

## **NZ on right track on climate change**

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(Paula Bennett is the Minister for Climate Change Issues)

We've ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, so what next?

On October 5, you may have seen New Zealand's ratification of the Paris Agreement making a few headlines. The EU and Canada promptly followed our lead, and the agreement will now come into force on November 4. However, you may, as many have, wondered exactly what that means.

The Paris Agreement is the most comprehensive agreement on climate change ever reached; 197 countries have committed to reducing their emissions to keep temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius.

New Zealand is playing our part.

Ratifying early means we contribute to the 55 per cent of global emissions needed to bring this incredibly important climate change agreement into force.

While we only make up 0.16 per cent of global emissions, one of the best things we've done as a global citizen is helping ensure the Paris Agreement gets over the line.

New Zealand's first target under the Paris Agreement, to reduce emissions to 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, is both fair and ambitious. It will not be easy. Our target will be met through a combination reducing emissions, planting more trees and trading in high integrity international carbon markets.

This Government has a plan.

Agriculture is responsible for almost half of our greenhouse gas emissions, which is why we are a leading member of the 46-country Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases and invest \$20 million per year in research on reducing agricultural emissions. Through AgResearch and other government agencies, we have also been working on growing our sheep dairy industry, a far more sustainable alternative for our environment.

Our plan includes an ambitious and wide-ranging package of measures to increase the uptake of electric vehicles, record levels of spending on public transport, and a programme of urban cycleways throughout the country.

We've also recently lodged the New Zealand Aviation Emissions Reduction Action Plan to help tackle the environmental impacts of aviation.

We have a target of 90 per cent renewable electricity by 2025, and are well on our way with 81 per cent currently. We have insulated more than 300,000 homes and we continue to upgrade and future proof our social housing stock.

We have heard the calls of environmental groups and are establishing working groups to focus on adaptation, agriculture and forestry.

Alongside this work, we are now halfway through the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) review, and the most forceful message we have heard so far is that increased policy stability and certainty are critical.

Businesses need to know where policy is heading over the next 5, 10 and 15 years so that they can have confidence when investing in new technologies.

That's absolutely my commitment.

New Zealanders might not always agree on issues such as what level our targets should be, or how best to include things such as agriculture, but I think we can all agree that as a country, we can and must do more.

Ratifying the Paris Agreement is a good way to show our strong commitment internationally, but the real work happens at home, and I am optimistic we're on the right track to finding better ways to live and leave this world for future generations.