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**The Royal Australasian College of  
Physicians' submission to the Primary  
Production Committee**

**Climate Change Response (Emissions  
Trading Scheme Agricultural  
Obligations) Amendment Bill**  
Hōngongoi | July 2024

## Introduction

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) welcomes the opportunity to submit feedback to the Primary Production Committee on the proposed Climate Change Response (Emissions Trading Scheme Agricultural Obligations) Amendment Bill (the Bill).

The RACP works across more than 40 medical specialties to educate, innovate and advocate for excellence in health and medical care. Working with our members, the RACP trains the next generation of specialists, while playing a lead role in developing world best practice models of care. We also draw on the skills of our expert members to develop policies that promote a healthier society. By working together, our members advance the interest of the medical profession, our patients and the broader community.

### Key points

Anthropogenic climate change is a global public health emergency. Evidence shows the health impacts of climate change can be attributed to worsening environmental exposures such as ambient heat, air pollution, storms, floods, reduced water quality, reduced food production, increased food spoilage, and change in disease vectors. These exposures underlie health effects including heat stress illnesses, cardiovascular disease, infectious gastrointestinal disease, physical trauma, malnutrition, psychological stress, vector-borne disease, and other epidemic illness<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>. In addition, forced migration and conflict caused by scarce food and water resources will have consequent impacts on health<sup>2</sup>.

As medical professionals at the frontline of climate change, the RACP is committed to transformative advocacy at local, national and global levels. Such a commitment is consistent with our professional duty towards the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community. In our position statements, the RACP supports The Paris Agreement's focus on mitigation of climate change by the reduction of atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions<sup>1 5 6 7</sup>.

Aotearoa New Zealand's greatest emissions are contributed by primary industries – predominantly agriculture<sup>8</sup>. The Bill proposes removing all agricultural activities from the New Zealand Emissions

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<sup>1</sup> The Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Climate change and health position statement. Sydney: The Royal Australasian College of Physicians; 2016. Available from <https://www.racp.edu.au/policy-and-advocacy/policy-and-advocacy-priorities/climate-change-and-health>. Accessed 23 July 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Watts N, Adger WN, Agnolucci P, Blackstock J, Byass P, Cai W et al. Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health. [Internet] *Lancet* 2015;386(10006):1861-914. Available from [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)60854-6/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)60854-6/abstract). Accessed 23 July 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Costello A, Abbas M, Allen A et al. Managing the health effects of climate change: *Lancet* and University College London Institute for Global Health Commission. [Internet] *Lancet* 2009;373(9676):1693–1733. Available from [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)60935-1/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)60935-1/abstract). Accessed 23 July 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, KR, Woodward A, Campbell-Lendrum D, Chadee DD, Honda Y, Liu Q et al. 2014: Human health: impacts, adaptation, and co-benefits. In: *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Field CB, Barros VR, Dokken DJ, Mach KJ, Mastrandrea MD, Bilir TE, Chatterjee M et al. (eds.]. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; 2014. pp. 709-754.

<sup>5</sup> The Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Environmentally sustainable healthcare position statement. Sydney: The Royal Australasian College of Physicians; 2016. Available from <https://www.racp.edu.au/policy-and-advocacy/policy-and-advocacy-priorities/climate-change-and-health>. Accessed 24 July 2024.

<sup>6</sup> The Royal Australasian College of Physicians. The health benefits of mitigating climate change position statement. Available from <https://www.racp.edu.au/policy-and-advocacy/policy-and-advocacy-priorities/climate-change-and-health>. Accessed 24 July 2024.

<sup>7</sup> UNFCCC. The Paris Climate Agreement; 2016. Available from [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/parisagreement\\_publication.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/parisagreement_publication.pdf). Accessed 24 July 2024.

<sup>8</sup> National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research. Climate change and agriculture. Available from <https://niwa.co.nz/climate-change-information-climate-solvers/climate-change-and-agriculture>.

Trading Scheme, removing the legislated pathway for achieving reductions in methane emissions consistent with The Paris Agreement. The RACP strongly opposes this.

Our expert members consider the proposals in the Bill a step backwards, and inconsistent with our positions on mitigating climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The RACP calls upon the Aotearoa New Zealand Government to facilitate low carbon systems on food production<sup>6</sup>, utilising all available legislative tools including the Emissions Trading Scheme.

## Conclusion

The RACP thanks the Primary Production Committee for the opportunity to provide feedback on this consultation. To discuss this submission further, please contact the NZ Policy and Advocacy Unit at [policy@racp.org.nz](mailto:policy@racp.org.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



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