



## PROACTIVE RELEASE COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Simon Watts	<b>Portfolio</b>	Climate Change
<b>Name of package</b>	Methane Science and Target Review: Release of the final report	<b>Date to be published</b>	9/05/2025

### List of documents that have been proactively released

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
25 November 2024	<a href="#">Cabinet Business Committee: Methane Science and Target Review: Release of the final report</a>	Office of the Minister of Agriculture Office of the Minister of Climate Change
25 November 2024	<a href="#">CAB-24-MIN-0465 Minute of Decision: Methane Science and Target Review: Release of the Final Report</a>	Cabinet Office

### Information redacted **YES**

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with the Ministry for the Environment's policy on proactive release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

### Summary of reasons for redaction

Some information has been withheld from CAB-24-MIN-0465 Minute of Decision: Methane Science and Target Review: Release of the Final Report and from Cabinet Business Committee: Methane Science and Target Review: Release of the final report, under Section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

### General note

The figure of 10% detailed in Paragraph 7.2 was updated by the Methane Science and Target Review Panel in the final report to 14-15% by 2050.

Office of the Minister of Agriculture  
Office of the Minister of Climate Change  
Cabinet Business Committee

## **Methane Science and Target Review: Release of the final report**

### **Proposal**

1. We propose to publicly release the final methane science and target review report on 1 December 2024.

### **Relation to Government priorities**

2. This supports the New Zealand National Party and ACT New Zealand coalition agreement to “maintain a split-gas approach to methane and carbon dioxide through to 2050 and review the methane science and targets in 2024 for consistency with no additional warming from agricultural methane emissions”.

### **Background**

3. In June 2024, Cabinet confirmed the appointment of an independent advisory panel (the Panel) to review the science of methane and provide an evidence-based report on what a target (or range) consistent with the principle of ‘no additional warming’ would look like for New Zealand, from a 2017 base year [CAB-24-MIN-0215 refers].
4. The Panel provided us with a draft report on 8 November 2024 and will provide a final Methane Science and Target report (the report) on 29 November 2024.
5. The Climate Change Commission (the Commission) is also undertaking a review of the legislated 2050 target,<sup>1</sup> which we anticipate will be made public in early December. We intend to publish the independent panel’s methane report ahead of this.
6. The biogenic methane target is a component of the 2050 target legislated in the Climate Change Response Act 2002 (CCRA). Any changes to the 2050 target will require amendments to the CCRA.

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand has a legislated emissions reduction target for 2050 that has two components:

- net zero emissions of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions other than biogenic methane by 2050; and
- 24 to 47 per cent reduction below 2017 biogenic methane emissions by 2050, including 10 per cent reduction below 2017 biogenic methane emissions by 2030.

### Key findings from the Panel's draft report

7. All of the report is written from an assumption that the international targets are fixed, and not likely to move. Key findings from the draft report are as follows:

7.1. if the rest of the world were to rapidly increase its climate policies to meet the 1.5 degrees warming Paris goal, then reducing New Zealand's biogenic methane emissions by **24 percent by 2050** would satisfy the goal of achieving no additional warming on 2017 levels by 2050; and

7.2. based on current global levels of effort and commitment, which is not aligned to the Paris goal, a reduction of **10 percent by 2050** on 2017 levels would be required to satisfy this goal.<sup>2</sup>

(Note added May 2025) The figure of 10% detailed in Paragraph 7.2 was updated by the Methane Science and Target Review Panel in the final report to 14-15% by 2050.

8. The report is currently being peer reviewed, including specific review of the application and accuracy of modelling, and so the draft findings summarised above are subject to change. If necessary, we will update offices ahead of publication of the final report, should there be any material changes between the draft and final.

### Next steps

9. We intend to publish the final methane report on 1 December, prior to tabling the Commission's report with Parliament. The report will be an input to the Minister of Climate Change's formal response to the Commission's advice.

10. §(2)(f)(iv)

### Cost-of-living Implications, Population and Human Rights Implications

11. We are not proposing any policy changes. Cost-of-living, population, and human rights implications can be assessed as part of any future policy work once the Panel's and Commission's findings are considered.

### Financial Implications

12. No new funding will be sought for any decisions outlined in this paper.

### Legislative Implications

13. Changing the biogenic methane target, if that is the conclusion of the Government response, would require amendments to the CCRA. Other changes may also be required to account for system implications, for example, to emissions budgets.

<sup>2</sup> If global methane concentrations are rising, the radiative forcing caused by every tonne of methane emitted by New Zealand decreases. This means that the amount of biogenic methane reduction needed to meet the condition of no additional warming is strongly dependent on the action taken globally.

## Impact Analysis

14. We are not proposing any policy changes at this stage. A Regulatory Impact Statement and Climate Implications of Policy Assessment will be undertaken to support future proposals.

## Use of External Resources

15. Cabinet appointed an independent panel of experts to conduct the review.<sup>3</sup> The total cost for the Panel was budgeted at \$250,000 for a term of approximately five months from 1 July to 30 November 2024.<sup>4</sup> The Panel was funded through the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry for Primary Industries' Financial Year 24/25 departmental funding.

## Consultation

16. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was informed.

## Communications

17. We expect there will be high levels of public interest in the methane report.

## Proactive Release

18. Following Cabinet's consideration, we will consider the release of this paper subject to appropriate redactions under the Official Information Act 1982.

## Recommendations

We recommend that the Committee:


- 1 **note** that in March and June 2024 Cabinet noted the intention of the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Climate Change to establish and appoint an independent advisory group to [ECO-24-MIN-0042 and CAB-24-MIN-0215 refer]:
  - 1.1 review the methane science; and
  - 1.2 provide evidence-based advice on what the 2050 biogenic methane target should be to ensure no additional warming;
- 2 **note** the independent advisory group has provided their draft Methane Science and Target Review report, and will provide the final version of the report to the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Climate Change on 29 November;
- 3 **agree** to the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Climate Change publicly releasing the independent panel's report on 1 December ahead of the Climate Change Commission's report;

<sup>3</sup> Nicola Shadbolt (Chair); Professor Bill Collins; Professor David Frame; Dr Sara Mikaloff-Fletcher; and Associate Professor Laura Revell.

<sup>4</sup> 9(2)(f)(iv)

4 **note** the Minister of Climate Change will be tabling the Climate Change Commission's review of New Zealand's legislated 2050 target on 5 December 2024;

5 9(2)(f)(iv)



Authorised for lodgement

Hon Todd McClay

Minister of Agriculture

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Climate Change



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

### Methane Science and Target Review: Release of the Final Report

**Portfolios**                      **Agriculture / Climate Change**

On 25 November 2024, Cabinet:

- 1        **noted** that in May and June 2024, Cabinet noted the intention of the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Climate Change (the Ministers) to establish and appoint an independent advisory group to:
  - 1.1       review the methane science;
  - 1.2       provide evidence-based advice on what the 2050 biogenic methane target should be to ensure no additional warming;

[ECO-24-MIN-0096 and APH-24-MIN-0111]
- 2        **noted** that the independent advisory group has provided their draft Methane Science and Target Review report, and will provide the final version of the report to the Ministers on 29 November 2024;
- 3        **authorised** the Ministers to publicly release the independent panel's final report on 4 December 2024, ahead of the Climate Change Commission's report;
- 4        **noted** that the Minister of Climate Change will be tabling the Climate Change Commission's review of New Zealand's legislated 2050 target on 5 December 2024;
- 5        9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet