Nurses Organisation, New Zealand Medical Association, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, and New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists welcome Climate Minister Shaw's in-person attendance at the COP26 negotiations in Glasgow this November. This is the crucial chance to significantly strengthen Aotearoa's international climate contribution, build on the Climate Change Commission's recent advice, and keep the capacity to limit global warming within a humanly adaptable 1.5 degrees.

Our three recommendations below let Aotearoa lead at last with a healthy fair climate response:

1. Health and wellbeing must be at the heart of our climate response.

- The UN Declaration on Human Rights recognises the right to the highest attainable standard of health, and hauora is guaranteed to all citizens as a taonga under te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- We strongly support the recent editorial simultaneously published in over [200 medical journals worldwide](#), which highlights that **climate change is a health crisis that will dwarf COVID-19** in the years to come.
- The [WHO Manifesto](#) on a healthy and green recovery from COVID19 gives a six-point plan for urgent climate action. This will be added to with a WHO COP26 Special Report which will be a focal point of the Conference and highlight the health benefits of climate change action.
- [Modelling](#) published in The Lancet Planetary Health [this year demonstrates that](#) health-centred NDCs can increase ambition and realise substantial health co-benefits. NDC health co-benefits till 2040 were modelled for nine representative nations with half the world's population, three-quarters of global emissions, and key global or regional influence. Here in Aotearoa, our stretched health sector takes up one-fifth of Government spending.

2. Aotearoa must proactively place indigenous and marginalised voices at the centre of COP26.

- This is particularly important this year as the COVID-19 pandemic and inequitable vaccination access has created major difficulties for representatives from poorer nations to travel.
- We must acknowledge both our own indigenous voices from nga iwi Māori and our position in the wider Pacific community, and centre these voices in all negotiations.

3. Aotearoa's new contribution must be ten times more than our 2016 contribution.

- Our new nationally determined contribution (NDC) must take full account of our historical cumulative emissions, our privilege as a wealthy country with the resources to make the necessary changes, and our position in the wider Pacific community.
- We urge a ten-fold increase as Aotearoa's fair share contribution (as outlined in OraTaiao's [Climate Change Commission](#) submission, this means 117-133% cuts in 1990 levels by 2030).
- This increase means prioritising accelerated domestic decarbonisation and strong methane cuts, through Tiriti partnership and just transitions, and including health-centred climate policies that self-fund in health gains and health sector savings.
- The balance of our better contribution must be also significantly more climate finance, real support for developing nations' loss and damage claims, sharing emissions cuts expertise, and minimal offshore emissions credits as costs inevitably soar.
- We urge our Government to signal the overall direction of Aotearoa's delayed Emission Reduction Plan (ERP) by signing the [Global Methane Pledge](#) (to cut global methane by at least 30% of 2020 levels by 2030) prior to COP26, plus committing to enforceable climate protection in all our trade agreements.

The difficulties encountered with COP25 and the time lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic amplify this November's crucial global Conference of the Parties. We no longer have the luxury of time to allow for a weak response. Aotearoa must step up as a climate leader (not laggard), strengthen our contribution ten-fold, and place human health and equity at the heart of our climate response.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Dermot Coffey,
Co-convenor, OraTaiao: New Zealand
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Dr George Laking, Aotearoa New Zealand
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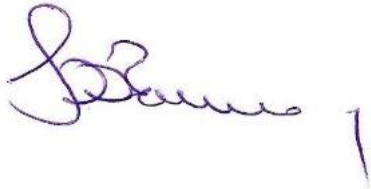
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**Mairi Lucas, Acting Chief Executive,
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Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa**



**Dr Alistair Humphrey, Chair,
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