



10/08/2023

Attn: Hon Nanaia Mahuta,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Re: Health representation in Aotearoa-New Zealand's COP28 delegation

Tēnā koe Minister,

OraTaiao: NZ Climate and Health Council is very pleased that COP28 this year will host the first ever [Health Day](#). This will be a collaboration between COP28, WHO and other partners.

This inaugural Health Day highlights the fact that climate change is, [in the words of the WHO](#), the "single biggest health threat facing humanity," as well as a huge opportunity for health and equity gains if our climate response centres health. This Health Day also reflects the reality that climate change is not simply an economic problem, but very much a health, wellbeing and societal challenge.

Like most countries, Aotearoa-New Zealand's climate response to date has sidelined health and wellbeing, and we have been slow to fully incorporate health into our climate mitigation and adaptation planning, or to incorporate climate change and its effects into the planning and reform of our health system. COP28 offers use an ideal opportunity to remedy this situation.

We recognise the particular difficulties in planning for COP28 given its timing shortly after the election. We strongly recommend therefore that the COP28 delegation include dedicated health expertise from members who have experience in public and planetary health.

We also recommend the presence of one of our health ministers at the Conference. This step would clearly acknowledge that Aotearoa recognises the intrinsic links between climate change and health, and allows us to maximise our influence and gain the most benefit from embedding health within the global climate response.

We would be delighted to meet in the coming weeks to discuss this further.

Ngā mihi nui,

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "JL".

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CC: Hon Chris Hipkins, Prime Minister; Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs; Hon Damien O'Connor, Minister for Trade and Export Growth; Hon Dr Ayesha Verall, Minister of Health; Hon Peeni Henare, Associate Minister of Health (Māori Health); Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister for Health (Pacific Peoples); Hon Willow-Jean Prime, Associate Minister for Health; Hon James Shaw, Minister for Climate Change

OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council is an organisation calling for urgent, fair, and Tiriti-based climate action in Aotearoa; we recognise the important co-benefits to health, well-being and fairness from strong and well-designed mitigative policies. Our vision is Āhuarangi Ora, Tangata Ora, 'Healthy Climate, Healthy People'.

