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## **Our Environment**

Discussion Document

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## Intro from National Party Leader Simon Bridges

We live in the most beautiful country in the world. When I look at our mountains, lakes, and native bush, I often reflect on how proud I am to be a New Zealander. Our environment matters to me. It's part of our identity and it also keeps us competitive on the world stage. As a father of three children, it matters to me that we keep our country beautiful for our kids and, in years to come, their children.

National will provide real leadership on environmental issues in a sensible, 'Bluegreen' way, because we understand a strong economy depends on our environment, and our ability to care for our environment depends on the success of our economy.

This paper on National's ideas for a way forward takes a distinctly 'Bluegreen' approach characterised by our essential principles:

- Sustainability must be at the centre of everything we do.
- We're practical environmentalists, putting results before ideology.
- Our economy depends on our environment, and our ability to care for our environment depends on the success of our economy; we will deliver both.
- A scientific and evidence-based approach is essential to quality environmental decision-making.
- People respond best to change when engaged and given incentives. We work with communities and businesses, not against them.
- New Zealanders have a unique birthright to access and enjoy our natural environment. We aim to improve recreational opportunities.
- We're aiming to transition to a circular economy, meaning one that is restorative and regenerative, designing waste out of our system.



It's time to look at new ideas. We believe hunters and fishers can take more responsibility for managing their own activities and the resources they use. We think we can get better value for money for the taxpayer and better outcomes for the environment if we place more emphasis on backing the many private and community conservation organisations around New Zealand.

We believe collaborative approaches work better than adversarial approaches. We can achieve more for the environment if

New Zealanders are included in the journey rather than government dictating what they should and shouldn't do.

National welcomes your feedback on these ideas as we put together a forward-looking plan for New Zealand for the 2020s and beyond.



**Simon Bridges**

National Party Leader  
Leader of the Opposition



National's Environment Caucus: Hon Scott Simpson, Sarah Dowie, Hon Simon Bridges, Erica Stanford, and Todd Muller.



## Intro from Scott Simpson

### National's Environment Spokesperson

As New Zealanders, we cherish our natural heritage. Concern for the environment is a universally-held value, and the small changes each of us makes in our everyday lives can have a positive impact on our environment's future.

Conservation, the care and preservation of nature, is part and parcel of the conservative political tradition. National's Bluegreen approach takes a long-term view that by making smart, strategic decisions today we can leave our environment in a healthier state for future generations.

We're the party of practical environmentalism. Our record in Government of establishing 11 marine reserves, overseeing a turnaround in the health of our rural waterways for the first time in generations, passing the Waste Minimisation Act, our focus on eradicating predators, and our commitment to climate change issues despite the economic uncertainty of the Global Financial Crisis, speaks for itself.

We know there's still so much work to be done. Our ability to solve the challenges facing our generation and those to come depends on our openness to go beyond conventional political boundaries and to focus on solutions that work. It also depends on our ability to pay for these solutions.

We need a prosperous economy to pay for the choices we make in protecting our environment,

Environmental issues are too important to be left to the fringe of politics. These are core issues for New Zealand and National's practical approach offers the best solutions.

**Hon Scott Simpson**

National's Environment Spokesperson

and we need a healthy environment to support our economy. We must focus our efforts on environmental outcomes in equal measure to our focus on economic outcomes. We cannot prioritise short-term economic gain at the expense of the environment.

This paper emphasises the importance of sustainable use of our natural resources and the right Kiwis have to enjoy our natural landscapes for their recreational activities.

It outlines our focus on smart, evidence-based solutions and an open-minded approach to embracing technology.

It reiterates that we need to be open to cross-party solutions where possible, demonstrated in our current work to establish a bipartisan legislative framework to meet climate change commitments both nationally and internationally.

Some of the environmental challenges we face require creative thinking and bold decision-making. This paper outlines our commitment to making those decisions together with communities, interest groups, and businesses to drive change.

This document contains a series of questions and propositions. I welcome your views and feedback as National develops its policy for the 2020s.





**Whatungarongaro te  
tangata toitū te whenua.**

As man disappears from sight,  
the land remains.





## Environment

"Good environmental practice is not only important to protect our natural heritage, but crucial in securing the type of future we want for our children and grandchildren."

**Hon Scott Simpson**

Spokesperson for Environment

### Nature's natural capital

If we as New Zealanders are serious about the care and protection of our natural environment, we need to value it like we say we do. To do that we need a new approach that better takes into account the economic value of the environment to us all as individuals and as a nation. Not doing so means we're more at risk of losing what we say we value so highly.

Governments and society are pretty good at assigning most things some kind of value. However, nature and our natural resources have been traditionally viewed as too precious to ascribe value. As a result, too often our natural resources haven't been given the consideration they deserve in decision-making, and their 'value' has not been included as part of the decision making debate.

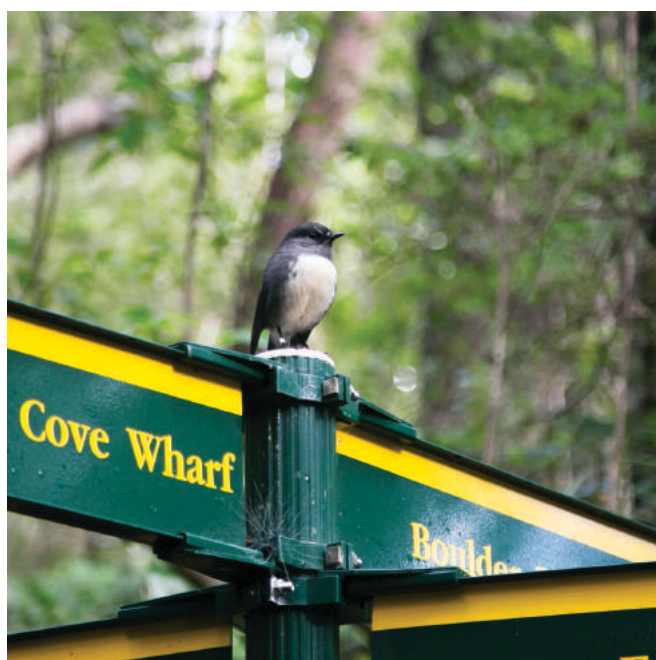
Natural capital is a concept which equates to the sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, air, and maritime space. These are all elements of nature that either directly or indirectly bring value to us as people and the country as a whole. A starting point is to commence building what would be effectively a natural assets register to identify and quantify exactly what is our national natural capital.

This approach would assign a value to our natural resources so they can be considered as an integral component of our overall economic framework. It would allow their value and the benefits they provide to be quantitatively analysed and accounted for.

**HAVE YOUR SAY > 2019 DISCUSS**



Valuing natural capital is not only about assigning a value. It's about acknowledging the things New Zealanders care about and giving them due consideration when making decisions. National will introduce a natural capital assessment to assist decision making across government. This will improve the quality, consistency and coverage of data on natural resources so that over time New Zealanders have access to the same quality of data on environmental issues as they do on social and economic issues.



## Water

The quality of our water is integral to the health and wellbeing of everyone, the viability of our land, and the prosperity of our communities.

With such an abundance of freshwater, we're in danger of not appreciating how valuable this resource is to our economy, our lifestyle, and our health. Many of our major export industries depend on freshwater. Over 60 per cent of our external earnings as a country can be connected to our freshwater resource. Freshwater is core to New Zealand's quality of life and competitive advantage internationally.

Concerns about the quality of our freshwater consistently rates highly when New Zealanders

New Zealand has an abundant freshwater resource of 600 trillion litres per year of which 10 trillion or 2 per cent is extracted for agriculture, industry, and town water supplies. Our water shortages are in distinct areas during summer and well designed and managed infrastructure can support improved water quality and sustainable agriculture.

National's practical environmental agenda is about managing water effectively to support healthy rivers and lakes for recreation and cultural values, as well as for industries like tourism, primary production, and electricity generation.

are asked about environmental issues. The feedback we've received from our Have Your Say survey is that people are concerned about how much water there is, who uses it, and the quality of that water. Significant improvements have been made over the past 20 years regarding reduced pollution from point source discharges, but the more difficult issue of diffuse pollution (nutrients, pathogens, and sediments) remain a challenge.

In Government National took a collaborative approach with the Land and Water Forum and iwi putting in place the first national policy on freshwater that set specific national standards on nitrogen, phosphorous, phytoplankton, periphytons, cyanobacteria, ammonia, dissolved oxygen, and E.coli. We increased by tenfold the investment in river and lake clean-ups totalling over \$400 million and supported rural New Zealand with water infrastructure.

There's growing disappointment that after 17 months the new Government has done nothing on freshwater despite its campaign rhetoric. National regulations to exclude stock from waterways due by late 2018 have not

progressed. Water infrastructure funding has been removed. There's been no new funding nor any regulatory changes.

National believes infrastructure investment is crucial to improving water quality, supporting more sustainable agriculture, and responding to climate change. In Auckland, billions need investing in properly separating and better managing stormwater and sewage to clean up streams and beaches, and the regions need investment in more schemes like the Waimea in Nelson. We're proposing a new Water Infrastructure Fund dedicated to helping councils finance projects to improve water quality and management in both town and country.

Regulatory improvements are also required on the issues like better managing sediment, and stronger national direction on water quality at our beaches.



National proposes establishing a new Water Infrastructure Fund to assist city and rural councils in improving water quality, supporting more sustainable agriculture and resilience to climate change.

National proposes working with water stakeholders and iwi to put in place a more efficient allocation method for the resource.

National proposes improving sediment management through stronger national guidance and collaboration with regional councils and stakeholders.

National proposes adopting the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's recommendations for the Overseer tool.

National proposes setting nationally consistent water quality standards for coastal waters to drive improved water quality for beach swimmers.

#### Other matters we'd like your feedback on include:

Is there broad acceptance of the principle that it should be polluters who pay?

Iwi rights and interests (Te Mana o te Wai) – what's the role of central government and local councils in recognising and applying iwi interests?

How do we best ensure sufficient focus is placed on cleaning up degraded urban waterways?

Where's the balance between environmental urgency and economic impact?

When should standards for the management of diffuse nitrogen discharges be applied – on consent expiry, on limit setting, through permanent transfer, or on a combination of some or all of these?

What further practical steps should be taken to exclude livestock from water bodies?



## Waste

Each of us sends about 900kg of waste to landfill every year. The volume of waste we discard has been increasing since the middle of the previous century. Single-use packaging in all forms, plastics, textiles, food waste, construction and demolition materials, and e-waste are a part of our complicated waste stream.

The current situation is summed up well by Professor Dieter Helm:

“For most of the twentieth century the waste by-products of industry have been dumped in rivers, landfill sites, the seas, and in the air. This pollution has happened for free – those who cause the pollution have not paid the price.”

**Professor Dieter Helm**

We’re all more conscious of waste. Plastic in particular presents a huge challenge not only in New Zealand but around the world. We all have an individual role to play in reducing the volume and range of materials sent to landfill. Small individual changes collectively have a big positive effect on the environment.

Sustainable economic growth must go hand in hand with less waste and smarter use of resources. Encouraging voluntary actions from individuals, communities, and businesses will take us a long way towards achieving positive change, but there’s a place for well-designed regulation, pricing, and incentives to reduce our volume of waste.

China’s decision to no longer take the world’s plastic waste has created a short-term issue for countries like New Zealand, but in the medium to long-term we’ll benefit from new initiatives as a result. Those new initiatives may not have

otherwise occurred had we kept shipping plastic waste offshore.

The waste disposal levy is an important and effective tool in delivering on the purpose of the Waste Minimisation Act. Since its introduction by the National-led Government in 2009, the levy has raised more than \$200 million which has been distributed to national and local initiatives to reduce waste. In Government we’ll consider further waste to energy options suitable for New Zealand’s population, geography, and environment.

Moving to a circular economy would transform New Zealand from a ‘take, make, waste’ model to one where the lifecycles and use of materials is optimised. A circular economy is restorative by design and is underpinned by the use of renewable energy. It’s a sustainable and viable alternative to the dominant linear model we have today.



## Litter

Litter is an increasingly costly and frustrating problem around New Zealand. We seem to have lost the culture of the 'be a tidy Kiwi' and 'do the right thing' when it comes to litter. Our Litter Act dates back to the 1970s, so we'll rewrite it to bring it into line with current thinking about addressing litter.

Container deposit schemes have been successfully introduced in many countries. There are many different systems and options. Some are more successful than others. In Norway, it's up to the manufacturers and beverage sector to be responsible for ensuring a high percentage of the containers they make and sell are recycled. Making the industry responsible for ensuring containers are recycled has led to the establishment of effective, efficient, and innovative industry initiated solutions that are working for Norway. There are good ideas everywhere, and we should not be limited to developing uniquely Kiwi solutions.

National proposes rewriting the Litter Act to make it fit for purpose. We'll strengthen enforcement mechanisms against people and businesses breaching provisions of both the Waste Minimisation Act and the Litter Act.

National proposes introducing measures to see either by a container deposit scheme in association with existing kerbside and recycling programmes is introduced, or by the beverage sector itself be responsible for ensuring through initiatives they set up, that 90 per cent of beverage containers are saved from being sent to landfill.

National proposes committing New Zealand to a nationwide zero avoidable waste timetable and target, and will work with communities and stakeholders to get those right.

## Case study

### Flight Plastics PET recycling

#### Recycling plastic drink bottles:

Every year, thousands of tonnes of plastic waste enters our landfills. A circular economy approach, reusing materials at end-of-life, can drastically reduce the volume of plastics we import and dump.

Flight Plastics, based in Lower Hutt, is turning New Zealand's linear approach to plastics – take, make, use, and dispose of – into a circular economy approach.

It established New Zealand's first PET recycling plant, recycling 8,000 tonnes annually of used plastic drink and water bottles into food-grade packaging such as strawberry and blueberry punnets, and meat and biscuit trays. Flight Plastics' PET wash plant was co-funded by the Waste Minimisation Fund and completed in 2017.

Flight Plastics is providing jobs and benefits to our economy and removing the environmental impacts of sending our used plastic drink bottles tens of thousands of kilometres offshore to be recycled in Asia and then imported back into New Zealand. It has demonstrated consumers are more likely to recycle more if they know they're using their own recycled PET.





## Climate Change

"National is committed to tackling the issue of climate change in a measured and responsible way. We believe everyone has a role to play as we rise to the challenge of transitioning to a low emissions economy. We must act to reduce our emissions in concert with 194 other countries because this is truly a global issue requiring a global response."

**Todd Muller**

Spokesperson for Climate Change

### Targets

National is proud to have signed New Zealand up to the Paris Agreement in 2015. This ambitious international agreement requires us to restructure our domestic economy to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the second half of the century without threatening food production. We stand by that ambition.

We have five principles to guide New Zealand in moving to a low carbon economy, ensuring environmental protection and economic growth go hand in hand. These principles inform our policy development process.

**Science-based:** New Zealand's targets must be based on the best available science that assesses the three key greenhouse gases and their impacts independently.

**Technologically driven:** We achieve emissions reductions by adopting new technologies rather than reducing sector activity.

**Long-term incentives:** Financial signals will place incentives on business, consumers, and entrepreneurs who will lead this change.

**Global response:** New Zealand's response is on pace with our global trading partners.

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**Economic impact:** We'll seek to minimise economic impacts, in particular actions that place an undue burden on single regions.

National believes it's vital New Zealand gets our institutional arrangements right when it comes to climate change. We're supportive of an independent Climate Change Commission which will advise successive Governments based on science, evolving technologies, the pace of global response, and economic impacts.

## Bending our emissions curve down

Meeting our targets is going to be challenging and will require transformation across almost all sectors of our economy. National believes carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), as the most common long-lived gas, must be reduced as a priority. As we transition to a low CO<sub>2</sub> emitting economy there are many decisions we can take to help us 'bend the curve' down and put New Zealand on a path towards lower emissions and to meeting our international obligations.

## The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

National believes the ETS should be our primary tool for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by

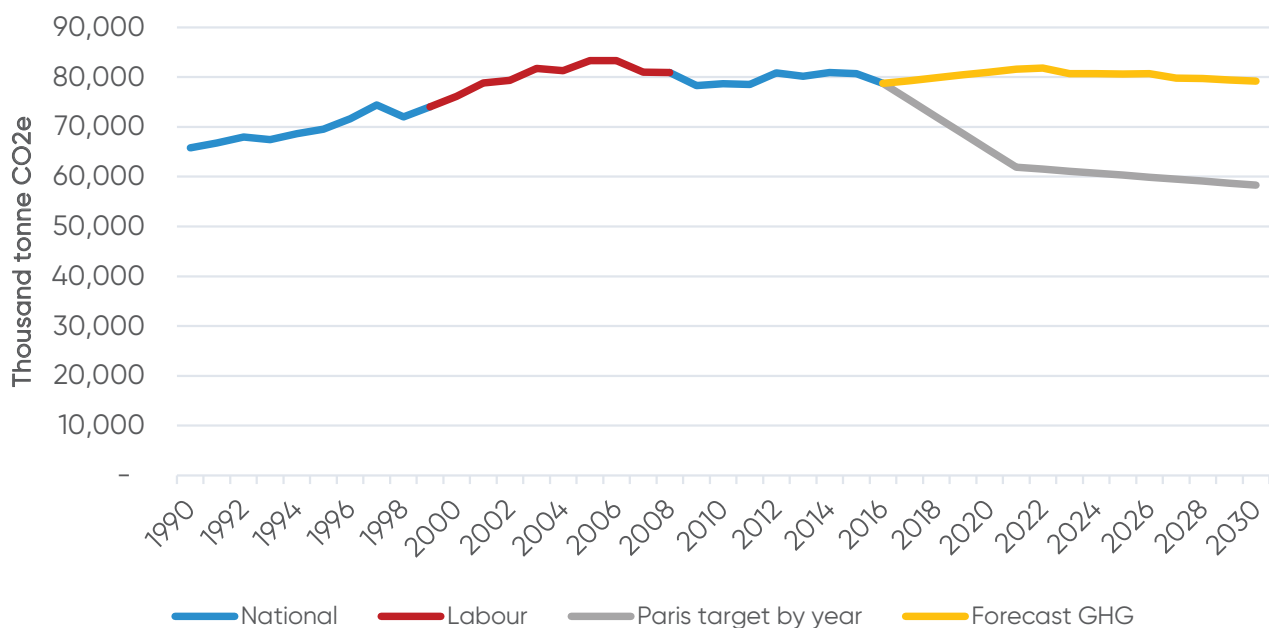
putting a price on carbon use in our economy. We understand the importance the business community puts on a well-functioning, stable, and predictable ETS.

Currently, the majority of our large industrial heavy energy users have most of their emissions liability reduced by free allocations of carbon credits (New Zealand Units).

A tension currently exists between incentivising change and ensuring our trade exposed industries remain competitive in the global marketplace. It's critical we get the balance right to send a clear signal to businesses, investors, and foresters.

National believes allocation of units into the ETS should reflect an increasingly constrained emissions cap, but that this reduction must avoid making our domestic industries uncompetitive and must also avoid risking transfer of production to other countries with laxer emission constraints (carbon leakage). We're strong proponents of accessing robust international units of integrity if they're available, but we believe most abatement over time should occur domestically.

## New Zealand Historical and Target Emissions





The ETS scheme must be made fit for purpose to support our Paris obligations, including refreshing the framework for auctioning NZUs, accessing international units, and providing confidence to business to support ongoing investment in decarbonising projects.

## Adaptation

Whatever mix of market incentive, regulation, and public investment we choose to reduce our emissions, the likelihood remains that adapting to the effects of climate change will be our nation's reality. We expect the climate to change over time with potentially significant local impacts. We're interested in your views on what the optimum role of the central Government is in supporting local communities through this expected change.

## Sector investment by government

### Industrial manufacturing

A considerable amount of industrial heat is required to power our economy. Companies like Fonterra and Rio Tinto use it to produce milk powder for export and to smelt aluminium.

How do we incentivise efficient transition of our large scale industrial capacity to lower emission technologies?

How do we get the balance right between exposure to the ETS and ensuring industry doesn't shut down completely, resulting in increased high emission imports?

Do we realistically see a future where New Zealanders stop using steel, aluminium, and concrete? If not, is there any justification in taxing local producers out of the market?

Our emissions intensive and trade exposed companies, many of which operate in regional New Zealand, are currently given a free allocation of NZUs to reduce their exposure to the carbon price.

### Energy generation

New Zealand is fortunate to have an abundance of renewable energy opportunities with over 80 per cent of our current electricity generated coming from renewable sources. The Government has set a target of getting this to 100 per cent by 2035.

How realistic is the Government's target for renewable energy? As consumers, what price are we willing to pay for all future demand to be met by renewable generation? Are we willing to fundamentally change the Resource Management Act to help facilitate large geothermal and hydro developments to support our future energy needs?

National believes we need to ensure New Zealand's electricity supply is as clean, dependable, and affordable as possible. This requires a conversation about what our energy mix looks like in the future, the impact on the cost of living for Kiwi families, and whether this is possible without traditional fuels like natural gas.

The Government's ban on future oil and gas exploration won't help prices in the long term. If we get the mix wrong, families could face high power prices or worse – have the lights go out.

National proposes developing a comprehensive energy security policy to ensure we deal with both wet and dry years, as well as winter demand peaks, without significant costs to low and middle income New Zealanders.

## Transport

Transport is the area of the most significant opportunity in the medium term as we move away from combustion engines to cleaner, greener alternatives – but electric cars are still relatively expensive for the average Kiwi family.

National proposes to consider developing further robust incentives to encourage New Zealanders to take up renewable transport. National is open to all options, including subsidies for electric vehicles, increasing regulations on older, less efficient cars, and encouraging older cars to be scrapped.

### **As well as that, we want your thoughts on the following:**

- How do we ensure potential alternative technologies like hydrogen aren't crowded out by an investment focus on electric vehicles?
- How can we reduce emissions from heavy freight? Should we expand investment support for rail and public transport, or are there other options to consider?
- If we move from petrol to electric solutions for transport, what strain will this put on our electricity supply? What other kinds of electricity supply are we willing to invest in to meet increased demand?

the right place at the right time, but what does that look like? These are long term investment decisions we need to make to ensure our afforestation strategy makes sense.

Should we have a preference between planting slow-growing natives or fast-growing exotics?

What impact will significant land use change have on our rural communities and provincial employment?

Are additional changes to the forestry components of the ETS required to maximise both the amount of carbon removed from the atmosphere and the contribution to economic growth and employment in the regions?

How do we best incentivise farmers to view their on-farm emissions alongside their farm's potential to reduce emissions through carbon sequestration?

Is there an optimum number of hectares that should be made available for forestry relative to other land use options?

## Forestry

Forestry has a vital role to play in our transition as our native and exotic trees remove carbon from our atmosphere (carbon sequestration). We're told it's all about having the right tree in





## Agriculture

Agriculture is the backbone of the New Zealand economy, but New Zealand's unique emissions profile means it also produces roughly half of our emissions. This is because we have very low energy generation emissions and produce a significant volume of food exports for the size of our country. While most sectors in New Zealand are likely to be adopters of international emissions reduction technology, National expects our agriculture sector to continue its global leadership role in demonstrating how a country can produce more food while lowering its environmental footprint. We expect land use to continue to change in response to global market expectations of sustainably produced food.

Our challenge is to ensure policy encourages investment and uptake of new technologies while ensuring we continue to lead the world in efficient food production. National sees an opportunity for our capacity and innovation to assist other countries in reducing their environmental impact and sharing the climate benefit. It remains our view that the agricultural gases of methane ( $\text{CH}_4$ ) and nitrous oxide ( $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ ) are best managed down by improved farming efficiency and direct investment in new technologies as they appear.

What does global agricultural leadership on climate change look like?

How do we best incentivise ongoing improvement in reducing emissions and demonstrate reduced environmental impacts?

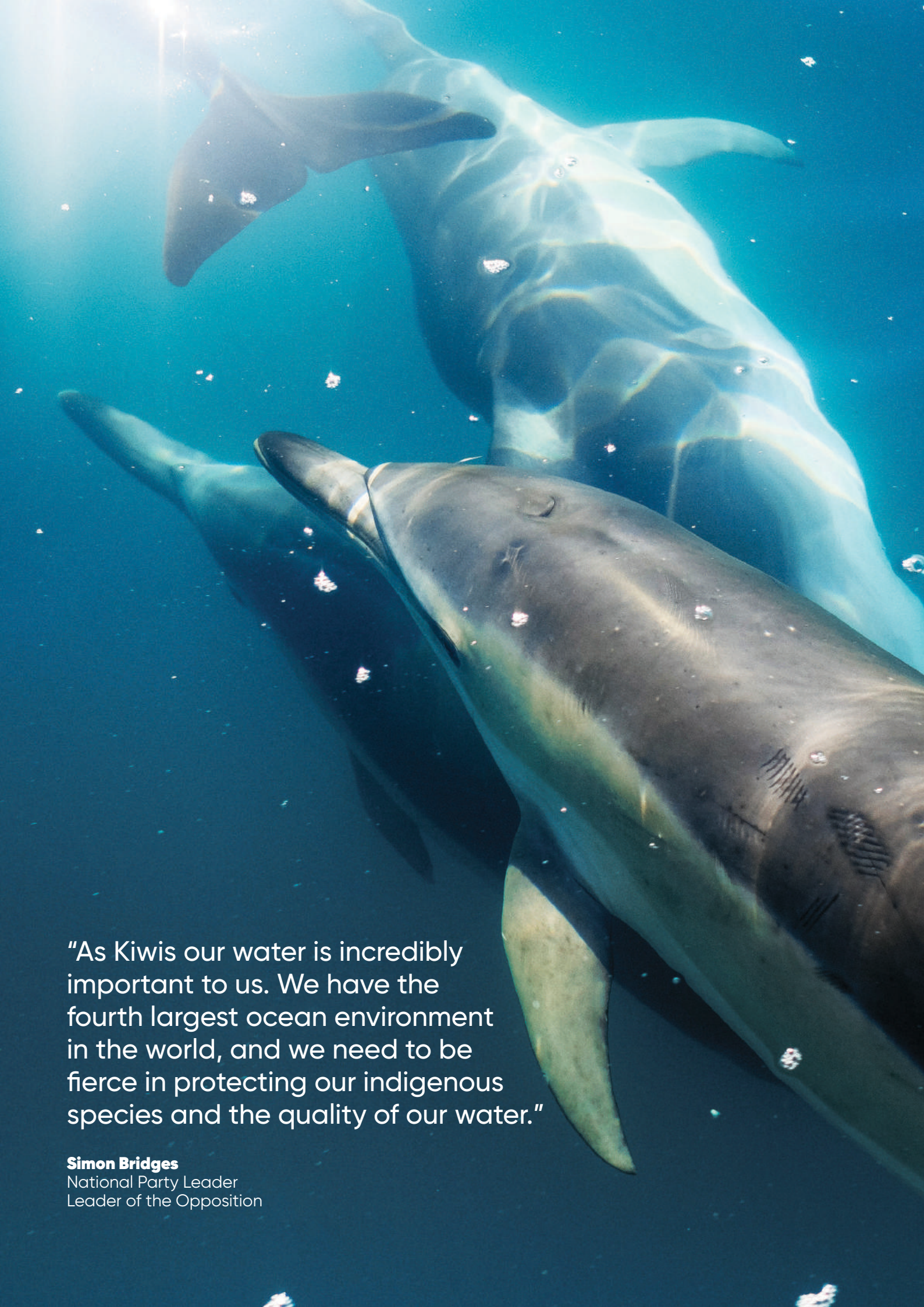
How do we best incentivise fast adoption of new emissions technologies as they become available?

Should all technologies to reduce emissions be considered, including new developments in biotechnology?

How can we commercialise our future agritech intellectual property in a manner that assists our climate change obligations?





An underwater photograph of two dolphins swimming in clear blue water. The dolphins are sleek and grey, with visible fins and some markings on their bodies. Sunlight filters through the water from the top left, creating a bright, shimmering effect. The dolphins are swimming towards the right, with one slightly ahead of the other.

"As Kiwis our water is incredibly important to us. We have the fourth largest ocean environment in the world, and we need to be fierce in protecting our indigenous species and the quality of our water."

**Simon Bridges**  
National Party Leader  
Leader of the Opposition





## Conservation

"Our conservation estate is unique, special, and a taonga to all New Zealanders. It deserves our protection, conservation, and our appreciation. Where biodiversity is improved our ability to enjoy nature is enhanced."

### **Sarah Dowie**

Spokesperson for Conservation

The conservation estate consists of over 8 million hectares of land and covers approximately one-third of New Zealand. It contains some of the most distinctive plants and animals in the world.

Over half of international tourists visit the conservation estate and often attribute natural heritage as a drawcard of their travels to New Zealand. Equally, New Zealanders identify with their surrounds and enjoy an innate connection to unimpeded access to conservation lands, whether or not they recreate in them.

It makes sense to think about how the Government should invest in our conservation estate, whether to protect and improve our biodiversity, enhance and diversify our natural landscapes under protection, or celebrate New Zealanders' and our visitors' appreciation

of nature by encouraging appropriate recreation on the estate.

The previous National-led Government worked hard to implement policies which enabled New Zealanders to get ahead. As a result, this Labour-led Government was gifted a growing economy with which they're able to consider how they might invest in the conservation estate.

National wants to make sure the Department of Conservation remains an advocate for the best interests of the conservation estate and our iconic flora and fauna.



## Predator Free 2050

An estimated 68,000 native birds are killed in New Zealand by introduced predators every night.

In 2016 National committed to the Predator Free 2050 initiative. We established and funded Predator Free 2050 New Zealand Limited to begin the scoping of eradication projects and look at technologies to eradicate pests.

Eradication projects rely on partnerships with community and corporates on the ground, and without involvement locally Predator Free 2050 would not succeed.

While many projects have been funded to date, funding, research into technology advancement, and engagement at grassroots is essential to continue with a plan that's engaged the hearts and minds of many New Zealanders.

We can only achieve the 2050 goal by investing in new technologies like gene drive, a piece of biotechnology with the potential to eradicate rats and mice from mainland New Zealand. The Government has blocked these technologies being explored, and outdated ideology from the early 2000s is standing in the way of protecting our birds for future generations.



## Case study Wellington Predator Free

In Government, National announced it wanted New Zealand to be predator-free by 2050.

Predator Free Wellington aims to make Wellington the first predator-free capital city in the world by elimination all possums, rats, stoats, and ferrets.

By removing predators from Wellington, native bird species like tui, saddleback/tieke, stitchbird/hihi, kākā, kākārīki, and the New Zealand robin/toutouwai, which are already returning to suburbs near the Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary, will find safe habitats to thrive.

Over the past decade, Wellingtonians have seen the benefits of Zealandia as birds have increasingly returned to the suburbs they used to call home. With Wellington Predator Free this newly developing dawn chorus will turn into a symphony.

- National is committed to improving biodiversity outcomes by continuing with pest eradication and Predator Free 2050.
- National will integrate species management plans into the Predator Free 2050 initiative.

## Ex-situ biodiversity

Ex-situ biodiversity, or offsite conservation, is a growing industry in New Zealand, developing meaningful and important research and development in conservation issues. Places like Otari-Wilton's Bush, which does work on seed-banking, cross-pollination, and building resistance in kauri and swamp meryt to combat pathogens, has exciting opportunities for conservation around New Zealand. Currently, ex-situ work like this is mostly left to local councils and private industry.

National wants to encourage investment into ex-situ research and development in conservation.

## Recreation

Different parts of the conservation estate are subject to very different management practices, depending on the land designation. There are around 60 different categories, including National Parks, National Reserves, Scenic Reserves, Forest Parks, Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, and Stewardship Land.

National Parks, for example, are protected for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the public and, where consistent with conservation purposes, to foster use for tourism and recreation. Wilderness Areas, on the other hand, have very little human interaction to keep the land in its natural state.

New Zealanders independently recreate on the estate to varying degrees. Many people day walk, utilising our Great Walks or overnighing in huts, and mountain biking is growing in popularity as well as other adventure activities. Some hike for days using a bivvy and are self-reliant, and a strong hunting fraternity keeps active and puts food on the family table while directly contributing to pest control, hut management, and restoration. Our conservation estate is not solely about the protection and conservation of species but to celebrate in the New Zealand birthright to

enjoy the outdoors. National values recreation and its part in engaging people, communities, and stakeholders in conservation efforts. Enabling appropriate use of the conservation estate captures the hearts and minds of New Zealanders in the benefits of conservation as more than a nice to have.

Concessionaires play an important role on the estate. A concessionaire is someone who has a right to use parts of the conservation estate to enable appreciation of the environment via direct interactions with visitors who may not have the confidence to recreate on their own. Concessionaires create opportunities for visitors, educate, and engage them appropriately in nature while mitigating their adverse effects, create jobs for their communities, and generate wealth to be reinvested into conservation initiatives. It's a privilege to operate on the conservation estate, and as such, concessionaires should meet a minimum standard of delivery. As part of this, quality tourism which demands a premium should be the focus.

National proposes improving the delivery of visitor services and identification of recreational opportunities by Department of Conservation Rangers.

National proposes improving the Department of Conservation's capability to engage with, establish, and maintain good working relationships with key stakeholder groups.

National proposes to empower key stakeholder groups like the Game Animal Council and Fish & Game to better deliver their mandated role.

National wants to improve Department of Conservation Rangers' ability to develop relationships and better identify and offer concessionaire opportunities for recreation.

A proportion of concessionaire revenue generated from concession activity fees will be directly reinvested into core conservation projects.

Concessionaires will be expected to reinvest in the conservation estate by way of predator control, and/or advocacy.

When the Department of Conservation was formed in 1987, vast tracts of land without a label were classified as stewardship land. The idea was that land with good conservation value would be reclassified as a park or reserve, and land with limited value could be disposed of.

The Department of Conservation was charged with looking after stewardship land while a decision was made about what to do with it. However, the amount of stewardship land has increased over time as the Department of Conservation has acquired more land via tenure review, Crown purchase, or purchase by the Nature Heritage Fund. Stewardship land now makes up approximately 30 per cent of the conservation estate. The stewardship land classification was only ever meant to be a temporary measure. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has called for stewardship land to be reclassified entirely and the Federated Mountain Clubs has also called for this issue to be resolved with its Forgotten Lands campaign.

- National proposes setting targets and a deadline for the completion of the review of stewardship land.
- National proposes introducing a system of net conservation benefit for landscape acquisitions and disposals.

## Recognising the relationship between use and protection

National acknowledges protection and appropriate use goes hand in hand. We must better protect species on the land, acquire new representative landscapes, and enhance appropriate social and traditional activities in those areas.

Funding provided by the Tourism Infrastructure Fund and concessionaire activities is being invested into a more efficient management system to build essential facilities like toilets or shelters, and create opportunities for local communities to make a living. It's accepted many areas in the estate are dynamic and therefore the unique character of these places needs to be recognised, permitted, and enriched.

Not all protected areas are remote or wilderness. Many are front country areas with rich social histories and adjoining communities and industries.

National proposes looking at establishing a new National Park and will investigate establishing one in The Catlins.

National proposes amending the conservation policy and National Park Management Plans to enable more dynamic National Parks.

## Biosecurity

Biosecurity incursions are taken very seriously in New Zealand due to the sensitivities of our agricultural industries. However, it's arguable whether the same urgency exists regarding threats to our natural ecosystems and our conservation estate. The most recent threat is kauri dieback disease.



In response to the kauri dieback incursion we secured an extra \$26.5m for more hygiene stations, boardwalks, and scientific research.

Recent recommendations include the need for a more collaborative approach between the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Department of Conservation to tackle biosecurity incursions on the conservation estate. We believe this type of co-ordinated approach will help preserve the conservation estate.

Currently, the Ministry of Primary Industries is responsible for leading all biosecurity incursion operations. National will look at giving more responsibility on conservation threats to the Department of Conservation.

National proposes to increasing funding to Department of Conservation Rangers to lead biosecurity incursions where threats are of a conservation matter.



## Oceans

New Zealand's ocean environment is the fourth largest of any country and 18 times that of New Zealand's land mass. Critics argue the lack of integration in oceans management has led to a lack of meaningful protection for our protected ocean wildlife species and marine mammals. Little has been done to recognise and address the impact we have on ocean water quality and ecological health.

Currently, the Department of Conservation is responsible for managing 44 marine reserves established under the Marine Reserves Act 1971. Setting aside areas in our marine environment is vital to allow species to thrive, but the establishment and consultation processes to establish reserves has been widely criticised.

Other legislation provides marine protection, such as the Marine Mammals Protection Act, while commercial commercial fishing is overseen by the Ministry of Primary Industries and regulated by our quota management system.

The new Government is too compromised to make any meaningful progress on marine conservation issues. No new reserves are planned. The Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary has stalled. National's practical new initiative to require cameras on commercial fishing boats to reduce sea bird and dolphin deaths and to reduce fish dumping has been shelved by the new Government despite being required in Australia and the Pacific.

We need to rewrite the outdated Marine Reserves Act. It's vital for the future of New Zealand the combination of treaty issues, current property rights of the fishing industry, and a number of different ministries with ocean responsibilities does not compromise New Zealand's ability to raise the bar on the management of our marine environment.

- National proposes continuing its excellent record in marine reserve establishment by setting up three marine reserves in our first term, including in the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary.
- National proposes updating the Marine Reserves Act to make it fit for purpose with

regard to community engagement and allow for stakeholder conflict to be more easily overcome.

- National proposes creating a new oceans management policy and integrate it across all relevant ministries.
- National proposes implementing cameras on commercial fishing vessels in consultation with industry to reduce seabird and dolphin deaths and fish dumping.

### Case study Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary

In September 2015, the National Government announced the creation of the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary, one of the world's largest and most significant fully-protected areas. It would have preserved important habitats for thousands of species of fish and marine life.

The sanctuary will cover 15 per cent of New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone, an area twice the size of our landmass, and 50 times the size of our largest national park in Fiordland. It contains the world's longest underwater volcanic arc and the second deepest ocean trench at 10 kilometres deep.

Establishing the sanctuary will create a no-take, fully-protected zone preventing all fishing and mining in the area, adding to the protections already in place. The sanctuary stands alongside National's proud record of establishing 11 new marine reserves around New Zealand between 2011 and 2014.



## Biotechnology

"Science and innovation is so important to New Zealand's primary industries and environmental challenges that we cannot let it be held back by the previous century's restrictive rules on biotechnology. We need to update the law so protections are consistent with the latest science."

**Dr Parmjeet Parmar**

Spokesperson for Research, Science and Innovation

New Zealand is a biological economy with much of our wealth produced from growing plants like grass, fruit and trees and animals like sheep, cows, deer, and fish. Our quality of life is also very connected to nature and our unique wildlife. Our global success in primary industry and conservation protection work has depended on being leaders in the biological sciences, and we must ensure this continues into the future.

A problem we must address is New Zealand's law and regulation on biotechnology, which is now 20 years old. Gene technologies have changed rapidly and become much more precise. The risks are fewer and are now better understood. Consequently the current approach is too restrictive. New Zealand scientists have

had to revert to doing trials overseas. Our existing law is unenforceable with new gene editing techniques making it impossible for agencies to distinguish between genetically modified organisms and those developed from traditional breeding techniques.

Biotechnologies today provide real benefits in medicine, agriculture, and the environment. There are new vaccines and cancer treatments using genetically modified organisms. We import more than 70 varieties of genetically modified food ingredients from crops such as corn and soy beans. Crops have been developed that better survive drought, resist pests, and are more productive. Biotechnology is also offering solutions to difficult New Zealand environmental problems like wilding pines,



reducing nitrate leaching into waterways, reducing greenhouse gases from agriculture, and pest control to support National's 2050 predator free goal.

The Environment Protection Authority, which has responsibility for administering these outdated laws and regulations governing biotechnology use, has raised concerns about their practicality and effectiveness. The Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor and the Royal Society have also advocated reform.


National's approach to environmental issues is science-based. New Zealand being clean and green does not mean being opposed to the use of new technology. We need to modernise rules around biotechnology to allow its use where there are clear benefits and where it's safe.

## Case study

### Ag Research Ryegrass

AgResearch's High Metabolisable Energy ryegrass is not only resistant to drought but helped produce up to 23 per cent less methane from livestock, lower urinary nitrate leaching and lower emissions of another greenhouse gas, nitrous oxide. However, due to the prohibitive rules around GM trials in New Zealand, the AgResearch team has taken their research to America to trial.

National proposes updating New Zealand's restrictions on the use of biotechnologies in consultation with New Zealanders to bring them into line with the latest science.

A photograph of Simon Bridges, the National Party Leader, wearing a dark green raincoat with orange accents. He is looking slightly to the right with a slight smile. In the background, another person in a blue jacket is partially visible, and the background is a blurred green foliage.

"Kiwis have always trusted National with managing the economy. I want you to know you can trust us to care for our environment as well. We'll focus on cleaner water, protecting our fisheries, and on our native species and iconic places."

**Simon Bridges**  
National Party Leader  
Leader of the Opposition



## National's Environment Team 2019

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**Simon Bridges**  
National Party Leader

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**Scott Simpson**  
Spokesperson for the  
Environment

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**Sarah Dowie**  
Spokesperson for  
Conservation

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**Todd Muller**  
Spokesperson for  
Climate Change

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**Erica Stanford**  
Associate Spokesperson for  
the Environment

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**Dr Parmjeet Parmar**  
Spokesperson for Research,  
Science & Innovation

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# Feedback

## National vision

Please fill out the below (Feel free to add any additional comments) and post them to:

### FREEPOST PARLIAMENT

**Hon Scott Simpson**  
**Parliament Buildings**  
**Wellington**

Post to Parliament is free so you don't need to add a stamp. You can also visit [national.org.nz](http://national.org.nz) for an online version.

	Agree	Disagree
1. National proposes developing a comprehensive energy security policy to ensure we deal with both wet and dry years, as well as winter demand peaks, without significant costs to low and middle income New Zealanders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. National proposes to consider developing further robust incentives to encourage New Zealanders to take up renewable transport. National is open to all options – including subsidies for electric vehicles, increasing regulations on older, less efficient cars, and encouraging older cars to be scrapped.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. National proposes ensuring water quality measurement tools are consistent across the country, urban and rural, to give confidence to New Zealanders that the water they drink and where they swim is safe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. National proposes working with water stakeholders to put in place a new and more efficient allocation method for the resource.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. National proposes determining whether water management should be undertaken on a catchment by catchment basis, or if a national standards regime for measurement should be put in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. National proposes adopting the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's recommendations for the Overseer tool.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. National proposes setting a quality standard for coastal water and a timetable for regional councils to meet those standards. We'll also implement beach and quality standards/swimming standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. National proposes rewriting the Litter Act to make it fit for purpose. We'll strengthen enforcement mechanisms against people and businesses breaching provisions of both the Waste Minimisation Act and the Litter Act.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. National proposes introducing measures to see either by a container deposit scheme in association with existing kerbside and recycling programmes is introduced, or by the beverage sector itself be responsible for ensuring through initiatives they set up, that 90 per cent of beverage containers are saved from being sent to landfill.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. National proposes committing New Zealand to a nationwide zero avoidable waste timetable and target, and will work with communities and stakeholders to get those right.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Continue over page ➤

	Agree	Disagree
11. National proposes making sure the Department of Conservation remains an advocate for the best interests of the conservation estate and our iconic flora and fauna.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. National proposes encouraging investment into ex-situ research and development in conservation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. National proposes improving the delivery of visitor services and identification of recreational opportunities by Department of Conservation Rangers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. National proposes improving the Department of Conservation's capability to engage with, establish, and maintain good working relationships with key stakeholder groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. National proposes empowering key stakeholder groups like the Game Animal Council and Fish & Game to better deliver their mandated role.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. National proposes improving Department of Conservation Rangers' ability to develop relationships and better identify and offer concessionaire opportunities for recreation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. National proposes looking at establishing a new National Park and will investigate establishing one in The Catlins.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. National proposes amending the conservation policy and National Park Management Plans to enable more dynamic National Parks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. National proposes increasing funding to Department of Conservation Rangers to lead biosecurity incursions where threats are of a conservation matter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. National proposes updating New Zealand's restrictions on the use of biotechnologies in consultation with New Zealanders to bring them into line with the latest science.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:



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