

Submission to the Climate Change Commission/ He Pou a Rangi



On the Draft Second Emissions Reduction Plan

19 June 2023

Introduction

The Timaru District Council (the Council) thanks the Climate Change Commission for the opportunity to submit on the Second Emissions Reduction Plan.

This submission is made by the Council, at 2 King George Place, Timaru. The submission has been jointly endorsed by the Mayor and Chair of the Environmental Committee. The contact person for Council is Nigel Bowen, Mayor of the Timaru District, who can be contacted at Timaru District Council, by phone (03) 687 7200 or PO Box 522, Timaru 7940.

The contact person regarding the submission content is Rhys Taylor (Climate Change Advisor) who can be contacted via rhys.taylor@timdc.govt.nz. We do not wish to speak to this submission.

Overview of Timaru District

The Timaru District Council is a local authority in the South Island serving over 48,000 people in South Canterbury. The main settlement is Timaru, with other smaller settlements of Geraldine, Pleasant Point and Temuka. The District covers 2,737 square kilometres of South Canterbury. Two rivers naturally define its northern and southern boundaries, the Rangitata and Pareora respectively, with the district stretching along the gentle curve of the South Canterbury coastline and inland to the foothills. The District enjoys a temperate climate and has well-established exporting agricultural and horticultural industries. Our District is already experiencing the effects of a warming climate, from faster coastal erosion to severe weather events affecting crops and livestock.

Council is currently developing a district-wide Climate Change Strategy, in part informed by a citizens-based Advisory Group. A proposal has been made that the Environmental Committee support an independent Climate Trust (to be further considered in July 2023). The Trust proposed will act as an independent body providing information and advice to Council and other stakeholders, as well as potentially providing support to smaller neighbouring District Councils, Waimate and Mackenzie.

Venture Timaru (the economic arm of the Council) is leading a national Sustainable is Attainable effort to decarbonise food processing and manufacturing, with substantial local investment secured from EECA.

The Council has read and supports the submissions made by LGNZ-Taituara and by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.

Agricultural Emissions

1. Council supports recommendations 8 and 9 on creating low-emission options, but requests that any solutions helping to reduce gross carbon emissions be delivered quickly and with the certainty of action, so industries affected know for a surety what they need to do next.
2. As stated in the Canterbury Mayoral Forum submission, our region is heavily impacted by agricultural emissions policy and considers it critical that the Government delivers certainty and enables innovative solutions as quickly as possible.
3. Council knows that local farmers have already shown a willingness to adapt to climate change and that they see first-hand the changes to the land and water affected by climate change. We have examples in the District of coastal erosion, inundation and resulting salinity of farmland, and also of river flood damage. Arable harvests have been damaged by prolonged late-summer humidity in La Nina conditions and by drought in El Nino conditions.
4. Enhancing the advisory services to farmers (rec.8) would be welcome and can also provide feedback to Central Government to support the overall emission reduction target.
5. The ETS is a blunt tool and farmers wish for ETS to provide a more detailed pricing system, reflecting considering fertiliser application methodology and altered feed types for grazing. Council supports a more robust version of ETS to reflect steps the agricultural and farming sectors are already taking to reduce emissions.
6. Diversification of land usage can only come about if there is a market for the product. Central Government needs to use the levers available for market influence to work with the agricultural sector to help create new markets at scale, to support the diversification within the sector. Diversifying agricultural land use needs to be considered in consultation with not only the farmers but also the industries that process their products. Within the Timaru District connections between agricultural industries and economic development are closer and more cross-reliant on each other than in other parts of New Zealand.
7. Council supports greater investment in science, research and innovation to support the pastoral and arable sectors. As per our submission on the Future for Local Government, partnership with Central and Local Governments and the local agricultural sector in the district would allow a research provider to work extensively with local experts to review land use and identify diversifications that result in lowering of emissions but retain the economic stability of the district. In order to ensure the stability of the economy within the Timaru District, a partnership where the Central Government levers the market to support any diversity proposed in the farming/ agricultural sectors.

8. South Canterbury farm production is a significant export earner. It should be noted that 95% of South Canterbury food production is sent out of our district to other markets many overseas.

Buildings' energy performance

9. Recommendation 10 proposes that planning systems build urban areas upward and mixes uses while incrementally reducing climate risks. Council in considering the needs of the community now and into the future that large scale greenfield subdivisions provides the expansion needed in the District, and these plans provide for the incremental reduction in climate risks required.
10. Council notes recommendation 11 to incentivise refits to deliver healthy, resilient, low-emission buildings. We welcome existing Government funding through *Warmer Homes* that helps to insulate older, poorly-performing buildings, but wish to see it much better funded for a faster speed of delivery. Some of our housing stock is energy-inefficient and consequently vulnerable to condensation and mould, with significant health impacts. We see community health and economic benefits of improving that housing stock, alongside reducing the carbon impact by making adequate clean heating more efficient and affordable.

Transportation/ Energy Strategy.

11. Council supports recommendation 13 for a national energy strategy but wishes to reinforce councils are the experts in local matters, and therefore the national energy strategy should be developed in partnership.
12. Council supports recommendation 13 to prioritise and accelerate renewable electricity generation and distribution, particularly future-proof the existing local electricity infrastructure (Alpine Energy network, in our case) to support the uptake of EV and hydrogen vehicles including those for transportation of goods and produce; and to aid decarbonisation of coal-based industrial processes (your recommendation 14) for which local biofuel supplies will be inadequate.
13. Council supports the Regional Transport Committee's target of a 30 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from land transport in the Canterbury region by 2030. We have the successful *MyWay* on-demand public transport system supporting Timaru residents to utilise alternatives to single-occupant car driving. This has been a trial and given the success confirmation of long term funding is essential and welcome.
14. Council supports increased funding of integrated transport networks- (to aid transfer between modes), resolves the barriers to scaling-up vehicle charging infrastructure, and boosts incentives for the adoption of zero-emission vehicles - and hopes this can be done in partnership with local government.
15. As per the Canterbury Mayoral Forum submission, we support the Government to provide "clear direction and approaches for balancing and resolving conflicts between system outcomes" in order to ensure the fast-paced and sustained build of renewable generation and network infrastructure.
16. Council recommends an integrated approach to transport and urban development funding and planning systems to ensure that systems are built from

urban upwards. By utilising levers available to Council such as regional spatial planning strategies, and natural and built environment plans, Central can provide more direction on how lowering of emissions can be achieved.

17. Council is already actively working to reduce waste emissions. This has included commencing promoting landfill gas capture and is taking action now to achieve this at our Redruth landfill. Timaru District has been collecting and processing organic waste through composting for many years now to remove putrescible material (methane source) from landfill input. We will soon be upgrading and expanding capacity of the composting facilities at our Timaru Landfill site. This additional capacity will allow processing of organic waste from other districts. Council has run workshops to support residents to reduce food ending up in landfill; Domestic Food Resilience 8 February 2023 and Commercial Food Resilience 5 July 2023. Therefore Council supports Recommendation 19 and advises that more Councils need to incorporate strategies at all levels.

Summary of changes sought

18. Council recognises the need for climate change to be integrated into its everyday business as well as future planning through Long Term Plans and District Plan and is working towards this in the next LTP. In order to achieve the outcomes wanted by Central Government there is a need for a clear, concise, partnership between governments and stakeholders.
19. Government funding is needed to ensure that as we move towards the Crown's UN-committed emission targets we do not unduly impact the financial and economic stability of the arable and pastoral sector.

Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit on this submission. Please do not hesitate to contact us via rhys.taylor@timdc.govt.nz if you have any questions or wish to discuss aspects further.

Ngā mihi



Nigel Bowen
Mayor