

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

Building a Brighter Future



Practical solutions, better protection

Our environment is a valuable resource that we must preserve and protect. It's a big part of our quality of life and it's central to our international reputation, our primary sector, our growing tourism market, and our economy.

National believes sensible management of our resources can go hand-in-hand with faster economic growth and job creation. A stronger economy can better provide the means to restore, maintain, and enhance our environment.

Improving our environment

In the past three years we have simplified resource management, improved air quality, helped minimise waste, and enhanced environmental governance.

We've put a plan in place to improve our rivers, lakes, and aquifers. We've introduced a more balanced approach to climate change. Our Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is helping New Zealand do its fair share to reduce emissions, protect our clean, green brand, and help transition to a low-carbon economy.

National will continue this work to improve the environment and build a cleaner, greener, brighter future for all New Zealanders.

Related policies

→ [Resource management](#)

“National will introduce new environment reporting systems, pass legislation to protect our Exclusive Economic Zone, and clean up nationally-significant lakes, rivers, and aquifers. We'll also improve the ETS broadly in line with the recommendations of the 2011 review.”

Key facts

- More trees have been planted. More renewable power stations have been approved. More homes have been insulated.
- New Zealand's air is the cleanest on record.
- Moderated the ETS. Put in place the Waste Minimisation Act. Simplified and streamlined the RMA. Set up the new Environmental Protection Authority. Put in place practical controls on freedom camping.
- Adopted national policy statements on renewable energy, fresh water, and coastal management. Passed new national regulations on water metering and contaminated sites.
- Funded Auckland rail electrification and introduced incentives for electric car technology.
- Ranked best green performance in 2011 by the Global Green Economy Index.

National has...

Improved fresh water management

- ✓ Embarked on our *Fresh Start for Fresh Water* programme.
- ✓ Established the Land & Water Forum – made up of primary industry groups, environmental and recreational organisations, iwi, and other groups.
- ✓ Adopted a National Policy Statement on Fresh Water Management.
- ✓ Improved monitoring of compliance with water consents, and doubled penalties for non-compliance.
- ✓ Passed regulations for metering 98 per cent of water takes.
- ✓ Provided \$265 million to clean up iconic waterways, such as Lake Taupo, the Rotorua Lakes, and the Waikato River.
- ✓ Put in place practical controls on freedom camping.

Improved waste management

- ✓ Implemented the Waste Minimisation Act.
- ✓ Provided contestable funding to focus on collecting and recycling harmful waste.
- ✓ Introduced a waste levy to provide better financial incentives to reduce waste and support smart waste recycling initiatives.
- ✓ Provided \$20 million for waste minimisation projects – helping communities and businesses to reduce waste.
- ✓ Allowed for a flexible and efficient approach, through special legislation, to the waste generated by the Christchurch earthquakes.

Improved air quality

- ✓ Launched *Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart*, a nationwide scheme to insulate and/or provide clean heating for 188,500 homes.
- ✓ Upgraded state houses with clean heating devices and insulation.
- ✓ Introduced a new National Environmental Standard for air quality, which set pragmatic timeframes for improving air quality throughout New Zealand.

Improved environmental governance

- ✓ Set up an advisory group on green growth, clean technology and a lower-carbon economy.
- ✓ Removed regulatory functions from the Environment Ministry and focused it on policy advice and the implementation of our environmental programme.
- ✓ Established the new Environmental Protection Authority to:
 - Better manage the Government's regulatory responsibilities.
 - Consent major projects of national significance.
- ✓ Tackled the dysfunctional regional council in Canterbury:
 - Completed a resource plan after 18 years.
 - Dramatically improved RMA compliance.
 - Adopted a clean-up plan for Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.
 - Advanced work on the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.

Improved resource management

- ✓ Simplified and streamlined the RMA to reduce delays, uncertainties, and costs.
- ✓ Established priority consenting for projects of national significance.

For more details, see our [Resource Management](#) policy.

Cleaned up contaminated sites

- ✓ Provided \$15.2 million to clean up New Zealand's most contaminated sites such as the Tui Mine at Te Aroha.
- ✓ Set a national environment standard for contaminated soil.

Improved management of our seas

- ✓ Launched a new National Policy Statement on Coastal Policy.
- ✓ Introduced legislation to properly manage New Zealand's vast Exclusive Economic Zone.

Ensured New Zealand is doing its fair share on climate change

- ✓ Reduced New Zealand's emissions. We're now on track to comfortably meet our Kyoto obligations for 2008-12.
- ✓ Amended Labour's ETS to strike a better balance between New Zealand's environmental and economic interests. We:
 - Halved the costs to households.
 - Reduced the impact on agriculture and small businesses.
 - Are encouraging renewable energy and tree planting.
- ✓ Completed the first ETS review.
- ✓ Adopted a National Policy Statement on Renewable Electricity Generation.
- ✓ Set emissions targets for 2020 and 2050.
- ✓ Established the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases and provided \$45 million in funding. The Alliance now has scientists in 36 member countries working to tackle greenhouse gas emissions and increase food production.
- ✓ Provided \$50 million over 10 years to set up the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre, to investigate practical ways to reduce greenhouse emissions from domestic farming.

Our results so far

More renewable electricity

- In the March 2011 quarter, 79 per cent of electricity came from renewable sources – the highest rate in 12 years.
- 1340 MW of new renewable electricity generation – a record – has been consented in the first year of the ETS. This is five times the average annual renewables consented in the previous decade. No new fossil-fuelled plants have been sought or consented.

More homes are warmer and drier

- Nearly 130,000 homes are warmer, drier, and healthier under our *Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart* scheme.
- Over 29,000 homes have been converted to clean heat devices.

Progress in insulation, space heating, and water heating	Labour after 9 years	National in just 3 years
Homes insulated with government grants	50,264	135,390*
Homes converted to clean heating	800	29,151
Homes installed with solar heating or heat pumps for water heating with government grants	1971	7462

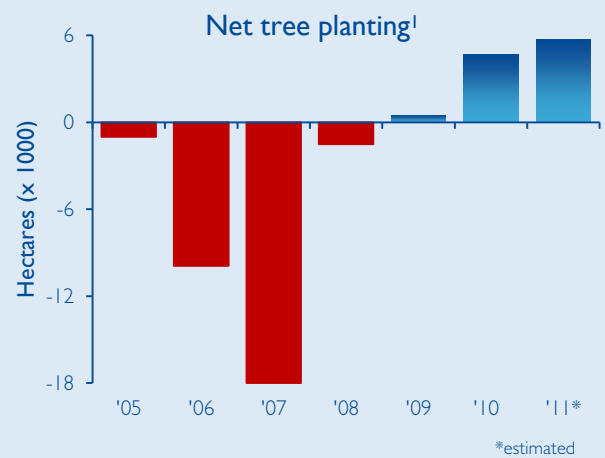
* Includes *Warm Up New Zealand: HeatSmart* and other government grants.

More toxic chemicals cleaned up

- \$15.2 million for the Tui Mine cleanup.

More tree planting

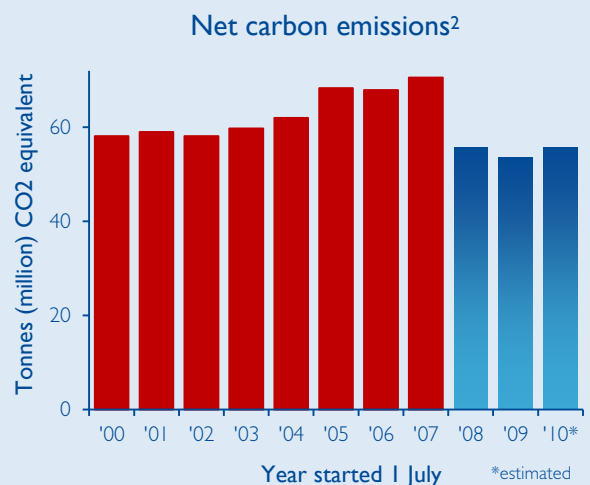
- Record levels of deforestation between 2005 and 2008 of 30,000ha have been reversed.
- There has been more trees planted than felled in each year we've been in office:



¹Ministry for the Environment tree-planting data

Emissions are down

- Net emissions have fallen for the first time since 1990 due to gains in forestry and renewable electricity.



²Ministry for the Environment emissions data

What we will do next...



1. Advance our *Fresh Start for Fresh Water* programme

Water is our most plentiful natural resource. It gives us a competitive advantage over our trading partners, particularly in our primary and tourism industries.

→ Clean up nationally significant lakes, rivers, and aquifers, working with stakeholders and local authorities.

This is part of our Budget 2011 *Fresh Start for Fresh Water* programme to assist councils with historic pollution problems.

We've reprioritised funding of \$15 million over two years and already allocated \$6.1 million to Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. Total funding for water clean-ups will be \$265 million.

→ Advance the Land & Water Forum work to set limits on water quality and minimum flows.

The National-led Government has asked the Land & Water Forum to report back to Government by May 2012 on methods, tools, and governance arrangements for setting limits for water quality and quantity.

→ Strengthen monitoring and compliance of resource consents by regional councils to ensure greater consistency in performance.

Regional councils are doing better with their consent performance.

But there needs to be more consistency to ensure breaches in consent conditions are dealt with properly and fairly.

2. Introduce new environment reporting systems

→ Pass a new Environment Reporting Bill. Under this new legislation, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment will independently report every five years on:

- Water and air quality.
- Coast and ocean management.
- Waste management.
- Native plants and animals.

New Zealand is the only OECD country not currently required to produce independent state of the environment reports.

→ Apply consistent measuring tools to the environment that create benchmarks and allow trends and progress to be clearly identified.

Measurement of water quality around New Zealand is inconsistent. It requires central government guidance to make sure benchmarks are being met.

We will improve these tools and systems to give a clearer picture and help inform Government decisions around funding priorities.

→ Rank rivers and lakes from cleanest to dirtiest in a national database against national standards, using scientific data.

Currently, data and records vary throughout, and between, regions. There is no way to tell which rivers are the most polluted.

Ranking will enable government, councils, and communities to identify the most polluted rivers and prioritise resources for clean-ups.

3. Improve environmental management of our oceans

- Pass Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) legislation, which has already been introduced to Parliament, by 1 July 2012.

This legislation will set environmental standards for all commercial activities within our EEZ.

- Make the new Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) responsible for consenting, monitoring, and enforcing activities that impact on the EEZ, such as petroleum exploration, seabed mining, deepwater aquaculture, and marine energy development.

As the environmental regulator, the EPA will have authority for enforcement of the EEZ legislation.

- Introduce regulations to support new EEZ legislation.

Regulations will reinforce National's commitment to world's best practise to protect the environment. Robust legislation and regulation is crucial to getting proper rules in place to better manage our ocean resources within the EEZ, and ensure environmental safeguards are in place.

- Pass new Marine Reserves legislation

Approving marine reserves is a controversial and fractured process.

National will streamline the process and align it more with the board-of-inquiry model. This is used successfully by the EPA to decide consenting for projects of national significance.

We will also extend into the EEZ the Marine Reserve legislation and the purposes for which reserves can be created.

4. Improve management of waste and contaminated sites

- Put in place the new National Environment Standard on contaminated sites.

New Zealand has thousands of contaminated sites.

We will carry out an independent review into extending the National Environment Standard (NES) to also protect environmental values. The NES provides clear rules to manage public health risks.

- Create a new national register of significant contaminated sites.

We will implement an information management software system for regional councils.

This will document contaminated sites and form a register of national priority contaminated sites.

- Set up a nationwide TV take-back programme to recycle old televisions in 2012 – prior to the digital switchover.

Following a pilot study with a national retailer, we will integrate the collection and recycling of televisions through major retail outlets and nationwide recycling depots.

- Continue to work with industry on improving management of electronic waste, working closely with Australia.

We need to find a permanent solution to e-waste issues, and recycling 80,000 tonnes of electronic waste, all year round.

We will work with Australia to progress a product stewardship scheme and provide a permanent solution for e-waste.

Tackling climate change and reducing emissions



Domestic policy

The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is the most important – but not only – policy tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help New Zealand transition to a low carbon economy.

The 2011 Review recommended improvements and refinements in the ETS.

National acknowledges the financial pressure households and businesses face with the ongoing global financial crisis.

We intend to slow the phasing in of the ETS. We recognise the Government's finances are under pressure and our changes to the ETS will be fiscally neutral.

National will:

- Extend the transitional implementation phase for the electricity, industrial, and transport sectors.

The 2011 ETS Review Panel recommended moving to full obligation in three equal steps between 1 January 2013 and 1 January 2015. It is National's intention to implement this recommendation.

- Maintain a fixed price option until at least 2015.

The 2011 ETS Review Panel recommended maintaining the fixed price option but increasing it at \$5 per tonne each year until 2015.

National will maintain the fixed-price option unchanged at \$25 per tonne until 2015.

- Introduce offsetting for pre-1990 forest land owners from 1 January 2013.

National believes it is important to maintain land-use flexibility for pre-1990 forest land.

We will introduce offsetting on 1 January 2013 regardless of the lack of international agreement.

It makes sound scientific sense that, all else being equal, planting a tree is more important than where it is planted.

- Review the second tranche of compensation for pre-1990 forest land owners faced with a loss of value because of restricted land use in light of the introduction of offsetting.

The allocation to pre-1990 forest land owners was made in recognition of the land value lost as a result of introducing the ETS.

The introduction of offsetting will allow land owners to change land use, as long as they provide an equivalent level of carbon sequestration by replanting on another site.

- Review the 1 January 2015 legislated entry of agricultural emissions into the ETS in 2014.

The agriculture sector is liable to surrender units for agricultural greenhouse gas emissions from 1 January 2015.

National will review this in 2014. We will not impose a liability unless there are practical technologies to reduce emissions, and our trading partners have made further progress with their climate change policies to reduce emissions.

Tackling climate change and reducing emissions



Domestic policy (continued)

- Explore the 2011 Review Panel recommendations on providing the option of an averaging approach to carbon credits for post-1989 forest owners.

National believes that adopting averaging will encourage small scale post-1989 forestry by removing the harvest liability while providing an up-front cash flow.

- Advance trans-Tasman discussions on linking the New Zealand and Australian carbon markets for the post-2015 period.

The future of our ETS relies upon access to international markets for carbon credits. Australia is our closest trading partner and it makes sense for us to establish a trans-Tasman carbon market.

- Work with Local Government New Zealand on ETS exemptions for small, unused landfills.

It is important to ensure there is a benefit from imposing a cost on the economy. National is not convinced that a blanket policy for landfills meets that criteria.

- Work with the refrigeration industry on the lowest-cost method of including synthetic gases in the ETS alongside existing ozone protection regulations.

While the ETS is the most efficient way to introduce an economy-wide price on carbon, we need to be satisfied that its application is fair, reasonable, and cost-effective when there are other price signal options available.



International policy

- Support the development of a comprehensive international agreement to succeed Kyoto. This should seek to reduce emissions in a balanced and fair way that recognises all significant emitters need to be part of the solution.

Climate change is a global issue. Unless all major emitting nations participate in tackling it, we are unlikely to achieve the reductions in emissions needed.

- Continue to negotiate a set of international rules that recognise the unique aspects of our plantation-forestry businesses.

National believes there should be a set of international rules governing land use, changes to land use, and forestry that recognises our extensive plantation-forestry sector.

- Advocate for international acceptance of more flexible land-use rules where this can achieve greater economic returns with no detrimental environmental outcomes.

The punitive rules around land-use change for pre-1990 plantation forests need to be amended in any future international agreement.

- Advocate for an international agreement that requires all major emitters to reduce their emission levels over time.

National sees no point in any future international agreement that does not include a commitment from major emitting countries to reduce their business-as-usual emissions levels.

We've made our 2020 target conditional on this.

Tackling climate change and reducing emissions

- Support development of the Cancun Accord as the basis for ongoing global action.

The Cancun Accord established a robust framework for achieving international agreement on climate change action.

National supports the progress made and the focus on an agreed measuring, reporting, and verification protocol leading to future mitigation targets.



Complementary measures

- Put in place the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Green Growth Initiatives.

National will carefully consider the Advisory Group's recommendations – particularly those relating to the transition of small and medium-sized businesses to a low carbon economy.

- Improve commercial building stock.

We will explore opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of existing commercial buildings and encourage developers to consider the commercial benefits of investing in green building technologies.

- Encourage the adoption of electric car technologies.

In 2010, National introduced an exemption from road user charges for full electric cars until 2013.

We will extend this exemption until 2020 to encourage the uptake of this low-emission technology.

Labour would take New Zealand backwards

Labour in government:

- ✘ Oversaw a 23 per cent increase in carbon emissions.
- ✘ Allowed 30,000 hectares of forest to be cut down in its last three years in government.
- ✘ Insulated only 50,000 homes in nine years.
- ✘ Converted only 800 homes to clean heating, and installed less than 2000 solar hot water panels in nine long years.
- ✘ Had no plan for e-waste, or reducing waste to landfills.
- ✘ Delivered little reform over nine years, other than a plan of inaction on water, which led to shortages and further deterioration of water quality.
- ✘ Ignored the economic impact of its ETS on our export industries, particularly agriculture.
- ✘ Set an impractical goal of carbon neutrality.
- ✘ Funded seismic surveys for oil in the EEZ with no environmental protection legislation.
- ✘ Delayed signing an international agreement on oil spill liability from 2001 and gave legislation the lowest priority before the 2008 election.

Our environment – and New Zealand – can't afford another dose of Labour