



OIA Ref: 2023-012

[REDACTED]  
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5 July 2023

Kia ora [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 June 2023 in relation to our 26 April 2023 Official Information Act (the Act) response to your request for information (ref: OIA 2023-007).

We have considered some questions in this correspondence under the Act as these parts seek information known to or held by the Climate Change Commission.

#### *Clarification*

On 8 June 2023 we contacted you to confirm that our interpretation of the term “hard waste” in your request was referring to “solid waste”, that is, everything accounted for in the waste sector other than wastewater, was correct. In your response on the same day, you confirmed our interpretation and asked further questions relating to those in your correspondence of 1 June 2023.

On 13 June we acknowledged your confirmation and advised that these additional questions had widened the scope of your request, which re-started the statutory time limit for responding to you.

On this basis, the Commission has considered the following parts of your correspondence in accordance with the Act:

1 June 2023

*“What is the Climate Commission doing to alleviate the real impact of ‘said’ methane from hard waste sites? How does the Climate Commission account for this, if at all? Are there data sets that portray the true emissions from hard waste that should be disseminated to the public [...]? Is hard waste methane factored into the biogenic methane emissions equation?”*

8 June 2023

*“What I am asking after is the level of methane that is emitted from solid waste and how this is measured, if at all? How does this compare to the projected emissions from animals? Please provide the numbers that support your narrative that animals are a danger to the globe, in direct comparison to ‘solid waste.’”*

#### *Response*

As noted in our 26 April 2023 response to OIA 2023-007, the statutory purpose of the Commission is to provide independent and evidence-based advice to Government on climate action, as well as monitoring progress towards Aotearoa New Zealand’s climate goals.

What this means in practice is that we exist separately from government policy. Our independence enables us to provide impartial advice on issues such as emissions reduction in the waste sector. In developing our advice, the Commission relies on verified data sourced from Government agencies.

Specifically in relation to emissions resulting from waste, and actions being taken to manage the impact of these emissions, we refer you to chapter 15 of [Aotearoa New Zealand's first emissions reduction plan](#) on the Ministry for the Environment's website.

As you will see in the chapter, the main sources of waste emissions in 2019 were from the organic waste that is part of solid waste disposal (82 per cent), followed by wastewater treatment (11 per cent), incineration and open burning (5 per cent), and biological treatment of solid waste (compost) (2 per cent).

Further detail on emissions from the waste sector in Aotearoa New Zealand can be found in [New Zealand's Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#) on the Ministry for the Environment's website. This is the official annual report of all anthropogenic (human induced) emissions and removals of greenhouse gases in Aotearoa New Zealand. Chapter 7 provides information on waste.

The Inventory also includes an [Interactive Emissions Tracker](#). This is a tool that allows you to break down data from the Inventory by industry, including agriculture and waste. You can also view a breakdown of different types of methane emissions including solid waste, which accounts for 2698.31 kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-e, and agricultural methane emissions including livestock, which accounts for 29,430.97 kilotonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-e for the most recent year with data (2021). In total, 9% of biogenic methane produced in Aotearoa New Zealand comes from organic waste in landfills, with the remaining 91% coming from livestock.

Another representation of this data can be found on the Inventory Snapshot published on the Ministry for the Environment's website. See [figure four](#) for a breakdown of emissions trends by sector.

Regarding how the level of methane emitted from solid waste is measured, landfill facilities that receive household waste are required to record information about the gross tonnage of waste entering their landfill facilities per year and submit this as part of their annual emissions return. This figure is then multiplied by an emissions factor that estimates the emissions per tonne of waste to give a total emissions figure. You can find out more at the Environmental Protection Authority's webpage '[Waste](#)'.

As the information you seek is publicly available, we have responded to your request for information by providing you with links to websites containing the information you seek. This decision is made under section 18(d) of the Act.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Office of the Ombudsman, in accordance with Section 28(3) of the Act. Contact details for the Ombudsman can be found on their [website](#).

Please note that the Commission proactively releases its responses to requests made under the Act. This is to help ensure others can also have access to this information. As such, this letter will shortly be published on our website with your name and contact details redacted to protect your privacy.

Ngā mihi



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