



Climate change and younger New Zealanders

What the national adaptation plan means for you

Adapt and thrive: Building a climate-resilient New Zealand

Our first national adaptation plan will help New Zealanders adapt to the effects of climate change now, and better protect us against changes to come.

Many impacts are already with us, with unstable and unpredictable weather, worsening floods, droughts and storms, and rising sea levels. We can expect more changes will happen.

Lowering emissions can reduce the impacts of climate change but won't eliminate them all.

The national adaptation plan sets out what actions the Government will take over the next six years to help all New Zealanders adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

It has actions relevant to every sector and community in New Zealand, and addresses the priority risks that need action now.

Climate change risks and the costs of adapting will need to be shared across society, but through the actions in the plan we can reduce the long-term costs across the motu.

Managing risk now and for the future

In 2020, the National Climate Change Risk Assessment set out the main risks New Zealanders face from the impacts of climate change up to 2026.

These include risks to people's health and property, risks to our infrastructure like roads and water supplies, and risks to our natural environment.

The national adaptation plan is the first in a series. It will be updated every six years to respond to changing climate risks.

Impacts of climate change on younger New Zealanders

Everyone is affected by climate change. But some people are more vulnerable to the damaging effects than others.

Because the risks and impacts of climate change are likely to worsen and intensify over time, young people today will be disproportionately affected.

The effects – both now and in the future – include likely disruptions to where they live, work or study, and to their social and support networks.

Children and young people can be more vulnerable to the emotional and psychological impacts of this disruption. They may also be more susceptible to other consequences of climate change, like the health impacts of extreme temperatures.

What you've told us

Submitters who identified as younger New Zealanders or who represent them told us they support:

- plain language resources, communications and products tailored to youth, available via social media
- youth-directed information sharing platforms and portals
- community-led initiatives, such as urban farming, local food loops and regenerative horticulture
- support for youth leadership involved in climate adaptation work
- guidance on how to include mātauranga in adaptation measures
- better engagement by central government with communities
- intergenerational education on climate change and its impacts
- opportunities to be involved in adaptation planning and implementation
- direct mana whenua involvement in the governance of infrastructure systems.

How this plan will build climate resilience for younger New Zealanders

The plan outlines a programme of work to support and encourage all New Zealanders to adapt. It brings together existing actions and proposed future work.

Enabling better risk-informed decisions

The plan provides information, guidance and tools about climate change threats and responses. Young people can use these to understand and assess the risks they face and decide how best to adapt. Some of the key actions include:

- Action 3.2: Design and develop risk, resilience and climate adaptation information portals: this will explore opportunities to collect and make available data and information on social and equity risks. The portals will also help assess people's vulnerability to climate change, including disproportionately affected groups such as younger New Zealanders.

- Action 3.4: Raise awareness of climate hazards and how to prepare: this will deliver public education campaigns and provide information to help people get ready for emergencies. This will help ensure people know what to do and have what they need to get through.
- Action 3.29: Produce an adaptation professional development programme for key audiences: this will build capability and help circulate new tools and guidance for people working on climate adaptation efforts.

Adaptation options including managed retreat

Many communities are already under threat from natural hazards. Successfully adapting to these risks will be vital as climate impacts worsen. Some people and communities may have to change how and where they live.

One option is managed retreat, which may be necessary to reduce or eliminate exposure to intolerable risk. It's a carefully planned and managed process of relocating assets, activities and sites of cultural significance away from at-risk areas.

Key actions to support younger people include:

- Action 5.1: Pass legislation to support managed retreat: the new law will address the complex issues around retreating from at-risk areas exposed to climate hazards.
- Action 5.7: Reduce and manage the impacts of climate hazards on homes and buildings: this will help building owners understand and assess their adaptation options. This action includes collating existing information to help adapt now; researching the impacts of climate hazards on different types of housing; producing property guidance; developing an assessment framework; and investigating incentives. This action is also necessary to inform further work such as regulatory changes.

Embedding climate resilience across government

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

For example, the plan's **communities chapter** sets out how all communities around New Zealand, including younger people, will be supported to adapt to climate change now and in the future.

- Action 9.2: Develop the Health National Adaptation Plan: this will prepare the health sector to meet the needs of communities affected by climate change. Key steps include identifying and considering the needs of groups who are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- Action 9.5: Continue with the reform of the health and disability system: this will restructure the system to make it simpler and more coordinated. It will lead to better and more consistent care that is shaped by the voices of consumers, communities and whānau, and stronger partnerships with iwi and Māori.
- Action 9.7: Strengthen teaching and learning related to climate change: this will support early learning services, schools and kura to include understanding of, and responses to, climate change in their local curricula and marau ā-kura (living, breathing curriculum). The aim is to help connect children and young people to the environment, their communities, and sustainability.

Future engagement during implementation

As the plan is implemented, more targeted engagement with different stakeholders, including younger people, will take place.

Inclusive engagement, particularly with those disproportionately affected by climate change, will help to ensure actions lead to equitable climate resilience.

We are taking the same approach with the implementation of the emissions reduction plan and encouraging engaged and active public participation.

Find out more

Read [Aotearoa New Zealand's first national adaptation plan](#).

