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Hon James Shaw,
Minister for Climate Change
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160
New Zealand

16 March 2021

Dear Minister,

The Climate Change Commission

We are writing on behalf of twelve health professional organisations and congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Climate Change. We would also like to emphasise our support for an all-of-government response to both reducing emissions and adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change in Aotearoa. However, such a response must include public health. Human health is not simply another stakeholder group in climate change policy, health is a fundamental human right and is deeply embedded within the political, economic, and ecological systems that we've generated or impacted on to cause climate change.

In December OraTaiao sent an email and briefing paper outlining recommendations for priority actions for climate and health (attached for your reference). One of these recommendations is to appoint two public health experts to the board of the Climate Change Commission, including one Māori public health expert. Additionally, we recommend the Commission set up a technical advisory group on health.

While there is an increasing evidence base of the health impacts of climate change internationally (see for example the Lancet Countdownⁱ), a better understanding of the risk and effects of climate change on health in Aotearoa is needed. For example, the National Climate Change Risk Assessment for NZⁱⁱ, includes very little on health impacts. Additionally, Aotearoa currently has no climate and health action plan. Developing and implementing such an action plan that adopts an integrated cross sectoral approach is a critical step towards ensuring the co-benefits of climate and health action are realised and towards ensuring health and health equity issues are considered in Aotearoa's climate change mitigation and adaptation strategyⁱⁱⁱ.

In order to ensure the wellbeing of New Zealanders we need effective climate change policy which also benefits health and reduces inequities. To achieve this, the Commission must include public health experts and centralise Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Public health experts are trained in population health, disease prevention, promoting physical and mental health and organisation of the health service, as well as being highly experienced in the evidence-based methods for promoting healthy behaviour change on a societal level. Just as the response to the Covid-19 pandemic has benefitted from public health expertise, the

climate crisis affects the whole population and requires this same level of understanding of effective interventions and health and equity impacts. We also recommend that one of the experts is Māori in order to assist with centralising Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

We urge you to appoint public health experts to the Climate Change Commission and to advise the commission to establish a health technical working group.

Yours sincerely,



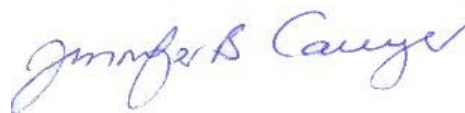
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**Dr Kate Baddock, Chair,
New Zealand Medical Association**



**Dr George Laking, Aotearoa NZ President of
the Royal Australasian College of Physicians**



**Professor Jenny Carryer, Executive Director,
College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ) Inc**



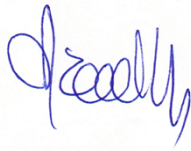
**Kerri Nuku, Kaiwhakahaere,
New Zealand Nurses Organisation**



**Selah Hart, Chief Executive Officer,
Hāpai Te Hauora, Māori Public Health**



**HĀPAI TE HAUORA
MĀORI PUBLIC HEALTH**



**Alison Eddy, Chief Executive,
New Zealand College of Midwives
Te Kāreti o ngā Kaiwhakawhānau ki Aotearoa**



**Dr Sheila Hart, President,
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**Sione Tu'itahi, Executive Director,
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Runanga Whakapiki Ake I Te Hauora o Aotearoa**



**Runanga Whakapiki Ake i te Hauora o Aotearoa
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**Grant Berghan, Chief Executive Officer,
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**Dr Mark Lawrence, Chair,
Tu Te Akaaka Roa | New Zealand National Committee,
The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of
Psychiatrists**



**Tu Te Akaaka Roa
New Zealand National Office**



**Hauora hinengaro
Manatuhia**



**Sam Robertson, President
Auckland University Medical Students'
Association**



Ngā Taurira Rata o Tāmaki Makaurau

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ⁱ <https://www.lancetcountdown.org/2020-report/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Climate%20Change/national-climate-change-risk-assessment-main-report.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/Climate-change/activities/integrating-health-in-policies-for-mitigation-of-and-adaptation-to-climate-change/projects-on-health-in-mitigation-and-adaptation/climate,-environment-and-health-action-plan-and-information-system-cehapis>