

Moves to slow climate change gain speed

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Momentum is gathering in New Zealand's efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change.

Chair of the Climate Change Commission, Dr Rod Carr, is tasked with advising the Government on policy directions which, in his words, "support the transition to a climate-resilient, low emission Aotearoa" and include all regions and sectors. Carr has encouraged community support and action to nudge Government to make ambitious and binding policy changes.

We can add to this momentum by calculating and reducing our own household emissions.

The average New Zealand household's biggest emitters are transport (37 per cent) and food (25 per cent).

A useful tool is a carbon footprint calculator, <https://www.carbonneutraltrust.org.nz/household-entry>, developed by Carbon Neutral New Zealand Trust.

It measures both greenhouse gas emissions and sequestration (storing carbon). So if you get cracking to store CO₂ by planting trees then the calculator will reward you by reducing the size of your overall footprint.

Transport: New Zealand's travel sector is highly dependent on imported fossil fuel so driving and flying less are among our most effective choices to reduce our carbon footprint.



Transport is responsible for an average of 37 per cent of a Kiwi household's emissions.

DAVID WHITE/STUFF

On the plus side over 80 per cent of our electricity comes from renewable sources and New Zealand is in a strong position to move on decarbonising the economy through 100 per cent electrification.

In the meantime, Government and local authorities will need to both provide low emission public transport options and incentivise the uptake of electric vehicles supported by a wide network of EV charging stations.

Transport emissions can be reduced by:

- Choosing to walk or cycle for short trips (a third of our trips

are 2km or less)

- Planning your car trips so you combine multiple errands into one

- Car sharing or using public transport for longer trips

- Switching your fossil-fuel car to an electric car or an electric bike

- Working from home and holding meetings and conferences online

- Lobbying your council to adapt urban design to prioritise safe walking and cycling and

- Low emission public transport
- Managing with one less car in your household

Food: What you choose to eat and drink also has a huge impact

on the planet.

An average New Zealand household in 2017 emitted 10,875kg of CO₂ through the food and non-alcoholic beverages consumed.

Beef, lamb and processed meat were, by far, the largest contributors to heating the planet, emitting 21, 17 and 12kg of CO₂ equivalent per kilogram, respectively.

Eating these frequently also has adverse health impacts by increasing the risk of heart diseases, cancer and diabetes. Hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent on treating these preventable dis-

eases each year.

By contrast, international research has highlighted the climate and health co-benefits of consuming a plant based diet such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains and legumes.

This diet is shown to be substantially less climate polluting, emitting only 1.2-1.8kg of CO₂ equivalent per kilogram.

So, gradually swapping meat for more vegetables will not only benefit your wallet and family's health but also help save the planet.

Another way of reducing your emissions is by planting trees in your backyard or on a local reforestation project.

As trees grow they absorb more CO₂ from the atmosphere.

This of course applies to fruit and nut trees which will reduce your grocery bill as well.

Food emissions can be reduced by:

- Reducing the amount and frequency of red meat and dairy consumed

- Planting fruit and nut trees

- Setting up a veg and herb garden

- Supporting locally produced food eg from farmers markets, box subscription schemes

- Joining a food matching community to share surplus and reduce food waste.

For more information on NZ emission estimates for common food items, visit the 'Climate Change: a

Quick Guide for Kiwis' website.