



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government

# Urutau, ka taurikura: Kia tū pakari a Aotearoa i ngā huringa āhuarangi

## Adapt and thrive: Building a climate-resilient New Zealand

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND'S FIRST  
NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN

AT A GLANCE



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# Building a climate-resilient Aotearoa New Zealand

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The climate has warmed by 1.1°C in the past 100 years – we are already seeing the devastating effects. We can expect to continue to see rising sea levels, more extreme weather events, and increased risk of wildfire and drought. We can meet the challenges of a changing climate – but there is no time to waste. We need to take action now. That is the purpose of this national adaptation plan.

*The long-term adaptation strategy sets out how Aotearoa New Zealand will build resilience for an uncertain future.*



Adaptation is a continuous process of assessing and managing risk, evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken and adjusting those actions as needed. By adapting to the unavoidable effects of climate change, we become more resilient to those risks.

Climate change is exacerbating the risk of existing natural hazards – including flooding and drought – and creating new risks such as sea-level rise. We can build on our past experience with natural hazards to prepare for increased risk in the future.

This national adaptation plan is the first in a series. Every six years, He Pou a Rangi – Climate Change Commission will prepare a national climate change risk assessment. This will identify the climate risks that need to be addressed most urgently. New national adaptation plans that respond to those risks will be developed in consultation with all New Zealanders.

The first plan focuses on getting the foundations right. It sets out what the Government will do to enable better risk-informed decisions, drive climate-resilient development in the right locations, help communities assess adaptation options (including managed retreat) and embed climate resilience into all of the Government’s work.

Together, we can reduce our vulnerability to climate risk, enhance our ability to adapt and strengthen our resilience to a changing climate.

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## Enabling better risk-informed decisions

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Climate change will affect where we want to live and invest, how we farm and run our businesses and how we keep ourselves safe. To make good decisions, we will need to assess current and future climate risks to our homes, businesses and communities.



The national adaptation plan will enable New Zealanders to make better risk-informed decisions. To make sure everyone has access to up-to-date and relevant information, tools, methodologies and guidance, the Government will:

- ▶ provide access to the latest climate projections data to give New Zealanders information they need to assess climate risk
- ▶ design and develop risk and resilience and climate adaptation information portals to make natural hazard risk information, climate data and information for climate decision-making available to everyone
- ▶ establish the platform for Māori climate action to enable Māori to actively participate in policy design and tangata Māori climate actions, and support hapū, iwi and Māori to develop strategies and action plans for adaptation and mitigation.
- ▶ improve natural hazard information on Land Information Memoranda to help people make decisions informed by natural hazard risk when buying a property
- ▶ deliver a rolling programme of targeted adaptation guidance to help decision makers better assess and manage climate-related risks.



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## Driving climate-resilient development in the right locations

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The built environment has a long lifespan. Decisions we make today about how and where we develop really matter. Buildings, infrastructure and communities must be resilient to the impacts of climate change and help build our capacity to adapt to a changing climate.



To make sure that our planning and infrastructure investment systems guide climate-resilient development in the right places and account for changing risks, the Government will:

- ▶ reform the resource management system to support resilient buildings, infrastructure and communities, and encourage future growth and development in the right locations
- ▶ set direction on natural hazard risk management and climate adaptation through the National Planning Framework
- ▶ reform institutional arrangements for water services to deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes for our communities and protect our environment for generations to come.

**Councils should use their existing powers now to drive climate-resilient development in the right places. They should use the climate scenarios recommended by the national adaptation plan when making and changing policy statements and plans.**

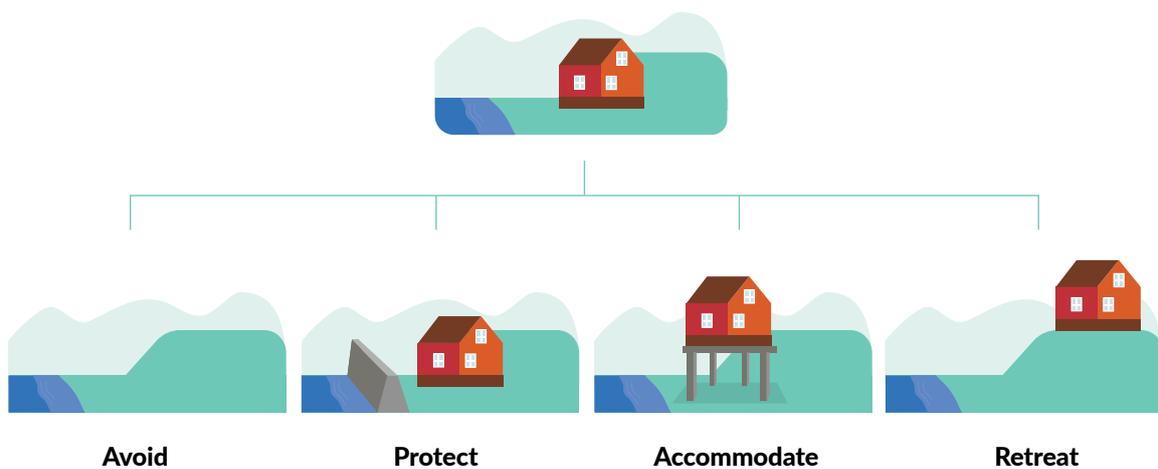
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## Adaptation options including managed retreat

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Many of our communities are already under threat from natural hazard events. These events will increase in severity and frequency over time because of climate change. Government, businesses and communities can consider a range of adaptation options to reduce risk.

There are a range of adaption options to manage and respond to different climate risks.



To support councils, communities, businesses and individuals to consider and understand the adaptation options available in their area, the Government will:

- ▶ pass legislation to support managed retreat of assets from at-risk areas
- ▶ review the future for local government to ensure councils are equipped for agile, sustainable and anticipatory decision-making
- ▶ publish the programme of work on how Aotearoa meets the costs of climate change and invests in resilience
- ▶ ensure kaitiaki have access to information and advice to help them understand threats to, reduce impacts on, and adapt taonga/cultural assets.

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# Embedding climate resilience

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The Government will embed climate resilience across all its strategies and policies.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

When ecosystems are healthy and diverse, they can adjust more effectively to climate threats. To support healthy, connected ecosystems, where biodiversity thrives, the Government will:

- ▶ implement key biodiversity policies and strategies to protect, restore and build resilience of indigenous biodiversity to climate change
- ▶ deliver biosecurity actions to protect ecosystems and our economy from invasive species
- ▶ implement key freshwater management programmes to ensure water availability and security, and healthy waterways.

## HOMES, BUILDINGS AND PLACES

Homes, buildings and places play a vital role in our health, wellbeing and quality of life. Driving climate-resilient development in the right places and putting the foundations in place for communities to consider adaptation options will help make sure they are resilient to the changing climate, and support people and communities to thrive. In addition to those actions, the Government will:

- ▶ help building owners, renters and new home builders reduce and manage the impacts of climate hazards on homes and buildings
- ▶ reduce the exposure of public housing tenants to climate hazards
- ▶ ensure funding decisions for urban development and housing consider climate hazards.



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## INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure provides the services we depend on to live, work, learn and play. To reduce the vulnerability of existing assets and ensure new infrastructure is fit for a changing climate, the Government will:

- ▶ scope a resilience standard or code for infrastructure to encourage risk reduction and resilience planning in existing and new assets
- ▶ integrate adaptation into Treasury decisions on infrastructure to ensure that decision-making on new assets and across major renewal or upgrade programmes considers climate risks
- ▶ develop guidance to support asset owners to evaluate, understand and manage the impacts and risks of climate change on their physical assets and the services they provide
- ▶ develop and implement the Waka Kotahi Climate Adaptation Plan to enable climate-resilient transport networks and journeys, connecting people, products and places for a thriving Aotearoa.

## COMMUNITIES

Communities are diverse and experience the impacts of climate change in various ways. Building and maintaining strong communities will equip New Zealanders with the right tools to adapt. To support resilient communities that are empowered to respond to risks, the Government will:

- ▶ modernise the emergency management system
- ▶ raise awareness of climate-related hazards to make emergency preparedness a part of everyday life
- ▶ develop the Health National Adaptation Plan to prepare the health sector to meet the needs of communities in a changing climate.

## ECONOMY AND FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Climate change impacts, such as increased floods, droughts and sea-level rise, are already affecting our economy. To make sure our economy is resilient in the face of a changing climate, and that we seize the opportunities that will arise, the Government will:

- ▶ develop options for home flood insurance to support community resilience to the consequences of extreme weather and facilitate recovery after the event
- ▶ deliver a strategy to ensure our freight and supply chain system is resilient, reliable and prepared for disruption
- ▶ help businesses make decisions that better recognise climate-related risks, realise opportunities and attract more investment, through the climate-related disclosures programme.

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## Working with nature to adapt to climate change

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Safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems is fundamental to our climate response. Our precious native ecosystems can buffer us from the impacts of climate change, store carbon, support biodiversity and improve community wellbeing.



To address the climate and biodiversity crises together, the Government will:

- ▶ prioritise nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change and deliver other socio-economic and environmental benefits, embed nature-based solutions in transport policies and identify options to increase their integration into urban form
- ▶ establish an integrated work programme to deliver climate, biodiversity and wider environmental outcomes.

## We are all affected by climate change and have a role in building resilience

Climate change will affect all of us in different ways. We all need to be prepared and we all have a role to play in building a climate-resilient Aotearoa.

- ▶ **Central government** has a leadership role to play, and will establish policy and institutional settings that support effective adaptation.
- ▶ **Local government** is on the front line in managing climate effects and risks. Councils have functions and duties in relation to natural hazards, civil defence and emergency management, and improving community resilience.
- ▶ **Māori** have a unique role to play – as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners, tangata whenua, and kaitiaki of their ancestral and cultural landscape.
- ▶ **Communities** and individuals need to be prepared to manage the impacts climate change will have on daily life and the risks to private assets.
- ▶ **The private sector** will need to invest in reducing risks to businesses and assets. Businesses can take advantage of new economic opportunities such as access to new technologies and markets.

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## Our adaptation journey must be equitable

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No two communities will experience climate change in the same way. Communities that are less able to adapt and disproportionately affected by climate change – including Māori, Pacific people and ethnic communities, low-income groups, disabled and older people, women, children and youth, and rural communities – are considered throughout this plan.

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## Enabling an equitable transition for Māori, led by Māori

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We need to ensure an equitable transition for Māori, led by Māori, to uphold Māori rights and interests under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Achieving an equitable transition means building Māori–Crown relationships and capability, so that we can progress our climate response work as partners.

**Māori-led climate-change initiative Te Ihirangi has developed the Rauora framework, which brings together Māori values and principles into an indigenous worldview of climate change. The framework provides a lens through which the adaptation strategy and national adaptation plan will be progressed.**



Reflecting the principle of interconnectedness, which is at the heart of the Rauora framework, both this plan and the emissions reduction plan establish a pathway for Māori and government to work together to:

- ▶ develop a new platform for Māori climate action that will enable tangata whenua to actively participate in the climate response
- ▶ develop a Māori climate strategy and action plan that will elevate te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori within the overall climate response
- ▶ ensure the right funding and resourcing for community action, kaupapa Māori, and tangata Māori actions and solutions.

# Adaptation journey to 2028

## Towards a climate-resilient Aotearoa New Zealand

2018

Climate change adaptation technical working group recommendations published

2019

Amendments to Climate Change Response Act 2002 require preparation of national adaptation plans

2020

First national climate change risk assessment published



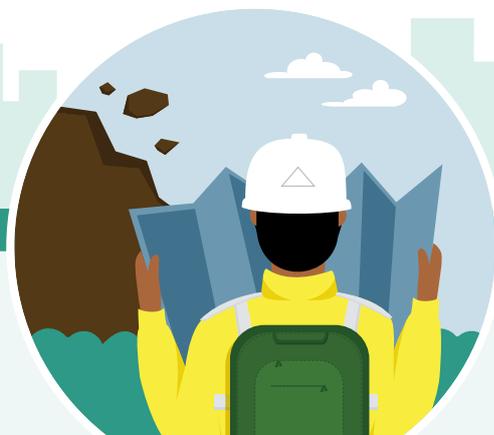
- ▶ New Zealand climate projection datasets available
- ▶ Large financial institutions required to disclose climate risks and opportunities
- ▶ Long-term plans set strategic direction for communities

- ▶ Climate Adaptation Act passed
- ▶ New water service entities established
- ▶ Kāinga Ora's climate-resilient public housing initiative established

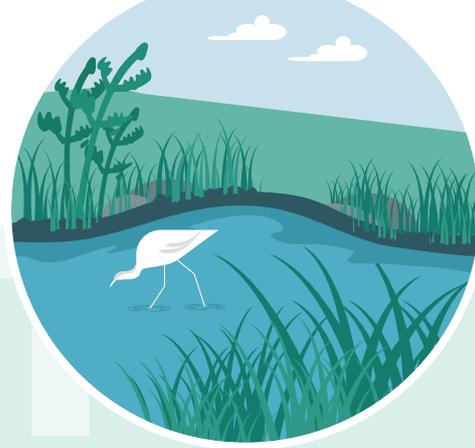
- ▶ New civil defence and emergency management legislation in force
- ▶ Water availability and security project established

- ▶ Public climate-hazard education strategy launched
- ▶ National planning framework sets direction on adaptation and natural hazard risk management

2024



2025



2022

2023

► **First national adaptation plan**

- Government and Māori work together to design Māori platform for climate action



- Initial risk and resilience portal launched
- Natural and Built Environment Act and Spatial Planning Act passed
- Future for Local Government review final report and recommendations due

- National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity implemented
- Freight and supply chain strategy launched
- Waka Kotahi Climate Adaptation Plan published



- Updates to the Building Code available
- Climate risk integrated into Treasury decision-making



- Second national climate change risk assessment released
- Housing and urban development funding models updated to consider climate risk
- Transpower Adaptation Plan released
- Updates to the Building Code have been identified

- Long-term plans set strategic direction for communities

- Continued development of regional spatial strategies and Natural and Built Environments Act plans

► **Second national adaptation plan published**

2026

2027

2028



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