



New Zealand House of Representatives
Te Whare Māngai o Aotearoa

Environment Committee

Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Taiao

54th Parliament

May 2024

Inquiry into climate adaptation

Final report

Presented to the House of Representatives
by David MacLeod, Chairperson

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Inquiry into climate adaptation

Recommendation

The Environment Committee has conducted an inquiry into climate adaptation and recommends that the House take note of its report.

Introduction

In August 2023, the Minister of Climate Change, Hon James Shaw, wrote to the Environment Committee of the 53rd Parliament requesting that it initiate an inquiry into climate adaptation. The Minister explained that the committee's findings from this inquiry would inform the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Bill.

The Environment Committee agreed to the Minister's request, and called for public submissions from 24 August to 1 November 2023. During this period the 53rd Parliament was dissolved, the 2023 General Election was held, and there was a resulting change of Government. At the beginning of the 54th Parliament we decided to continue the previous committee's work on this inquiry.

Terms of reference

The previous committee set the following terms of reference for the inquiry:

- The current approach to community-led retreat and adaptation funding, its strengths, risks and costs.
- Lessons learned from severe weather events and natural disasters in Aotearoa New Zealand for community-led retreat and funding climate adaptation.
- Effective mechanisms for community-led decision making.
- The role of the private sector in managing climate risk.
- Potential institutional arrangements, including roles and responsibilities of central and local government agencies, iwi and hapu.
- Māori participation, Crown obligations, and how to best give effect to the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, and integrate matauranga Māori and te ao Māori across the adaptation system.
- Alignment and integration with existing legislation and regulatory framework, including the reformed resource management system and any changes needed to regulatory powers and potential economic or other incentives needed to support adaptation actions (both before and after extreme events).
- Funding sources, access to them and principles and criteria for cost sharing.
- Targets or indicators for assessing progress to more resilient communities and infrastructure.

Request to conclude inquiry

On 30 April 2024, we received a letter from the Minister of Climate Change, Hon Simon Watts, requesting that we conclude our inquiry into climate adaptation. He proposed that instead of our committee continuing this work, the Finance and Expenditure Committee could undertake an inquiry into climate adaptation with “a more focused terms of reference”. The Minister noted his intention to lodge a notice of motion proposing that the House refer an inquiry into climate adaptation to the Finance and Expenditure Committee.

We understand that part of the reason for the Minister’s preferred approach is that all parliamentary parties are represented on the Finance and Expenditure Committee. The Minister noted in his letter that this will be important for cross-party consensus building. The Minister’s letter is appended to this report.

At the time of receiving the Minister’s letter, we had not undertaken any substantive consideration of the inquiry or held any hearings of evidence. We note that the Minister expressed an intention for his notice of motion to require the Finance and Expenditure Committee to take into account the submissions we received on our inquiry. We would like to thank all those who made a submission to our inquiry and we are pleased that their contributions will be considered by the Finance and Expenditure Committee.

Climate adaptation is one of the major long-term challenges facing New Zealand. We will follow the evolving conversation around climate adaptation with interest.

Appendix A: Committee procedure and members

Committee procedure

We met between 14 December 2023 and 9 May 2024 to consider the inquiry. The Environment Committee of the 53rd Parliament called for public submissions with a closing date of 1 November 2023. We received submissions from 161 organisations and individuals. These submissions are available on the Parliament website.

We received advice from the Ministry for the Environment.

Committee members

David MacLeod
Glen Bennett (from 27 March 2024)
Hon Rachel Brooking
Mike Butterick
Dr Hamish Campbell
Simon Court
Hon Marama Davidson (from 8 May 2024)
Katie Nimon
Lan Pham
Darleen Tana (to 8 May 2024)
Hon Dr Megan Woods (to 27 March 2024)

Related resources

The documents we received as advice and evidence for this inquiry are available on the [Parliament website](#).

Appendix B: Letter from the Minister of Climate Change

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Climate Change
Minister of Revenue



30 APR 2024

David MacLeod
Chairperson, Environment Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

By email: environment@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koe David,

Request to conclude inquiry into climate adaptation

I would like to thank the Committee for your work to date on the inquiry into climate adaptation. Cyclone Gabrielle and the Auckland Floods reinforced the critical nature of climate change adaptation, and it is important to maintain momentum.

I consider broad public consultation and cross-party consensus is needed prior to developing legislation on adaptation. Given the complexity of adaptation matters, I also consider it important to take a more targeted approach by focusing on key elements, such as investment and cost-sharing.

In order to facilitate this and build on your work, I am proposing that the Finance and Expenditure Committee (FEC) commence an inquiry into adaptation with a more focused Terms of Reference. The FEC has all parties of parliament represented in its membership, which will be important for consensus-building.

My intention is to lodge a notice of motion to initiate the new inquiry on adaptation. The motion will state that the new inquiry must take into account the submissions to your inquiry.

To conclude your inquiry, I suggest a short final report without recommendations, noting the steps the inquiry has taken to date and the proposed establishment of the FEC inquiry.

I welcome further discussion with you on these matters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Hon Simon Watts
Minister of Climate Change

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160
s.watts@ministers.govt.nz