

20-D-01648

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 19 August 2020 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *How can a scenario that is based on:*

- *No mitigation measures being taken by any country*
- *No technical developments applied to reducing emissions*
- *Coal use to increase 650%*
- *Unrealistic population increases.*

be considered seriously for a document that is of such importance to New Zealand and our future?

2. *What research was carried out by the panel or the Ministry on the current status of RCP8.5?*

3. *What was the panel seeking to achieve by using such an implausible and discredited scenario?*

The Arotakenga Huringa Āhuarangi: Framework for the National Climate Change Risk Assessment for Aotearoa New Zealand (The Framework) was developed for the Ministry by an expert panel.

The Expert Panel (the Panel) produced the Framework to guide production of New Zealand's first National Climate Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA). You can find the Framework on the Ministry's website here:

www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Climate%20Change/arotakenga-huringa-ahuarangi-framework-for-national-climate-change-risk-assessment-for-aotearoa-FINAL.pdf.

To answer question 2 above, neither the Panel nor the Ministry for the Environment carried out any specific or new research on the current status of RCP8.5, and hence the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) has not identified any documents within scope of your request.

The Panel recommended the use of two scenarios from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), RCP4.5 and RCP8.5, in the first National Climate Change Risk Assessment.

The high emissions scenario, RCP8.5, was recommended by the Panel for use in the NCCRA because it would enable identification of a broader range of risks in the early stages of the assessment. It was important to identify as many risks as possible early in the process, and this could best be achieved using a high emissions scenario. The risks were then screened and those risks with a high consequence score were carried through to the next stage of the assessment, where they were analysed using both RCP4.5 and RCP8.5. This is similar to the approach taken by both the United Kingdom and the United States in their national climate change risk assessments which also use 2-3 scenarios of future climate change, including RCP4.5 and RCP8.5.

The NCCRA itself was not carried out by the Panel, but by a team of consultants appointed by the Ministry for the Environment. The Framework was used by this team in carrying out the NCCRA, and the team used the two scenarios (RCP4.5 and RCP8.5) as recommended by the Panel when assessing risks.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that, due to the public interest in our work, the Ministry publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent.

If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Katherine Wilson
Director, Climate Change

Released under the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982