

**Seniors Climate Action Network (SCAN) Submission  
to Climate Change Commission (CCC) Consultation  
30 May 2024**

SCAN agrees with the CCC statement that “there is strong evidence that the world is not on track to meet the goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C and will need sustained reductions and removals to bring temperatures back down below that mark.” SCAN also agrees with the CCC’s initial finding that “the current 2050 target as a whole is not compatible with any of the four perspectives from the IPCC”. This initial finding is confirmed by the [Climate Action Tracker](#) analysis of emissions by country which ranks New Zealand’s current projection to be “insufficient”.

In December 2021, SCAN submitted its case for targeting Net Zero Emissions by 2030 instead of 2050 in its Emissions Reduction Plan Submission to the Ministry for the Environment (Download [link](#)). Subsequent publications listed below confirm the urgency for reducing greenhouse gases earlier than later due to the increasing risk of exceeding tipping points which would lead to a cascade of irreversible climate change, an existential threat to all life on Earth:

Armstrong McKay et al. (2022) *Exceeding 1.5°C global warming could trigger multiple climate tipping points*.

Science.org Download [link](#)

Boers & Rypdal (2021) *Critical slowing down suggests that the western Greenland Ice Sheet is close to a tipping point*. PNAS. Download [link](#)

Ditlevsen (2023) *Warning of a forthcoming collapse of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation*. Nature Communications. Download [link](#)

Hansen et al. (2023) *Global warming in the pipeline*. - Oxford Open Climate Change. Download [link](#)

Hobbs et al. (2024) *Observational Evidence for a Regime Shift in Summer Antarctic Sea Ice*. American Meteorological Society. Download [link](#)

IPCC (2022) *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change, Summary for Policymakers*. Download [link](#)

IPCC (2023) *Summary for Policymakers*. In: *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*. Download [link](#)

Lenton et al. (2023) *Global Tipping Points - Full Report*. Download [link](#)

NOAA (2024) *2023 was the world’s warmest year on record, by far*. - View [report](#)

Piecuch & Beal (2023) *Robust Weakening of the Gulf Stream During the Past Four Decades Observed in the Florida Straits*. Geophysical Research Letters. Download [link](#)

UNEP (2021) *Global Methane Assessment, Benefits and Cost of Mitigating Methane Emissions*. Download [link](#)

UNEP (2023) *Emissions Gap Report 2023*. Download [link](#)

UNU-EHS (2023) *Interconnected Disaster Risks 2023: Risk Tipping Points*. Download [link](#)

Wendt et al. (2024) *Southern Ocean drives multidecadal atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> rise during Heinrich Stadials*. PNAS Download [link](#)

Wunderling et al. (2021) *Interacting tipping elements increase risk of climate domino effects under global warming*. Earth System Dynamics. Download [link](#)

New Zealand has a high level of methane emissions per capita which, when rated with an IPCC 100-year average CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, is comparable to the scale of all other greenhouse gas emissions. Methane is a short life greenhouse gas with a far higher potency over 10 and 20 years than over 100 years. The next 20 years are the most critical years for

avoiding triggering tipping points including the thawing of permafrost and subsequent release of huge volumes of methane to the atmosphere. New Zealand's high levels of methane belched by ruminant livestock per capita can be simply reduced by culling of herds. Farmers can be compensated for culling losses and provided with resources to change their land use for growing food or forests. Complete culling of herds is not without precedence when there have been outbreaks of mycoplasma bovis. Given the serious threat of triggering irreversible tipping points, it is critical that all countries, including New Zealand, reduce their current levels of methane emissions due to an over stocking of ruminant livestock, the biomass of which now far exceeds that of all other wild animals (Greenspoon et al., 2023 download [link](#)).

SCAN acknowledges that CCC's remit is narrowly focused on addressing climate change, but climate change is but only one symptom of many where planetary boundaries have been exceeded. Successful mitigation of climate change requires fully addressing the root causes of climate change. In December 2021, SCAN released a 74-minute video which explains that planetary boundaries have been exceeded or threatened due to excessive consumption by the rich countries and the rich within countries exacerbated by over population. (View or download [link](#)). A focus on maintaining economic growth, including green growth, will jeopardise New Zealand's efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change. Alternative projected pathways to a sustainable future must include scenarios of Zero Economic Growth and Zero Population Growth. Continued positive net immigration will thwart New Zealand's efforts to attain net zero emissions.

SCAN supports emissions from international shipping and aviation being included in New Zealand's 2050 target. New Zealand is one of many rich nations which have historically contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions per capita. It is SCAN's opinion that New Zealand should now carry its own weight, take on responsibility, and not freeload its global obligations.

Signed on behalf of Seniors Climate Action Network (SCAN)

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