



# Cabinet Business Committee

## 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.*

### Climate Change Emergency and a Whole-of-Government Response

**Portfolios**                      **Prime Minister / Climate Change**

On 2 December 2020, the Cabinet Business Committee, having been authorised by Cabinet to have Power to Act [CAB-20-MIN-0497]:

- 1        **noted** that the scientific consensus represented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report on 1.5 degrees of warming states that failure to limit global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius will result in a range of risks to the ecology, society, and economy, and that there are likely to be irreversible impacts;
- 2        **agreed** that climate change requires decisive action by all levels of government, the private sector, and communities;
- 3        **authorised** the Prime Minister and the Minister of Climate Change to declare a climate change emergency in New Zealand, by making a public announcement on 2 December 2020;
- 4        **noted** that a declaration of a climate change emergency is not the same as a declaration of a state of emergency under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002;
- 5        **agreed** that climate change be regarded as having a level of equivalence to a civil defence emergency in that it demands a sufficiently ambitious, urgent, and coordinated response across government to meet the scale and complexity of the challenge;
- 6        **directed** the Climate Change Chief Executives Board to implement the remaining commitments in the Climate Action Plan as a priority, and to regularly report on progress to their respective Ministers;
- 7        **noted** the intention to put the climate at the centre of government decision-making;
- 8        **agreed** to the establishment of a Climate Response Ministerial Group, chaired by the Prime Minister, to oversee, co-ordinate, drive, and ensure the timely and effective delivery of the climate change work programme;

- 9 **invited** the Prime Minister and the Minister of Climate Change to report back to Cabinet in March 2021 with more detailed proposals on the role of the Climate Response Ministerial Group and governance arrangements for Public Service agencies to support the whole-of-government response to climate change.

Gerrard Carter  
Committee Secretary

---

**Present:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Poto Williams (part of item)  
Hon Damien O'Connor  
Hon Stuart Nash  
Hon Kris Faafoi  
Hon Jan Tinetti  
Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall  
Hon Aupito William Sio  
Hon Meka Whaitiri  
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan (part of item)  
Hon James Shaw

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Minister of Climate Change