

Media Statement – (Mid Apr 2022)

Release date: 10/05/2022

Embargo date: 09/05/2022

Aotearoa New Zealand Renewable Energy Associations: Prioritise Domestic Emission Reduction – May 2022

Renewable Energy Associations, consisting of the New Zealand Bioenergy Association, New Zealand Geothermal Association, and New Zealand Wind Energy Association¹ call for prioritised domestic emissions reductions if Aotearoa New Zealand is to effectively meet targets to combat future climate change and rising emissions.

Together we advocate and champion the vital need to work towards a low-emission and climate resilient future based on our actions at home.

The Government has already announced via public statements it is in support of strict standards for environmental integrity in any offshore mitigation it will employ and we are hopeful that when the Government's Emissions Reduction plan is released soon, solid emphasis is given to the importance of domestic mitigation, and it properly articulates the need for the Government to implement a comprehensive set of policies to effectively maximise the opportunity for domestic emission reductions within Aotearoa New Zealand, and demonstrate clear leadership worldwide.

There is a real cause for concern as our net emissions have continued to rise. With previous climate change targets primarily met by using offsets from internationally purchased carbon credits, rather than from lowering our own gross domestic emissions.

We also note the potential high cost this will incur to taxpayers and other risks resulting from price uncertainty and the environmental integrity of reduction initiatives caused by purchasing international carbon credits to offset our future carbon emissions. This also increases the uncertainty as to how Aotearoa New Zealand will be able to access offshore mitigation without the development of a centralised and credible market.

The Climate Change Response Act limits the use of offshore mitigation in emissions budgets to situations incurring a major change in circumstances that was not accounted for when the budgets were established, which in turn affects the ability to meet the relevant emissions budget domestically and the Renewable Energy Associations are committed to continued focus on supporting the development pathway to properly maximise domestic mitigation efforts.

The country's first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC1) was submitted in 2016 and updated on 31 October 2021, with the new NDC now setting a headline target of a 50 per cent reduction of net emissions below our gross 2005 level by 2030 and covers the period from 2021-2030.

¹MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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Over the next decade it is critical to reduce our country's emissions, and to strengthen our own emissions response, with the principles of Tiriti o Waitangi and equity at the heart of our responses to ongoing environmental crises and climate change.

As renewable energy associations, we aim to keep a strong focus on long-term goals, offering support across the renewable energy sector to assist in accelerated efforts to increase Aotearoa New Zealand's domestic decarbonisation actions, as we make the much-needed transition to a low-emissions, climate resilient economy.

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