



Briefing Note: Carbon Neutral Government Programme – Ministry

Key messages

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins Minister of Education		
CC:			
Date:	4 December	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1246367
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to provide a broad outline of work underway and planned by the Ministry to reduce carbon emissions in line with the objectives of the Carbon Neutral Government Programme announced on 2 December 2020.

Summary

- You requested key messages from the Ministry of Education on our general work to date to support emissions reduction. This follows the announcement of the Carbon Neutral Government Programme as a response to the Climate Change Emergency Declaration of 2 December 2020.
- The Ministry supports the Carbon Neutral Government Programme including the measurement and reporting on emissions and setting reduction targets for the Ministry. There is already work underway within the Ministry to map our transition to Net Zero Carbon emissions, including developing a corporate sustainability strategy, a carbon footprint baseline and plans to convert our vehicle fleet.
- The Ministry is working with the Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority to determine the nature and extent of emissions reporting for the schooling sector that will contribute to achieving the Carbon Neutral Government Programme outcomes, without increasing the burden on school Boards. This will inform a report back to Cabinet in March 2021.
- The Ministry of Education already has a significant amount of work underway to reduce the environmental impact of Ministry owned school property. This includes a major

focus on reducing emissions, for example through the \$55 Million of funding to replace up to 90 coal boilers in schools.

Proactive Release

1. It is intended that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

☒ Agree ☐ Disagree



Kim Shannon
Head of Education Infrastructure

04_/12_/2020__

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

23/12/2020

Background

2. The Government declared a Climate Change Emergency on 2 December 2020. This announcement also included the aim of Carbon Neutral Government by 2025 through the Carbon Neutral Government Programme (GNGP).
3. Your office requested key messages (see Appendix 1) on the Ministry of Education's general work to support emissions reductions.

Establishing a Carbon Neutral Government Programme

4. The Cabinet paper '*Establishing a Carbon Neutral Government Programme*', that was approved by Cabinet on Monday 30 November, outlined the long-term work programme to achieve this carbon neutral aim, and included:
 - Measure, verify and report emissions annually;
 - Set gross emissions reductions targets and longer-term reduction plans for the next decade;
 - Introduce a phased work programme to reduce organisations' emissions; and
 - Offset after gross emissions reductions are made to achieve carbon neutrality.
5. The paper applies to government departments but also includes, to varying degrees, School Boards and tertiary institutions. Phase one of the work programme focuses on reporting requirements and seeks to minimise emissions from some significant sources namely, coal boilers, petrol cars and office space. Schools are currently scheduled to begin reporting from the end of 2023 – subject to a report back due in March 2021.
6. On 27 November we advised your office on the potential implications of this work (namely the reporting requirements) on School Boards and the Ministry of Education. This included
 - The mix of responsibilities between School Boards and the Ministry and other parties, such as proprietors, varies depending on the type of school and sometimes the specific circumstances applying to a school.
 - Resourcing and system implications for the Ministry, should we be required to undertake this on behalf of the 2,500 schools and kura.
 - The Ministry's ability to report on behalf of schools will be dependent on the level of detail required. 9(2)(f)(iv)
7. The Ministry will work with other agencies involved to inform the MfE report-back in March 2021 (on reporting requirements) on the recommended extent and nature of emissions reporting for the schooling sector, who should be responsible for that reporting and the resourcing required to measure and report on emissions at the school level.

Work Underway

8. The Ministry has a programme of work underway including the development of a corporate sustainability strategy and a carbon footprint baseline.
9. In the state school property portfolio the Ministry is currently focused on direct interventions that reduce emissions (i.e. replacement of coal boilers). To date, the Ministry of Education has been allocated approximately \$55 million of the \$200 million State Decarbonisation Fund, to replace or convert coal boilers with low emission alternatives (METIS 1218022 & 1220552 refers). Eight coal boiler replacements have also been approved using funding from the Sustainable Contestable Fund (METIS 1222096 and 1241649 refer).
10. Work is also underway to understand and reduce the environmental impact of the state school property portfolio. This forms part of the Sustainable portfolio object of *Te Rautaki Rawa Kura – the School Property Strategy 2030* and examples include:
 - a. The development of an Environmental Action Plan for school property which is due for release in mid 2021. This plan includes a focus on reducing fossil fuel use, improving operational efficiency and reducing waste.
 - b. Improvement of asset performance data – including the collection of electricity data and running of energy efficiency trials.
 - c. Small and remote schools programme that is replacing old inefficient lighting with new LED lights in around 600 schools.
 - d. The funding of environmental sustainability projects at 94 schools funded through the \$5M Sustainability Contestable Fund.

Next Steps

11. We will update you on progress with MfE, MBIE and EECA on the nature and extent of emissions reporting for school Boards as that work progresses leading up to the Cabinet report back due in March 2021.