

<https://www.orataiao.org.nz/budget-2020-must-tackle-climate-crisis-say-health-organisations>

## Budget 2020 must tackle climate crisis say health organisations

### **MEDIA RELEASE, 3 May 2020**

Leading NZ health professional organisations have written to the Government asking them to prioritise Budget 2020 funding for a just transition to a climate-resilient, sustainable and low-emissions economy.

The [letter](#), led by OraTaiao: NZ Climate & Health Council, was sent to the Minister and Associate Ministers of Finance on Sunday 3 May, and urges the Government to heed health advice that has for many years been warning of the serious health threat posed by the climate crisis.

Signatories to the letter represent more than 70,000 of the health professionals who have been on the frontline of responding to the pandemic. They include all the major health professional organisations representing nurses, clinical and public health doctors, public health workers and a wide range of other health professionals.

“Government spending must do triple duty – by equitably supporting economic wellbeing, addressing climate change, and improving people’s health,” said Dr Alex Macmillan, Co-convenor of OraTaiao: NZ Climate & Health Council.

“An example is investing in transport infrastructure that makes it easy and safe for people to walk, bike and use a wheelchair to get around, which can create jobs, address climate change, increase physical exercise, reduce traffic crashes and lower healthcare costs. Investments in housing, energy and food systems can also create jobs, address climate change, reduce inequalities and bring health savings.”

“Doing these things fairly means they must be grounded in the Articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, designed in partnership with local communities, and ensure that benefits accrue to the groups currently most harmed by injustice,” says Dr Macmillan.

“We can’t go back to business-as-usual, because that’s been a disaster for social, economic and environmental wellbeing,” says Dr Macmillan. “Smart investment, on the other hand, can achieve win-win outcomes for people, prosperity and the planet.”

### **Quotes from signatory organisations**

“The RACP sees action on climate change as part of our ongoing campaign to Make Health Equity the Norm for everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand – healthy houses, healthy jobs, and healthy tamariki and whānau,” says Dr Jeff Brown, Aotearoa New Zealand President, Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

“Alison Eddy, Chief Executive of the College of Midwives, recognises the urgent need for the Government to consider the next generation, who midwives welcome into the world every day. There is a fundamental obligation to support intergenerational justice to ensure the environment is safe and protected for our children.”

### **ENDS**

**Media Spokesperson:** Dr. Alexandra Macmillan, Mob. 021 322 625

**Dr Alex Macmillan** (co-convenor@orataiao.org.nz) is a Public Health Physician, Associate Professor of Environment and Health at the University of Otago, and Co-Convenor of OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council.

**Notes to editors:**

**Letter re. 2020 budget from 14 health professional organisations**