

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments.

As a doctor, I agree with the report of the Lancet commission on climate change that suggested "[c]limate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century". Changing weather patterns will have significant health consequences in terms of food production, water shortages, severe weather events and changing patterns of infectious diseases.

It is clear that recent weather patterns support the scientific evidence of climate change.

My comments are:

1. The adoption of a carbon tax has been a step in the right direction. To truly make progress, we need to look at the adverse incentives created by the carbon tax - in allowing the high intensity carbon emitters to keep emitting (coal power plants).
2. From a framing point of view, it would make more sense to focus on the adverse effects of pollution, that brings with it carbon emissions. For example, coal fired power plants are responsible for micro-particles that are strongly associated with worse cardio-respiratory health status (heart attacks, strokes, respiratory complaints). Pollution is something that no-one wants and is an argument that industries may find more difficult to counter than whether climate change is occurring or not.
3. Mitigation is essential. A considered approach that brings together different areas (health, water supply, urban planning, energy sectors) to discuss the best way forward is essential. There should be a taskforce adopted for this, with projects funded by the Future Fund. In addition, regional health impact assessments to identify climate-sensitive health outcomes, predict future scenarios and estimate the attributable burden to climate change would be helpful in crafting policy solutions.
4. Disaster planning - to consider the results of forced migration in the event of significant flooding or bush fires.

Climate change is an issue that is going to get more and more important in coming years. We need to start planning, to reduce our impact, and plan how we are going to adapt. There is a strong economic and public health argument for this.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Anstey