

Submission for NCC AP 2020/21

Zero Carbon Nelson Tasman is a group of citizens working to promote a vigorous regional response to the climate crisis. We draw from our collective backgrounds in policy, science, energy, ecology, business, finance, health, education and diplomacy.

We celebrate Council's emphasis on responding urgently to climate change. Zero Carbon Nelson Tasman is very pleased to see that the council will be viewing all activities through a climate change lens. To emphasise the importance of this: the IPCC 1.5 Report in 2018 stated that we have to reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 50% by 2030 to have a 60% chance of keeping global warming to 1.5% above pre-industrial levels. The current global increase of 1.1 degrees Celsius has already increased the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events and increased the rate of sea level rise (SLR).

We continue to support the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration and Climate Change Reserve Fund. The creation of the Climate Change Reserve Fund last year has proven to be very important, as this ring-fenced fund can provide for an ongoing response to climate change while general funds are rerouted to respond to changing circumstances such as the current pandemic. If only climate change would pause while we dealt with Covid-19! The Council's Climate Champion, a role that arose from the declaration of climate emergency, is already proving hugely beneficial to establishing the community-led Nelson Tasman Climate Forum.

It is also heartening that the Mayor is involved with a whole of Government project on community resilience and that a senior staff member is supporting a collective local government response. A stronger community resilience means a better chance for Nelsonians to survive future pandemics and natural disaster events.

New Zealand has responded well to the Covid19 pandemic. Alongside a Government that decided health and lives were more important than the economy, we have shown we can move into emergency mode very quickly and act with decisive leadership. We have acted on the science and used the precautionary principle. We can take heart from this, and should replicate these factors to tackle climate change locally even if the visible aspect of climate breakdown is approaching more slowly, with the Fehi and Gita damage and Pigeon Valley Fires. Importantly, the continuation of disastrous future impacts are being set in train now, with our carbon emissions.

We strongly support the proposed \$62,500 from the Climate Change Reserve fund towards the work of the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum. The Forum has kept up its momentum since the February launch where 350 people gathered to listen to inspiring speakers and participate in 14 mini-workshops on climate change issues. The first face-to-face Forum meeting in mid-March involved 100 keen participants breaking into subgroups to continue the work on Climate Action Plans and a Regional Strategy. Since the lockdown for the Covid 19

pandemic, we have been having meetings by Zoom for individual subgroups and clusters of subgroups, as well as the whole-of-Forum April and May meetings. This month's meeting had around 80 participants online, which shows the support that the Forum still has in these challenging times. The Climate Forum's calendar shows multiple subgroup meetings nearly every day of the week.

The Forum's Regional Climate Strategy will evolve through a series of professionally facilitated meetings throughout the region. We believe that the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum can provide a significant part of the whole-of-community response, and is very cost effective with the amount of volunteer time and effort being put into the Forum. [Note that Council, and any other member of the Climate Forum, can adopt any part of the Strategy and contribute to all of the Forum's work, but it is not a requirement.] We will also be submitting to Tasman District Council's (TDC) long-term plan for funding to assist the Forum.

We commend that the council is continuing to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions through the CEMARS scheme, and encourage them to set an ambitious target of more than 50% reduction by 2030. Other councils have set targets, for example Christchurch City Councils target is carbon neutral by 2030, and the city by 2045. Kapiti Council carbon neutral by 2025, Wellington City a 40% reduction by 2030 from a 2001 year baseline, and Greater Wellington carbon neutral by 2030, with a 40% reduction by 2025. Dunedin City Council has set a very ambitious target for the city itself, of net zero by 2030. There are more Councils with targets, all reinforcing a sense of the urgency and the usefulness of targets.

NCC took the lead in declaring a climate emergency, and we urge this Council to continue that in its target-setting. The Climate Forum can assist in motivating the public to support the milestones to this target. We will have a *regional* carbon footprint from the Stats Department in mid year, and can use this benchmark for our progress.

We encourage Council to extend its leadership to CCTOs - Nelmac, Port Nelson and Nelson Airport - by requiring them to adopt plans and targets aligned with Council's own. Such a requirement could be made clear through Statements of Expectation and other means. (With respect to Port Nelson and Nelson Airport, this would require a coordinated approach with TDC, their joint-owner).

We support the trial kerbside organic food waste collection, to both reduce carbon emissions and provide good quality compost. A composting plant can be odorous at times and should be located distant from residential properties and waterways, to protect the environment from an accidental discharge of leachate. We understand methane from the landfill is a significant part of the council's emission profile, and a reduction in all types of waste must be encouraged. If feasible, biogas production from the organic waste could also be considered, and even used by the hospital to reduce their coal burning.

We encourage Council to take a lead in its purchasing decisions to work towards zero waste-to-landfill. We support the reduction in types of plastic waste collected for recycling to

only those able to be recycled locally, and encourage consumer education and product stewardship requirements to stop other types of plastic.

Reduction of construction and demolition waste is an important issue, and Council can take a facilitatory and regulatory position to ensure cooperation from building material providers and construction workers who have to segregate waste types so they can be reused or recycled. It must not be cheaper and easier to dump mixed waste than to segregate it.

We strongly support widespread planting of trees, both native and edible, around the urban areas and walkways. Likewise, trees for erosion control, shading waterways and providing biodiversity corridors.

We also support more education on organically growing fruit and vegetables at home gardens as this is one of the biggest ways in which people could reduce carbon emissions. Just before the lockdown, all vegetable seedlings and many fruit trees were sold out, showing many are keen to grow food in their backyard, particularly during the pandemic. Others may not know how to do this and, therefore, it is a great time to be encouraging workshops etc to increase awareness and skill levels in self-sufficiency. Information on the correct varieties of fruit trees for this climatic region, and disease free species would be very valuable so people don't become disillusioned and waste years growing nonproductive and high maintenance trees.

There are three focuses for the new triennium and we support two of them:

1. Transport

We support the focus on providing a sustainable transport culture, and hope the upcoming Transport Activity Management Plan includes behaviour change as well as physical changes. Transport emits 19.7% of our GHG and to reduce this by at least half in the next decade should be our goal. In addition to congestion and taking up parking space that could instead be green public space, vehicles emit particulate matter PM_{2.5} that has adverse health effects. Nelson residents experienced improved air quality during the COVID-19 lockdown due to reduced car use. Many people have taken up biking as a family exercise routine and have enjoyed a safer environment. The bike lanes need widening if we were to encourage people to exercise while maintaining the safe 2 m distance from each other in the future pandemic situations. It would be a great time to push for more working from home to reduce transport emissions and also to encourage regular car-less days and commuting by bicycle. The long-term Nelson Future Access Project must factor in sea-level rise and flooding and the Nelson Tasman Future Development Strategy's (FDS) commitment to attractive, community-oriented intensification of urban areas.

2. Housing

We support this year's focus on affordable housing, intensification, and directing all the funding from the sale of community housing into a Housing Reserve. We are concerned that as part of the FDS agreement TDC has planned more wasteful urban sprawl over good rural land, and we would rather that NCC take back some of that residential requirement into intensification of NCCs urban areas. Another way of ensuring sufficient affordable housing should be found instead of continuing to build more of the type of housing developers make most profit from.

We support a climate change lens being applied consistently to infrastructure planning in particular. We assume that the council is following the NZ Coastal Policy Statement 2010, which requires a 100-year time frame to be applied to coastal structures and a 30-year time frame to non-coastal infrastructure.

We encourage Council to take an intergenerational perspective to the phrase “resilience to climate change.” For example, more stop banks and pumps are not a long-term, intergenerational solution to sea level rise. Just as the airport upgrade was an investment in the medium-term, not long-term, prosperity of Nelson that will likely need to be reinvested in before the end of the life of the building, the intention to upgrade the library in its current location also suggests a lack of foresight and acceptance of future extreme weather events causing flooding in the lower reaches of the Maitai River. This decision must be put on hold until the City Centre Spatial Plan, the Nelson Plan and new Flooding Report are available to make an enduring, intergenerational decision to relocate essential services from low lying and vulnerable locations.

The public desire to have their favourite library remain in its current location was made 4 years ago, before the council declared a Climate Emergency and has pledged to put every activity through a climate change lens.

We encourage Council to consider the impact of changes to our climate systems on the longevity of its investments in the Nelson CBD and surrounds.

Civic House

The Civic House building is 40 years old, has substandard office space, and it is in a low lying part of the CBD, beside the lower reaches of the Maitai River. Tidal flooding in the adjacent Wakatu car park keeps reminding us of this fact. The risk to Civic House is already well understood and Nelson's Civil Defence capacity has been located elsewhere. It makes more sense, in the context of climate change, to rebuild both the Council accommodation and the library on higher ground, using low-energy and low-carbon technologies to offer Nelson a sustainable and resilient urban centre, than to invest in what could become an unusable or high-maintenance or even stranded asset.

Koata Park

Similarly, the Koata Park project needs to be reconsidered from a climate change perspective. Our commitments to steeply reduce our carbon emissions (by 50% before 2030), mean we must carefully prioritise which high-emission projects to undertake. Building a gondola (including earthworks, concrete and steel) will count against this requirement and increase the region's emissions. If tree planting is proposed to offset those emissions, we ask Council to recognise that climate change will increasingly put those offsets at risk as forest fires will be more likely with increased global warming.

Modellers Pond

We also support Council reviewing the solution for the Modellers Pond through a climate lens. We are confident that returning it to a natural estuarine condition or wetland with timber jetties would take precedence over high-carbon concrete and walls. Wetlands buffer sea level rise and the impact of extreme weather flooding events and provide valuable biodiversity and carbon sequestration potential.

Maitai River Precinct

We do not support allocating spending resources (and carbon emissions) on developing permanent infrastructure in the Maitai River Precinct, as this is a low lying area adjacent to the lower reaches of the river. While we appreciate the wide cycle path, upgraded Saltwater bridge, and native plantings, we believe further investment (and emissions) would be better spent in areas less prone to flooding and sea-level rise. We also enjoy the art work, particularly the carved Prow and the family tree, and are pleased that these could be moved and relocated if necessary. Unfortunately Trafalgar Centre is also low lying and has an uncertain future.

Responding to climate change on behalf of our communities is a complex and demanding task but we are confident that this Council is up to the challenge. Thank you for your ongoing efforts, on behalf of concerned parents and grandparents across the region.

We wish to be heard.

Jenny Easton, on behalf of Zero Carbon NelsonTasman.

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