

1 April 2022

The Hon David Parker  
Minister for the Environment  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Tēnā koe Minister

When He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission delivered *Ināia Tonu Nei* last year, we presented ambitious, achievable and equitable paths for Aotearoa to meet its climate targets and contribute to global efforts to address climate change.

It is now over to Government to determine and resource the specific policies that will form the Government's first Emissions Reduction Plan, and to set the first three emissions budgets to 2035.

As the Government moves to finalise the policies that will make up the plan, I am writing to all relevant Ministers to highlight recommendations from *Ināia Tonu Nei* and offer to meet with them.

In letters to your honourable colleagues I have highlighted key recommendations on energy, agriculture, forestry and transport. Many of these recommendations overlap with your portfolio as Minister for the Environment.

The Commission also made recommendations in *Ināia Tonu Nei* on how to reduce emissions from waste.

The Commission's ongoing engagement has shown us that businesses are looking to the Government for certainty and leadership, so that they can plan and invest with confidence aligned with the decarbonisation pathway Aotearoa needs.

Waste consistently comes up as an issue to be addressed and there's strong public support for action.

### **Reducing waste and emissions**

Aotearoa generates an estimated 17.49 million tonnes of waste per year, of which about 12.59 million tonnes are sent to landfill.

Aotearoa has one of the highest rates of waste generated per person in the OECD and low recovery rates of waste, such as to recycling, anaerobic digestion (energy recovery) or composting.

But there are good signs of progress. Waste emissions fell 16% from 2000 to 2019, which is even more impressive if you consider our population and economic growth.

The consultation currently being run by Ministry for the Environment on transforming recycling shows that there is an appetite from government to show leadership in this space, and to help make the right choice the easy choice.

People have already shown they will take bold steps to tackle waste emissions - from community groups such as Para Kore to big companies such as Waste Management. In Aotearoa, people want to do the right thing.

### **Accelerate the transition**

We are at the beginning of the transition, but we need to do more. As we advise in *Ināia Tonu Nei*, waste emissions have to reduce 40% by 2035.

We recommended in our advice that the Government should develop a long-term strategy to move Aotearoa towards a more circular economy.

This will require system level transformation of the waste sector, with waste thought of as a resource rather than something to be disposed of in landfill.

We also recommended that in order to be enduring, this strategy must be created in partnership with Iwi/Māori, give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi, and align with the He Ara Waiora framework.

Incorporating a mātauranga Māori approach in the strategy, enabling Māori-collectives to participate in associated business opportunities and setting up a mechanism that enables active collaboration with Iwi/Māori, local government and industry will be key.

### **Understanding the impact of actions**

Setting a clear strategy will help ensure Aotearoa invests in the right knowledge, community and physical infrastructure to drive transformation of how we view, collect and re-use waste products.

Our advice encourages prioritising and investing in data collection so that measurable indicators can be created and our progress towards circularity, and the impact on emissions, can be monitored.

Providing a clear governance structure to support this work - including tasking a minister and lead agency to assess and implement actions – will help keep this work on track to deliver the climate benefits of a more circular economy. In addition, it is more likely to see us achieve the environmental and economic co-benefits of these changes.

Strategy and clear policy will play a significant role in the transition to a thriving, climate resilient, low emissions Aotearoa. I welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss our recommendations, ahead of the Emissions Reduction Plan release in May.

Ngā mihi nui



Dr Rod Carr  
**Chair of He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission**

**cc:** The Hon James Shaw - Minister of Climate Change