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to improve outcomes for learners and communities*

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Learning to mitigate emissions: Relevance of research with Māori hapū and iwi

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Abstract

Currently, there is insufficient research on how New Zealand can achieve environmental sustainability through Māori iwi (tribe) and hapū (subtribe) relationships with land and sea, via the Zero Carbon Act. It is now agreed emissions from human activities negatively impact our atmosphere and climate with increasing frequency and ferocity. Applied research is vital to accelerate emissions mitigation action, as industry effects are considerable. The Greenhouse Gas Inventory estimates that the agriculture and energy sectors alone contribute almost 90% of New Zealand's gross emissions, contributing to global warming. The purpose of New Zealand's Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 is to provide a climate change policy framework to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris Agreement. The Act is a 'first step' to carbon neutrality and nature restoration, but concrete, urgent climate joint-action is needed to achieve targets under the Act's mitigation framework. This paper endeavours to address the research gap by considering specific beneficial partnerships that can be realised by co-creating research outcomes with hapū and iwi in Aotearoa, New Zealand and the cascading effect that the Act will have on other legislation, where mana whenua perspectives and implications are key considerations for the achievement of carbon mitigation targets. The importance of such a focus is in unlocking the potential of mātauranga (Māori knowledge systems), with relational co-creation through research. Stakeholders of the newly established New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) must diligently teach, model and research sustainability in every discipline, as employers demand graduates with environmental acumen.

Introduction

The Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 (Zero Carbon Act) in Aotearoa, New Zealand, is a framework to attain net-zero emissions by 2050. The Zero Carbon Act aligns New Zealand's Paris Agreement commitments, utilising steady, staged reductions of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Act is criticised as a 'weak outcome', setting good signals until section 5ZM, where "no remedy or relief is available for failure to meet the 2050 target or an emissions budget" with no

enforcement in a court of law. The Climate Leaders Coalition includes heavy hitters of industry, and is 'on a mission to reduce emissions in New Zealand (www.climateleaderscoalition.org.nz/about).

For tertiary students and stakeholders within the newly formed NZIST, issues of climate change and sustainability span every discipline; NZIST must figure boldly in our emissions mitigation initiatives. The Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS) submitted to the Environment Select Committee regarding the Zero Carbon Bill on behalf of 11 New Zealand tertiary providers. As signatories to ACTS, tertiary providers must also “inspire, promote and support change towards best practice sustainability within the operations, curriculum and research of the tertiary education sector” (Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability, n.d.).

AIG's recent Climate Change Survey (IAG, 2020) found 80% of Kiwis think we should do more to understand climate change impacts; 79% agree climate change is an important issue personally. Eighty-six per cent of us want climate change integrated in coronavirus economic recovery plans; we know impacts are growing and underestimated. NZIST is ideally placed to upskill tertiary students on sustainability.

New Zealand's carbon emissions mitigation will largely depend on collaborations and partnerships that lead to leveraged and focused action. Interdependencies of GHG-related industries and their economic impacts will play a major role in determining policies around investment and uptake of emission-reducing technologies. There will have to be incentives that accelerate emissions reduction strategies, so that there will be a positive impact on GHG mitigation, in order to meet the targeted goals in the Zero Carbon Act. Without focused effort intellectually, politically and with our available resources, a scatter-gun approach may diminish actions (Blaschke, 2020).

The New Zealand Greenhouse Gas Inventory is the official yearly estimate of total human-generated GHG emissions and removals, tracking a 24% increase in emissions between 1990 and 2018 (Ministry for the Environment, 2020). Currently, almost 90% of the nation's gross emissions derive from the agriculture and energy sectors, and the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector offset nearly one third of gross emissions in 2018 (Ministry for the Environment, 2020). Harvested timber is a key factor contributing to gross emissions, so deforestation issues are of critical concern.

The honourable James Shaw, climate minister for the Green Party, states that the Greenhouse Gas Inventory report is “the most up to date picture of how much we still have to do to solve climate change. Narrowing the gap between where we are now, and where we need to be, is the difference between handing our children a better world, or more crises in the future” (Shaw, 2020).

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) partnership will be fundamentally important to achieving environmental sustainability through Māori iwi (tribe) and hapū (subtribe) relationships with land and sea. Perspectives that are intergenerational will be vital in finding solutions that have lasting effect (Carter, 2019). Therefore, scholarly and applied Māori research will support achievement of our nation's environmental aspirations.

Climate Change, Emissions and our Land and Sea

The Zero Carbon Act is comprised of emission reduction targets and tools that some consider bold, but many think are not bold enough. To truly mitigate climate change, politics and practicalities will need an integrated approach that considers climate justice, tikanga (customs), economics, and long-term futurism. In New Zealand, tika (upright) practices and procedures around a low-emissions transition “are those that Māori view to be right or just, as well as those that do not give rise to a breach” (Hall, 2019, p. 19).

This approach aligns with the Waitangi Tribunal Wai262 report, concerning ownership of and rights to mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems) as integral to our resource management and conservation sectors (Waitangi Tribunal, 2011); the implications are even wider for our education, health and economic sectors. Indeed, mātauranga can be used “productively with Western, Aotearoa-adapted scientific knowledge” and the legacy of “colonial and post-colonial changes in land use” have altered land use patterns, agricultural intensification, and biodiversity loss, freshwater pollution and soil erosion (Blaschke, 2020, p. 27).

Problems such as climate change are difficult to resolve; they have innumerable causes, are tough to describe and do not have perfect solutions. But the immediacy of the issue demands a “holistic, indigenous, more-than-human wellbeing concept” to guide analysis, planning and governance actions, with transformative tools and data science (Yates, 2019, p. 2).

In Aotearoa, the Whanganui River has been granted legal personhood; it made global headlines (Roy, 2017). With a mindset that, if ‘I am the river and the river is me’, then climate change and emissions mitigation can only be solved with technologies, both new and indigenous. An approach that is anthropocentric can play a dynamic role in environmental management (Charpleix, 2018). The way forward will “displace old, outmoded dichotomies and reclaim Oceanic ways of living in Oceanic worlds,” established using relational thinking. “Scholarly inquiry should be part of this enterprise” (Salmond, 2020, p.1). “The tide has turned, the sea is rising but so are we, and when ordinary people act together, we can and will achieve extraordinary things” (Hayward, 2017, p.22). The whakataukī (proverb) ‘he waka eke noa’ (we are all in the same boat) is acknowledged a great deal these days, and rightly so; it is both blunt and nuanced.

Policy, Politics and Platform Integration

Work is underway, with initiatives in the private sector that parallel policy such as the Resource Management Act reforms, One Billion Trees programme and the Emissions Trading Scheme. Yet, significant technical and political issues diminish aims to mitigate emissions, pursue industrial free allocation, resolve land sector contributions and price agricultural emissions (Leining et al., 2020). These policies enmesh land use and so are entangled with social and economic concerns, and Māori.

In fact, there a plethora of methods, modes and support systems available to transition to a low-emissions future; many are untested and most are not integrated (Blaschke, 2020). The science is largely understood. Consensus is building that society must drive political change; we must also find answers within our society (Hayward, 2017). We have a choice. As a country, we must be prepared to make decisions around contentious issues (Darby, 2017). We cannot let politics and our political system systematically rip off our inter-generational future (Boston, 2017).

The Paris Agreement sets carbon targets but requires sustainable development and climate justice. We must advance discussions about what we value in New Zealand (Hayward, 2017), such as:

- Procedural justice: equitable, public and inclusive processes
- Distributive justice: equitable allocation of costs and benefits
- Ecological justice: holistic responsibility for damages produced
- Intergenerational justice: obligations to future generations

These discussions compel a whole-of-society debate and commitment and would benefit enormously from mātauranga Māori. In this regard, New Zealand can lead and play an exemplary role, globally. The path we choose now can be fragmented, or rather, an integrated and “sustainable view of how our land and water taonga could best be used” (Blaschke, 2020, p. 28).

An example is the One Billion Trees programme, in which technical, New Zealand specific knowledge is required for innovation (Te Uru Rākau, 2018). This initiative demonstrates an iterative and integrate process of knowledge transfer with technological innovation and social implementation.

Policy decisions are expected soon on mandatory disclosure of climate-related risks. These include physical and transitional risks arising from emissions pricing and governmental policies. Increasingly, these risks must be regularly, consistently and transparently reported in a comprehensive and decision-useful manner (Fallow, 2020, June 5).

In New Zealand, corporates founded the Climate Leaders Coalition in July 2018 to create business leadership, collective initiatives and strategies around climate change action in the transition to an emission reduction economy and align with the Zero Carbon Act (climateleaderscoalition.org.nz). Smaller firms can benefit too, as the conversations evolve and grass-roots initiatives such as Climate-X programmes align businesses with experts and organisations, passionate about accelerating emissions reduction (Climate-X, 2019).

Stakeholders also demand business leadership on lowering emissions (Orr, 2018); intelligent eco-consumers, sustainable investors, whole-of-supply-chain systems management and insurers want real metrics, consistently and reliably communicated. Such 'corporate-readiness' would improve policymakers' capability when preparing carbon-budgets. Anything less threatens our financial stability (Fallow, 2020, June 5).

There is empirical evidence that disclosure correlates to financial gain and the demand for greater corporate transparency is gaining momentum from every direction. (Cherrington et al., 2019). Developing consistent climate-related financial disclosures ameliorated in 2015 with The Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. New Zealand subsequently strengthened corporate governance advice on management and reporting of business, environmental and social risk; further statutory and listing rules are expected (North, 2018). Already the Climate Leaders Coalition are raising the bar; the founding signatories are already supported by 115 leading organisations and are moving from voluntary action on climate change, through to public reporting of GHG emissions, setting reduction targets and working with suppliers to reduce emissions. More ambitious goals have been set as momentum and incentives mount.

A Place for Partnership

A Climate Leaders Coalition founding signatory is Ngāi Tahu Holdings; subsequently, Ngāi Tahu Farming, Ngāi Tahu Seafood and Ngāi Tahu Tourism became signatories. This is a clear example of how environmental sustainability is enhanced with Māori iwi and hapū and hapori (community) relationships, elevated with respect for land and sea. Ngāi Tahu Holdings is owned by the South Island iwi, Ngāi Tahu and is a major player in the South Island economy, with an Exclusive Economic Zone that covers 80% of the South Island (Gibson, 2011). They are highly influential.

The clear distinction between the financial entity and the arm protecting and growing the Ngāi Tahu asset base can highlight ethical issues. With regard to emissions, the commercial arm invests in dairy farms which increase emissions and reduce biodiversity (Hutchinson, 2014). Yet, there are an impressive range of outcomes and achievements using this approach. The financial arm allows Ngāi Tahu to build on the foundation of the past 20 years and continue to create initiatives that strengthen and empower our Ngāi Tahu whānau and communities" (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, 2018).

The whakataukī, "mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri, ā, muri ake nei" (for us and our children after us) is the foundation that Ngāi Tahu Holdings Corporation adheres to when developing investment policy. There is no doubt that the economic and social initiatives created are admirable, safeguarded by a

long-term perspective to sustainable returns to the iwi. This can be contrasted by ‘the agency problem’ in companies, that can contribute to lethargic decision-making as conflicting objectives, differing perspectives and uncertainty curb transformative action (Roelich & Gieseckam, 2019). Diversity and connection to long-term goals allow for the possibility of new futures.

Building its knowledge base, through business development and initiatives such as the Ngāi Tahu Executive Leadership Programme, in partnership with Victoria University, is important for the iwi. The aim is to ensure rūnanga (council) values and culture align and develop leadership best practice (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, 2018). Scholarships such as Kā Pūtea Scholarships, Beca Scholarships and Ngāi Tahu Tourism Kaihautū (Chief Executive) Quinton Hall taking up a Prime Minister’s Business Scholarship all point to a new era of partnership to build strong socio-economic visionary outcomes.

Ngāi Tahu’s first climate change symposium, *Understanding and Adapting to Future Climate in Aotearoa New Zealand*, focused on research and emissions issues such as marae resilience and food security. Our young generation is the first to live with imminent climate change awareness, demanding action now. Māori Strategic Frameworks are already in place.

On April 1, 2020, New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) came into being, uniting the vocational education sector, requiring NZIST to “demonstrate agility and a willingness to embrace the future” (McGirr, 2019). Education is a great leveller; it creates a space for highly capable, future-focused practitioners. There is ample opportunity to make change.

Many people of indigenous cultures walk in two worlds. Education can build capability; it can also reduce barriers and build engagement with indigenous communities to enlarge our world view. The resulting transformative benefits are what wicked problems like climate change require (Doesburg & Bull, 2019). In New Zealand, the ‘two worlds’ implied are Māori and Pākehā (English). With regards to emissions reduction and climate change, we need to ask ourselves if we must trade-off between the ‘two worlds’ of social values versus economic surety. Learning can assuage trade-off mentalities.

Emissions and Mātauranga

To reduce emissions, there must be a new notion of ‘value’ and corporate responsibility. There must be a reassessment of assets through kaitiakitanga (guardianship), with a long-term, holistic and whole-of-life perspective. Increasingly, technology will be a significant tool, leveraging and accelerating outcomes; we must learn to utilise these technologies with intelligence and wisdom.

A new mindset is needed. A new mindset is being elevated. The younger generation are not willing to let the planet die under their feet. But they will need guidance. Learning alone is not enough. Institutional education must transform; urgently. Covid-19 lockdowns have proven that it is possible. In New Zealand, mātauranga is the obvious link that must be applied; after all, ‘he waka eke noa’.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi establishes the principle of partnership between the Crown and Māori as an overarching tenet, founded on key principles. The document(s) is imperfect – without question. Yet undoubtedly, Māori and the Crown are partners in resource management and kaitiakitanga is the key (Te Puni Kokiri, 2001). Colonialism mentalities persist to this day, but the Māori whakataukī “ka mua, ka muri” (look back to look forward) is traditionally used to inform the new by building on a sturdy foundation. Tikanga (customs) involve ways of being such as open communication, sharing, and being held to account while reaching out in an aspirational way. Business must learn to be less competitive and more collaborative if they are to survive, let alone thrive sustainably. This is what climate change solutions need; this is what Aotearoa can model. “Trends in business come and go, but indigenous cultures have been reflecting upon and working collaboratively with the environment, society and ‘governance’ for a very long time” (Cherrington et al., 2019).

In a youth sustainability leadership forum, the expression ‘go fast to slow down’ was uttered. The phrase was urging immediate, feverish action, to create the space to prepare thoughtfully for the next step; how apt (Cherrington, 2020). Climate change cannot wait for the mediocrity of the Zero Carbon Act. It cannot wait for politicians to put re-election motivations aside. It cannot wait until leaders’ coalitions address the issues that the world demands. “We already have all the facts and solutions... once we start to act, hope is everywhere. So instead of looking for hope, look for action” (Thunberg, 2018). We know what needs to be done; we have the science, mātauranga and motivation to do it.

Aotearoa, New Zealand has the blueprints. “The Treaty is like a partnership, that is: you have a part and I have a part” (Flavell, 2006). We have successful corporate models, creating inter-generational aspirations (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, 2018). “We understand that Māori success is New Zealand’s success and that unlocking the science and innovation potential of Māori knowledge, people and resources will benefit New Zealand” (Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, 2005). We have the cutting-edge technologies in this small nation of five million and the mindset to make things happen (Cherrington et al., 2019). Let us do what we can, now; let us also create the space to figure out the rest, together.

Conclusions

There is enough in the old generation to begin a bold effort in terms of sustainability, climate change and emissions reduction. There is a growing confidence and voice amongst our youth to lend their talents to ‘save the planet’. There is a “growing collective of talent and passion on a mission to deliver innovation, systems, products” (Climate-X, 2019) and action to get New Zealand to zero emissions. We need bold thinkers who have the drive to change our current course. Let’s act, with:

- Scalable innovations that are world-leading, working here and internationally
- Projects that are pan-corporate; collaboration is the only way forward
- People, caring for the planet: He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata
- Platforms that stretch and grow as technologies and resources generate
- Best practices, that we can all get behind and support (Climate-X, 2019).

For learning organisations, the ability to collaborate and develop relevant, applied, scholarly research on environmental sustainability with through Māori iwi (tribe) and hapū (subtribe) relationships must blossom. There are young minds, Māori and non- Māori that must be brought into the conversation; they will be the leaders that accelerate the actions we take today.

The purpose of New Zealand’s Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act is to provide a framework to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris Agreement; it can be amended to be bolder, as it will undoubtedly need to be. We have the foundations to close disparities by activating specific beneficial partnerships and collaborations, including co-creating research outcomes with Māori and iwi in Aotearoa. Potential is a meaningless word. Releasing and activating our potential using relationships and mātauranga will accelerate our learning; that will be the key to saving the planet for generations to come.

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