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BRIEF HISTORY OF CLIMATE CHANGE



1972:

Human Environment Conference

The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm was the first world conference to make the environment a major issue.

1988:

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC

World Meteorological Organisation WMO and UN Environment Programme UNEP established the IPCC. TO this day IPCC assessments are the scientific underpinning of international negotiations while also providing unique insights into, for example, managing the risk of extreme events and disasters.

1992

UNFCCC & United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

20 years after the Human Environment Conference the UN formed the UNFCCC in May 1992. In June they held the Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. The conference was centred around sustainable development. The plan of action was called **Agenda 21**.

The last Earth Summit, **Rio+20**, was in 2012.

Some documents and agreements from the Summit:

• Rio Declaration on Environment and Development • Agenda 21[5] • Forest Principles • Convention on Biological Diversity • Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

1997: The Kyoto Protocol

A legally binding international agreement to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and provide a framework for international emissions trading. It was adopted in 1997 but took until 2005 before it was enforced. New Zealand endorsed the agreement in 2002. Parties linked to the Kyoto Protocol use Kyoto emission units to track their progress against their agreed emissions reduction commitments.

2002: Climate Change Response Act 2002

Established New Zealand's legal framework for meeting its obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

2010: COP 16

COP 16 in Cancun concluded with a package of decisions to help countries advance towards a low-emissions future.

Almost all countries became parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

2012: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, RIO+20

A critical achievement of the summit was an agreement on the **Climate Change Convention** which in turn led to the **Kyoto Protocol** and the **Paris Agreement**.

2015: COP 21 - The Paris Climate Agreement

NZ is a signatory to the international binding agreement at **United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP)**. The key goal is to keep the rise in mean global temperature to well below 2 °C and preferably limit the increase to 1.5 °C. To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries must aim to reach a global peak of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century.

2018: IPCC Confirms Importance of 1.5C Goal

A special Global Warming of 1.5C report by the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change confirms the need to maintain the strongest commitment to the Paris Agreement's aims of limiting global warming to stave off the worst impacts of climate change, which include more frequent and more severe droughts, floods and storms.

2019: Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019

This amends the Climate Change Response Act to provide a framework by which New Zealand can develop and implement clear and stable climate change policies that:

- contribute to the global effort under the Paris Agreement to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels; and
- allow New Zealand to prepare for, and adapt to, the effects of climate change.

Climate Change Commission:

A Crown Entity established by the Zero Carbon Amendment Act to provide independent, expert advice to the Government on mitigating climate change and adapting to the effects of climate change. The Commission is also required to monitor and review the Government's progress towards its emissions and adaption goals.

2021-2024: COP26-29



COP is the annual UN climate change conference. COP stands for Conference of the Parties, and the summit is attended by the countries that signed the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC) – a treaty that came into force in 1994.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations. Their report assesses thousands of scientific publications. Consensus is that we have a small window to reverse climate change and urgent action is required.