

# How should local government respond to climate change?

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Responding to climate change:  
Sustaining health and wellbeing  
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 **OraTaiao**  
NZ Climate & Health Council

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# Outline

- What is local government in NZ?
- Why local government is important for climate action.
- Key bits of legislation.
- Local government action on climate change to date:
  - Mitigation
  - Adaptation
- What more could local government do?
- What can we do as citizens?

# Local Government in NZ

- System of locally elected members representing their communities.
- Makes decisions about local issues and services.
- Regard to **local/regional** needs and priorities.
- Central government deals with issues relevant to NZ and New Zealanders as a nation.



Local  
Autonomy ?

# Local Government in NZ

- Councillors and mayor elected every 3yrs.
- Standing committees, special committees or sub-committees – do much of councils' work.
- Community boards: advocate/represent; may have devolved decision making powers.
- Some operations may be undertaken by CCOs (e.g. Auckland – Watercare, Auckland Transport)

# Local Government in NZ

- Regional Councils.
- City Councils (which are largely urban).
- District Councils.
- Unitary authorities: powers of territorial **and** regional council.

# Regional Councils

- Manage **RESOURCES** – the effects of using freshwater, land, air and coastal waters.
- Regional emergency management and civil defence preparedness.
- Regional land transport planning.
- Harbour issues.

## Key Legislation

**RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
ACT  
1991**

**Local  
Government Act  
2002**

# Territorial Authorities (city & district councils)

- Local infrastructure - water, sewerage, stormwater, roads, rubbish, recycling + building control.
- Community facilities – pools, libraries..
- District Plans - rules governing the **use of land** within the district.
- Bylaws - special laws that apply in the council region only, e.g. liquor free zones, air quality control.
- Public health inspections.

## Key Legislation

**LOCAL GOVT  
ACT 2002**

**Resource  
Management  
Act  
1991**

**Others...**

# Why Local Government Important for Responding to Climate Change

- Cities and urban areas are estimated to account for most (~80%) of global GHG emissions.
- LG responsible for a range of functions & decisions that can AFFECT climate change, and are affected BY climate change:
  - Land use
  - Transport
  - Refuse and recycling
  - Buildings
  - Civil defence emergency management
  - Water management



# Why Local Government Important for Responding to Climate Change

Local government is a major sector of the economy:

- Annual operating income & expenditure of > \$7b
- Owns assets worth \$110 billion
- Contributes ~4% of New Zealand's GDP
- Employs about 23,000 FTE staff

# Why Local Government Important for Responding to Climate Change

- History of **leading** local action on issues that have not been addressed nationally:

e.g. WCC - Wellington became nuclear-free in 1982.  
By 1988 there was 105 locally declared nuclear-weapon-free zones.

e.g. Waitakere City Council – Eco City



# Key legislation

- Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991
- Local Government Act 2002
- Land Transport Management Act 2003
- Building Act 2004
- Health Act 1956
- Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002

# Key legislation – RMA 1991

## Main Environmental Law in NZ

### PURPOSE

- Promote **sustainable management** of resources.
- Meet needs of current and future generations.
- Provide for the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of people & communities.
- Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

# RMA 1991

National Policy Statements and National Environmental Standards (MfE)  
e.g freshwater management



Regional Policy Statement (Regional Council or Unitary Authority)



Regional Plans (land, water, air, coast)



District Plans (Territorial Authority or Unitary Authority)



Regional Strategies  
e.g. transport, waste, pest management

# Key legislation – RMA 1991

Since 2004, the RMA has included specific reference to climate change (s7):

Local authorities are required to have regard to:

“the effects of climate change”

AND “the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy”

# BUT

- **2004 Resource Management (Energy and CC) Amendment Act.**

Local government can consider the potential effects of climate change,  
BUT

“Most appropriate” to address air discharges at the national level

- Prohibits Councils from considering the effects of GHG emissions on climate change in making rules on air discharges.
- Courts have also ruled against consideration of climate change in land use consent.



# Key Legislation – Local Government Act 2002

- Provides for local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the **social, economic, environmental**, and **cultural** well-being of communities.
- Taking a **sustainable development approach**.
- Long Term Plans, Annual Plans, Annual Reports.

# Local Govt Act 2002 Amendment Act 2012

- removes reference to the four well-beings
- Replaced with new purpose:

“to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local **infrastructure**, local public **services**, and performance of **regulatory** functions in a way that is most **cost-effective** for households and businesses”

So RMA and LGA increasingly constrained by  
legislative amendments and legal interpretations

**SO**

**How are local governments approaching climate  
change action?**

**How is it changing?**

# Local Government Responses

- Mitigation
- Adaptation
- Current situation?



# Mitigation

- Reasonable amount of council mitigation action 2004-2009.
- Communities for Climate Protection Project (CCP-NZ).
- ? Use of legislative and policy instruments.

# CCP-NZ

- Delivered by ICLEI (International Local Governments for Sustainability).
  - MfE, Local Government, EECA + (MOT and MED)
  - 34 councils, 83% of NZ population
  - provided a strategic framework - councils determined own actions to reduce GHGs
    - Corporate
    - Community
- Energy, Waste, Transport, Land Use Planning**

# CCP Five Milestones

1. Conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, analysis, and forecast.
2. Set emissions reduction goals.
3. Develop a local action plan to achieve these goals.
4. Implement and quantify the benefits of policies.
5. Monitor progress towards the reduction goal.

# CCP-NZ: ChCh City Council

## CORPORATE ACTIONS

- Landfill gas to heat and power QEII recreational centre.
- Purchased 1 GWh/year from wind turbine on Port Hills.
- Replaced coal heating in Centennial Pool with ground-source heat pump.
- Used-vegetable oil to heat Halswell Swimming Pool instead of diesel.
- Upgraded to energy saving traffic lights technology.
- Green building principles for retrofits of council buildings.



# CCP-NZ : ChCh City Council

## COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- Greater ChCh Urban Development Strategy – plan to intensify.
- City wheelie bins to separately collect organics, recycling & refuse.
- Community energy efficiency initiatives and housing retrofits.
- Offered free inner-city bus service.
- Established 13km of cycle lanes.

# Other examples from CCP-NZ

## **CORPORATE**

- Solar/LED street lighting trials.
- Water and sewage pumping efficiency initiatives.
- Council buildings – changes to temperature set-points, and de-lamping.
- Vehicle fleets -new vehicle purchase criteria.

## **COMMUNITY**

- Park and ride initiatives.
- Door to door giveaway energy efficient light bulbs.
- Considering solar water heaters loan scheme.
- Pensioner units – insulation and solar hot water.
- Council sustainability advisors.

# CCP-NZ no longer funded after 2009

- Continuation of mitigation activity dependent on political make-up of Councils.
  - Some doing well (PNCC, Dunedin)
  - Some have let emphasis go
- Patchy.
- Not monitored or reviewed.
- Not joined-up.
- No national leadership.

# Shift toward climate change adaptation focus

Local Government Position Statement on  
Climate Change emphasises responsibility for  
adaptation

# CLIMATE CHANGE

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS POSITION STATEMENT



This statement defines the position that Councils have collectively adopted on climate change. We commit to playing our part in helping New Zealand face the climate change challenge. The key role we will play is to lead community responses to the risks and opportunities of climate change.

Councils provide a wide range of ratepayer funded services which will be impacted by climate change. These include stormwater management, flood control, biosecurity, land-use and transport planning, civil defence emergency management and water supply. Council services need to be future proofed and made resilient to the impacts of climate change.

We acknowledge that the evidence shows that climate change is occurring and that our understanding of climate change impacts in New Zealand will continue to grow. We will work with our communities to prepare for the future

### OUR POSITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

We recognise that we must respond to both the actual and potential physical impacts of climate change.

We understand that there are challenges, risks and opportunities for local communities in responding to and managing the impacts of climate change.

We recognise that action now will reduce the future threats and costs of climate change. We know we must plan ahead.

Solutions to climate change challenges will not be a matter of "one size fits all" and we recognise that climate change impacts on communities will vary around New Zealand.

Councils will individually show leadership and environmental responsibility by adopting mitigation and adaptation practices that fit with their community's

### OUR POSITION ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

We have a responsibility to help our communities prepare for and to adapt to the physical effects of climate change.

We will build on the existing work of Councils and communities – recognising that "business as usual" will not get us to where we need to be and that a community-wide effort will be needed to address the impacts of climate change.

Councils will support and actively engage with initiatives that provide guidance and expert advice on adaptation that can be applied at the regional and local level.

We will seek Central Government's support for the development of climate change information and modelling that delivers "local numbers" for local use.

### OUR POSITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

It is Central Government's role to engage internationally on climate change and to lead mitigation action on behalf of New Zealand.

We have an active interest in providing advice to Central Government on the local consequences of, and the opportunities presented by, international and national policies to reduce green house gas emissions.

Councils will choose their own mitigation projects to meet Central Government requirements and to assist in delivering New Zealand's emission reduction targets.

Councils will support individuals, communities and businesses to lower their emissions and will advocate for Central Government to develop tools that will assist the development of low carbon options for goods and services.

# Local government reports

Name	
<a href="#"><u>Tools for Estimating the Effects of Climate Change on Flood Flow: A Guidance Manual for Local Government in New Zealand</u></a>	M
<a href="#"><u>Preparing for future flooding: A guide for local government in New Zealand</u></a>	M
<a href="#"><u>Preparing for coastal change: A guide for local government in New Zealand</u></a>	M
<a href="#"><u>Climate Change and Long-term Council Community Planning</u></a>	C
<a href="#"><u>Climate Change Adaptation and Second Generation RMA Plans</u></a>	S 2
<a href="#"><u>Coastal hazards and climate change: A guidance manual for local government in New Zealand</u></a>	J
<a href="#"><u>Preparing for climate change: A guide for local government in New Zealand</u></a>	J
<a href="#"><u>Climate Change Effects and Impacts Assessment: A Guidance Manual for Local Government in New Zealand</u></a>	M

# Adaptation Planning Examples

Hawkes Bay Regional Council Regional Coastal Environment Plan:

- "inundation risk zones" - risk of a 1/50yr flood.
- building would be banned or restricted.
- boundaries taking into account sea level rise.

# Adaptation

- Difficulty planning over long time-frames.
- Uncertainty regarding risk & changing risk - need flexible planning.
- Organisational arrangements btw regional & district councils creating gaps in implementation.



**Currently?**

**Some brave efforts amidst constraints**

**Case Study:**

**Auckland Unitary Council**

# Auckland Unitary Council

- Auckland – 1/3 of NZ population.
- Transport responsible for 40% emissions.
- One Auckland council- aim to integrate plans and policies across the region.

# Auckland Plan (May 2012)

- Identifies climate change and energy security as challenges for region over next 30yrs.
- A Strategic direction = 'Contribute to Tackling Climate Change and Increasing Energy Resilience.'
- Targets to ↓GHG emissions 10%-20% by 2020, 40% by 2040, 50% by 2050.

# Auckland Energy Resilience and Low Carbon Action Plan

- Fifteen 'particular areas of focus' for this Action plan (identified in Auckland Plan)
  - Public transport
  - Travel demand management
  - Alternative fuels
  - Pricing mechanisms
  - Integrated land-use and transport patterns
  - Waste management
  - New technologies
- But DELAYS... DELAYS... DELAYS...

# Proposed Unitary Plan (Sept 2013)

- Replaces the existing Regional Policy Statement and 13 existing district and regional plans.
- The unitary plan will be the RULEBOOK: e.g.
  - what can be built and where
  - how to create a higher quality and **more compact** Auckland
- But should come after Low Carbon Action Plan!

# Brave attempts – but some criticisms

- Auckland Council seems to be working on high level statements without adequately linking them to regulation in plans and bylaws.
- Repeated delay of Energy Resilience and Low Carbon Action Plan.
- Aspirational, but difficult to achieve given current structures and political climate.

# What more could be done by LG?

- Can more be done in the current context?
- Community mandate, international examples.
- Framing to current context.

# What more could be done by LG

## -some ideas-

- Advising/supporting farmers to manage wet soils to reduce nitrous oxide formation.
- Setting nitrogen limits - ↓stock numbers and ↓methane and nitrous oxide.
- Sites with good wind resource designated 'wind-resource' zones.
- Making renewable energy options for homes easier (e.g. loans for solar hot water)



# What more could be done by LG?

- Re-thinking balance of land-use in the region

e.g. Rotorua District Council



Search...

Proud P



Bay of Plenty  
REGIONAL COUNCIL



TE ARAWA LA

Library

Co

# Rotorua Land and Innovation Challenge

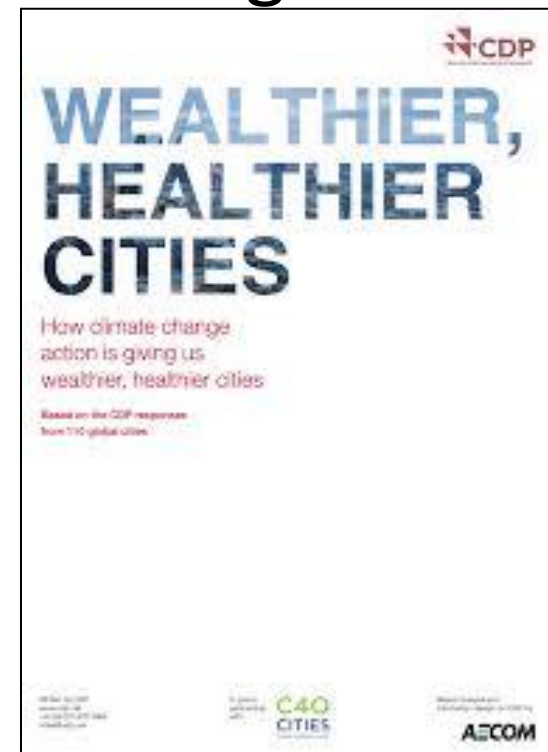


Identify innovative and  
viable land uses for  
Rotorua catchment to  
**win \$20,000**

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

# How do we, as citizens, make this happen?

- Vote wisely & encourage others to vote!
- Provide council staff and councillors with good information
  - Co-benefits of climate action
  - Use existing public health links
- Submission on a Council policies and plans



Council prepares draft plan, policy statement or issues and options papers



Council staff seek informal input through meetings, workshops etc



Council prepares proposed plan or policy statement



Proposed plan or policy statement is notified; submissions called for



Submission period closes



Council prepares summary of submissions



Council publicly notifies summary of submissions; calls for further submissions



Period for making further submissions closes



Pre-hearing meetings or mediation may be held

# Citizen Input

- Submissions on Resource Consent applications
  - E.g. OraTaiao & Mangatangi Mine



NZ Climate & Health Council

[www.orataiao.org.nz](http://www.orataiao.org.nz)

16 October 2013

PRESS RELEASE

### Doctors say weak law leaves door wide open for coal-powered climate change

Doctors say the decision to grant resource consent for a new coal mine in the North Waikato shows how the law in New Zealand is failing to protect human health from the negative effects of climate change.

Glencoal, owned by Fonterra, wants to build and operate the Mangatangi Open-Cast Coal Mine in rural Waikato to provide coal to the boilers of Fonterra's dairy factories at Waitoa, Te Awamutu and Hautapu.

# Citizen Input

- Attend Council and Committee meetings – usually time at beginning for public to be heard.
- Stand for Council.
- **ENGAGE** the community on the climate change issue





# Sources

Local Government NZ <http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz>

<http://www.lgnz.co.nz/assets/News-and-media/A-journalists-guide-to-local-government.pdf>

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<http://www.pha.org.nz/documents/PHA-local-government-thinkpiece.pdf>

Ministry for the Environment. <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/climate/adaptation/local-govt.html>