

Submission to the Climate Change Commission Draft Report to Government



Religious Diversity Centre
Aotearoa New Zealand

The Religious Diversity Centre (the RDC) is a national Taonga. It is responsible for promoting among all people of Aotearoa New Zealand, those with religious commitment and those without, understanding, appreciation and respect for religious diversity visible and vibrant in our society.

Over half the New Zealand population belongs to a religious tradition with another proportion claiming a form of spirituality. Through faith, spirituality, and indeed secularity, we have the opportunity to care for creation in both a spiritual and practical sense and thus to become a powerful force for safeguarding our world for future generations.

The RDC is powerfully committed to playing our part determinedly as our religious traditions in their various ways urge us.

The sentiments in this submission indicate the kind of active commitments that exist already within religious communities.

The RDC shares the understanding expressed in the CCC Report “that all things are connected: the people, the land, the atmosphere, the oceans. This connectivity - material and non-material - is central to Te Ao Maori”.

Religious traditions also share that understanding. They share the sense that the natural world is sacred. They teach the importance of caring for the earth.

“Let us meditate upon Bhumi Devi, the one who provides everything for us. Let her bless us all with abundance.” *A Hindu mantra in which the earth is perceived as a mother, known as Bhumi Devi.*

“Verily in the heavens and the earth are signs for those who believe. And in the creation of your selves, and the fact that animals are scattered (through the earth), are signs for those of assured faith. And in the alternation of night and day, and that fact that Allah sends down sustenance from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the change of the winds, are signs for those who are wise” (*Qur’an, 45: 3-5*).

It is on this basis especially that:

1. The RDC urges the CCC to represent very strongly to Government the urgency of taking every action necessary to mitigate the extant threats of climate change to the entire earth.

The Prime Minister has already named the present situation an “emergency”. Her words capture the crisis and they demand a response commensurate with the threat which climate change surely poses to all future generations.

2. The RDC urges the CCC to represent very strongly to the New Zealand Government the urgency of its responsibility to the island nations of the Pacific especially those where sea level rise is undeniably linked to climate change. There needs also to be far greater equity sought and mutually agreed to in these relationships.
3. The RDC asks the CCC to recommend to Government that real support, consultation, information, funding, be made available to the different sectors in society as they grapple with their responses to the threats of climate change.