

OPINION: Ministers have gone deaf

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Brian Cox

The Productivity Commission might be talking about big things from the energy sector, but the Government doesn't seem to want to know, says Bioenergy Association chief executive BRIAN COX.

CARBON NEWS reports that Government officials are scouring the world for international carbon credits yet little effort appears to be going into avoiding the need to purchase any credits.

Despite offers to discuss with ministers the opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that exist though out New Zealand, none seem interested.

All the attention seems to be going on either very futuristic research opportunities or the purchase of international carbon credits.

There appears to be no interest in the low-hanging opportunities which could be achieved using proven technologies such as happens in the bioenergy heat sector, either from wood or waste residues.

MORE DISCUSSION

Where is the plan to avoid the need to purchase international carbon credits?

If we are to achieve the 2050 zero-carbon target, which the Productivity Commission thinks is achievable, then there needs to be more on-the-ground discussion with those who are well-placed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as heat-plant owners who can transition from coal to wood fuel for their heat.

Investment in new low-emissions equipment takes time, and the alternative-fuel markets are just emerging. The development of emission-reduction opportunities also requires a whole-of-government approach as, for example, the availability of wood-fuel instead of coal for heat requires supportive land use, forestry, wood processing and regional growth strategies and action.

NOT HAPPENING

These cross a number of ministerial portfolios and require early discussion with business. This doesn't seem to be happening.

We can achieve the zero carbon target, but it requires collective action and improved involvement of those with the ideas and knowledge.

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