



**Office of the
Māori Climate Commissioner**

mata māori, āhuarangi ora

Through Māori eyes, the wellbeing of the planet

This Office was set up as a result of the experiences of Tā Mark Solomon and Dame Tariana with climate change on their iwi. Tā Mark sits on the Deep South Science Challenge Board and is familiar with research on the melting of the Antarctic and the impact of warmer oceans on Ngai Tahu fishing grounds. Dame Tariana experienced the 2015 extreme floods in Whanganui where there have been nine, one in a hundred year, floods in the past ten years.

They founded the Māori Carbon Foundation to encourage Māori landowners of marginal and erosion prone lands to enter into carbon farming. One month after its launch, they established the Office of the Māori Climate Commission and invited me to be the Inaugural Commissioner.

The goal of the Office to ensure Māori voices on this issue are being heard. 80% of our marae are where kaimoana are - on the coast or alongside rivers. – prone to flooding, rising seas and degraded sewage systems that give way under heavy rains. Because of this many marae and hapu have already experienced extreme weather events and discussions have begun on relocating marae and urupa.

Māori are over represented among the vulnerable and the poor who will be hit first and hit hardest by Climate Change.

As an example of the absence of Māori views on these issues – there were 23 out of a total of 15,009 submissions from Māori/iwi on the Zero Carbon proposals. And, within MfE and MPI, there is a serious lack of capacity to connect with Māori communities and to process that input were it to be made. This makes Māori even more vulnerable to poorly informed policy making. I have spent the past few months making a start on connecting up Māori in environmental activities. And have offered those channels to officials trying to encourage them to link directly with those who are in the forefront of climate change.

A quick look at Minister Shaw's diary June – Aug shows that of the numerous appointments held in his office, only one was with Māori. The majority were agricultural lobbyists. The emitters who deserve the greatest support are Māori farmers who have faced the greatest barriers to development but who, if tradition is followed, will be forced to bear a greater burden than others. They were not among those lobbying.

Māori suffer from consultation burn out because for years officials have sought out Māori views but not taken much notice of them. Nor are we set up to lobby to get legislation that benefits Māori.

This Office was set up to fill that gap : to network Māori together, to share their experiences and support one another and to encourage Māori to have their say and for officials and politicians to take notice.