

Draft Climate Change policy

Consultation document

May 31, 2023

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Introduction

The New Zealand Law Society Te Kāhui Ture o Aotearoa (the Law Society) is seeking feedback on a draft Climate Change Policy. This policy is intended to help ensure the Law Society joins national and international climate change efforts and assist and prepare the profession for climate change implications in their legal practice.

We want your feedback

The consultation period runs until **Friday 4 August 2023**. Submissions and feedback to consultation@lawsociety.org.nz

All feedback you provide will be treated as confidential. At the end of the consultation process, we will prepare a summary of the responses received, but no individual contributors will be identified.

Draft Climate Change policy proposal

Purpose

1. This Policy is intended to help ensure the Law Society joins national and international climate change efforts in line with the Climate Change Response Act 2002 (the Act). This includes:
 - a. Setting out the Law Society's position on the principles that should inform the role and development of the law, the role of the legal profession, legal education and legal practice; and
 - b. Ensuring the legal implications of climate change (generally and for the legal profession) are well understood.

Policy

2. The Law Society acknowledges the far-reaching consequences of climate change nationally and internationally. It seeks to:
 - a. Consider climate change implications when reviewing policy and legislation in its law reform and advocacy role;
 - b. Operate in a climate change conscious manner by developing plans and taking action to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change in line with the objectives of the Act;
 - c. Urge lawyers and law firms to operate in a climate conscious manner and equip them to consider and advise on the likely legal impacts of climate change (always in a way that is compatible with their professional duties and the administration of justice);
 - d. Support lawyers to be fully informed on climate change and how they might act to mitigate it by providing information and guidance (including educational tools and resources) aimed at:

- i. informing lawyers and law firms on how to operate in a climate conscious manner; and
- ii. supporting lawyers to incorporate into their daily practice advice on the impacts of climate change.
- e. Engage with others for the greatest impact in addressing climate change, including international professional bodies.

Background to this consultation

New Zealand's [Climate Change Response Act 2002](#) sets the goal for the country to reduce its net carbon emissions by 50 per cent below 2005 gross emissions for the period 2021-30, with the public sector aiming to be carbon neutral by 2025. There is a body of government policy and legislation aimed at meeting that target. Even where there is no legal requirement to do so, there is a growing expectation that businesses and organisations such as the Law Society join the efforts and reduce their own carbon emissions and adapt to the inevitable effects climate change. There is global awareness of climate change and a growing sense of urgency.¹

We have engaged in a number of international hui and significant guidance and resources are being developed internationally, which we will be able to draw from. The draft climate change policy was modelled off the [climate change resolution](#) of the Law Society of England and Wales and the Law Council of Australia's [Climate Change Policy](#).

¹ Under the [Paris Agreement](#) the global community committed to keep the increase in global warming to below to 2°Celsius.