

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is the purpose of the Climate Change Strategy?

The purpose of the Strategy is to set the direction for the Nelson community and Council as we work together to address climate change. The Strategy will guide decisions and actions in the short, medium and long term. The Strategy includes a Climate Action Plan, which outlines current and planned climate-related projects and actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Action Plan will be checked regularly and updated as required to close the gap between where we are and what is needed to meet the goals and targets in the Strategy.

2. Why is community engagement important for this Strategy?

Community engagement ensures that the Strategy reflects the values, needs, and priorities of you, our Whakatū Nelson community. It also helps build support and collaboration, making the implementation of the Strategy more effective.

3. What is new in the Strategy? Has Council released a Climate Change Strategy or set emissions targets previously?

This is the first time that Nelson City Council has developed a climate change strategy – a document to guide long term decision-making and investment in climate change.

The community emissions reduction target is also new.

Council has previously adopted a Council emissions reduction target. However, since [this target has already been met](#), the Strategy includes a proposed new, more ambitious target for Council's own emissions.

Council adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2021 – this set out all climate actions that Council is taking to address climate change that already had funding allocated. The updated Climate Action Plan includes new actions included in Council's plans for work moving forward and includes actions already taken or ongoing by iwi. In future, it will include sections on actions from businesses and community organisations.

4. What is the difference between the two options on community emissions reduction targets?

Community feedback is sought on two options for community-wide emissions reductions targets in the Strategy. Option A is based on New Zealand's national emissions reductions targets and budgets. Option B is a more ambitious target that is based on the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recommendation to cut emissions by at least 43 per cent by 2030 (relative to 2019 levels) in order to limit global average temperature rise to 1.5 °C - the level of warming considered to be "safe". The two options are:

Option A

- Reduce all greenhouse gas emissions excluding biogenic methane by an average of 6.83 per cent every year between 2025 and 2035.
- Reduce biogenic methane by an average of 1.4 per cent every year between 2025 and 2035.

Option B

- Reduce all greenhouse gas emissions excluding biogenic methane by an average of 8.3 per cent every year between 2025 and 2035.
- Reduce biogenic methane by an average of 1.5 per cent every year between 2025 and 2035.

5. Are the targets affordable?

While we can determine the costs of specific initiatives and their emissions reduction impact (see examples on page 19 of the Strategy), Council does not have the in-house capability to model the full costs of meeting the emissions reduction target options. However, we do know that doing nothing will be more expensive in the long term. The World Resources Institute estimates that for every dollar spent on increasing resilience now, we will save \$2 to \$10 of costs in the future. Inaction to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will also have repercussions, such as risk of losing trading opportunities and vulnerability to rising oil prices.

For every Council climate initiative that is considered, the costs and benefits will be weighed up. Many of the initiatives will have significant additional benefits, such as improving flood protection, reducing energy costs and improving health outcomes.

Significant additional investment will be required from everyone – local government, central government and the private sector – to meet the goals in the Strategy.

6. Are the targets achievable?

While Council can play a leadership role in reducing emissions and has several ways it can influence change (e.g. funding, plan-making), Council is only directly responsible for around two per cent of Nelson's emissions. As a result, a whole-of-community effort is required to meet the targets in the Strategy. As part of the community engagement, Council will be talking with others, in particular central government, businesses, iwi and community organisations, to ask them to also commit to the goals in the Strategy.

The community emissions reduction target options and the Council target are ambitious but reflect the changes needed to avoid and lessen the impacts of climate change. We know there is a gap between what we are doing now and where we need to get to – setting a target will guide action and investment that will help us to close this 'implementation gap'.

In terms of its own emissions, Council is already well underway with climate action, having reduced emissions by 89 per cent since reporting started in 2017/18. Council is now proposing to itself set a new, more ambitious target in the Strategy.

7. Why gross emissions targets rather than net targets?

Both the IPCC recommended target, and the national emissions budgets are net targets (i.e. total emissions – tree planting for example can be counted as having a positive impact as trees remove carbon from the atmosphere). However, both options A and B are gross (total) emissions targets. Gross emissions targets are preferred as they result in emissions being reduced at source, rather than relying on removals from forestry. This allows for greater predictability of the emissions reduction pathway, as forestry removals vary significantly between years due to economic factors and harvesting cycles. It also avoids potential issues of double counting and double claiming offsets.

Although a gross emissions target is preferred, Council will still consider the benefits of projects that contribute to carbon sequestration. Carbon sequestration is where carbon dioxide is captured and stored by trees as they grow. Pest control is another way of contributing to carbon sequestration by stopping loss of vegetation by browsing animals.

8. How were the actions in the Climate Action Plan chosen?

The actions in the draft Action Plan have been taken from Council's ten-year work programme. Some of these actions are already in place or underway and some are planned new projects. The Climate Action Plan will be updated at least every three years. It will include new projects as Council updates its ten-year work programme. It will include projects led by others, including community groups, businesses and research organisations, that are likely to have a significant impact in helping us reach our climate goals. If you are leading or supporting a project, or you have an idea for a future project, we would like to hear from you!

9. What are the benefits of this Strategy?

This Strategy enhances collaboration on climate action and aims to guide the response of Nelson City Council and the wider community to the challenges of climate change: reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change. Benefits of implementing this Strategy and its Action Plan include more focused direction and greater impact on our climate change response. It results in a more engaged and resilient community in the face of climate impacts. Other benefits include improved health from increased active transport, enhanced biodiversity, and economic savings from energy efficiency.

10. How will progress be measured and reported?

Council will receive regular reporting on progress with implementation of the Strategy and progress reporting will also be available on the Council website. This will uphold the principle of pono (honesty and accountability), give positive reinforcement where progress has been good and help to identify where more effort is needed. Ngā Iwi and the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum will be invited to provide an annual assessment of Council's progress with implementing the Strategy.

The Climate Action Plan will be updated every three years, to capture key projects, led by Council and others, that will enable us to achieve the goals in the Strategy.

Where data is available, Council will also release data to assist with monitoring progress towards our goals on a regular basis (e.g. monthly or quarterly). This could include, for example, data on fuel sales or numbers of bus passengers.

11. How can I help the Strategy succeed?

You can give feedback on the Strategy and let us know what you're doing to reduce your climate impact by filling out [our survey](#) or getting in touch through the engagement process.

- Individuals: Consider signing up to the [Take the Jump campaign](#) to identify ways in which you can further reduce your impact on the environment.
- Businesses: You can measure your emissions and assess climate-related risks to your business, establish a climate action plan, and identify opportunities to reduce your emissions and strengthen your climate resilience.
- Community groups: Consider organising community planting days and clean ups, raise awareness of climate change through webinars and educational events within your community, collaborate with other groups to broaden your reach within the community.

12. Vulnerable populations will be more affected by climate change – does the Strategy address this?

The Partnerships and Community Empowerment pillar (in the Strategy) emphasises working together to deliver shared goals, nurturing local leadership, and building community connections to enable better support systems in emergencies and long-term planning. It focuses on encouraging social cohesion to promote resilience and support vulnerable members of the community.

13. Will the Strategy cost me more?

The Strategy will not directly or immediately impose any additional costs on individuals or households. We encourage action but it is an individual decision.

We plan to take a “show, don’t tell” approach to communications on the Strategy through releasing a series of stories about people who have taken climate actions to show the community what is possible. Individuals may not necessarily know what actions they can take. We will highlight relatively simple change people can make that will have an impact – such as riding a bike to school or work, buying second hand or buying in season, local produce, but acknowledge that not everyone can do these things easily. The question we are asking people to consider regarding climate actions is ‘what can we do for each other?’

Any additional costs to Council will be considered through normal decision making and/or consultation processes.

14. What if I disagree with parts of the Strategy?

We welcome all feedback and encourage open dialogue. Responding to climate change is complex and there are many different views as to how this is best achieved. Please share your concerns and suggestions during the engagement process so we can consider them in our final Strategy.

15. How is this Strategy funded?

Investment will be required from multiple sources, in particular central and local government and the private sector. A range of funding and finance options need to be considered, such as New Zealand Local Government Funding Agency sustainably-linked loans, green bonds, blended finance combining public and private investment and crowd funding.

16. What are the consequences of not taking action on climate change?

Whakatū Nelson has already felt some of the impacts of climate change, with increased frequency of storms, floods, slips and droughts and greater variability in temperatures all becoming more common. Severe weather events take a personal toll but also have a profound economic impact. Other impacts that are being seen globally include increased erosion, more frequent fires, water shortages, food shortages, increased health risks due to higher temperatures, and outbreaks of pests.

17. How does this Strategy align with national and international climate goals?

Our Strategy is designed to complement and support national and international climate goals, ensuring we contribute to global efforts to combat climate change.

18. Why spend money on climate change when there are more pressing issues?

Addressing climate change can also help solve other local issues, such as improving public health and increasing community resilience to flooding and storms. Investing in climate action now can prevent more severe and costly problems in the future. For example, spending money now to improve stormwater drainage on steep slopes will reduce the chances of slips occurring during heavy rain and therefore save costs associated with repairing these slips and any related infrastructure damages.

19. Why should Nelson take action when other countries are the big emitters?

Tackling climate disruption requires every nation, every city and every community to do their share. Although Whakatū Nelson contributes only a small fraction of global emissions, it is crucial that we do our part alongside other regions who are going through the same process. New Zealand also has international obligations to take climate action. Inaction on our part will have wider repercussions, such as risk of losing trade partners and vulnerability to rising oil prices.

20. How do we know that the money spent on climate initiatives is being used effectively?

The Climate Change Strategy includes clear goals, success indicators and measurable targets. A regular report summarising progress will be considered by Council and then published on the Council website to ensure transparency and accountability.

21. Why not leave climate action to the national government?

Local governments are well positioned to implement specific actions that directly benefit our communities. While national policies are important, local actions can address unique local needs and opportunities.

22. Isn't it up to bigger companies to take action, not me?

Yes, bigger companies play a significant role in addressing climate change, however individual actions matter too. Individual action may not appear to make a difference, but our collective action has the power to increase community resilience and reduce emissions through the daily choices we make.

23. How will spending on climate change projects impact my rates?

Funding for the Council projects included in the Action Plan have already been included in budgets and rates projections. We are seeking feedback on what additional actions Council could take to address climate change. New actions (and any consequential increases in rates) will be carefully considered and/or consulted on through Council's usual planning processes.

24. Are there examples of other communities successfully addressing climate change impacts?

Yes, there are many communities around New Zealand and the world who are acting to address climate change impacts. Some New Zealand examples include the [South Dunedin Future](#) project, which has identified 16 possible adaptation approaches to reduce risk to the community and increase resilience, and Christchurch's [Coastal Hazards Draft Adaptation Plan](#), which sets out how the risks posed by coastal hazards and sea-level rise can be managed for six communities in the district.