MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

Education Report: Climate change and the curriculum

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	27 September 2021	**Priority:**	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	**METIS No:**	1272054
Drafter:	Anya Pollock	**DDI:**	9(2)(a)
Key Contact:	Pauline Cleaver	**DDI:**	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	**Round Robin:**	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to note the current curriculum supports for climate change education and how these will be strengthened through the current work programme. It seeks your direction on whether you would like us to investigate options to amplify these supports to strengthen the curriculum contribution to the Emissions Reduction Plan.

Summary

1 The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) is currently working on advice for the Government's Emissions Reduction Plan. We have prepared draft text on the early learning and schooling curriculum for inclusion in the Emissions Reduction Plan and provided it to MfE. This is attached for your visibility as Annex 1.

2 We can achieve some strengthening of climate change education across the national curriculum and supports for teaching and learning along the pathways through current funding. This will, however, be constrained and if a big push is wanted then additional funding would need to be secured. We have identified three areas where additional investment could be beneficial which we can explore further if you would like:

a. Developing a greater range of new and expanded resources

b. Initiatives that increase ākonga access to a range of rich experiences

c. Supports for kaiako and teachers to connect with each other and grow their confidence.

Proactively Released

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. **Note** the draft material we have provided to the Ministry for the Environment for the Emissions Reduction Plan (refer Annex 1).

b. **Note** that curriculum supports for environmental education, including climate change, will be strengthened over the next few years through the curriculum work programme, but will be constrained by available funding and other demands across the curriculum.

9(2)(f)(iv)

[redacted]

9(2)(f)(iv)

[redacted]

f. **Agree** not to proactively release this report at this time.

Agree / Disagree

Pleased

Pauline Cleaver
Associate Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement

27/09/2021

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

10/10/2021

Proactively Released

Background

1. The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) is currently working on advice for the Government's Emissions Reduction Plan. You have asked us to provide a contribution to the draft plan, focussed on the opportunities to strengthen climate change related teaching and learning. This paper:

    a. Provides an overview of current supports and work already planned, which are reflected in the draft material we have provide to MfE (Annex 1).

    b. Identifies options to amplify our contribution if funding was available.

2. In relation to the education system contribution to reducing emissions, outside of your portfolio responsibilities, we also:

    a. Are working with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to provide material for the Emissions Reduction Plan on how the Reforms of Vocational Education will create a collaborative dynamic resulting in training that provides the required underpinning skills to enable workers to adapt and upskill within a low-emission environment and build a more responsive training system. This will inform the chapter that is being led by MBIE around creating a more equitable transition and minimising disruption to the labour market.

    b. Have recently finalised our Environmental Action Plan (EAP) for School Property. The actions we're taking through the EAP are a central part of how we will respond to the requirements of the governments Carbon Neutral Government Programme and the Building for Climate Change programme.

3. We have also recently contributed actions for the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (based on our current work programme), and we have been asked for a contribution to the National Adaptation Plan for responding to climate change. From a teaching and learning perspective, there are overlaps in the curriculum response to all of these. We will be working on an integrated approach that makes sense within the context of the national curriculum, while also ensuring that the particular lenses and needs of these different government documents are visibly attended to.

Current supports and work already planned

4. We have prepared draft text on the early learning and schooling curricula for inclusion in the Emissions Reduction Plan and provided it to MfE. This is attached for your visibility as Annex 1. Note that MfE expect that the content will iterate as they bring together the contributions of different agencies and think about how the Emissions Reduction Plan can be most effectively structured and written.

5. Our curriculum contribution describes what is already in place, highlights the leadership and action we are already seeing from our rangatahi, and makes clear that learning relevant to climate change and caring for Te Mana o Te Taiao will be incorporated as we progress the Te Whāriki implementation supports, the New Zealand Curriculum (the NZC) and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMoA) refresh and NCEA changes.

6. Our aspiration is that all ākonga leave schooling as lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected to the land and environment as well as to societies and communities, and who are actively involved to secure a sustainable social, cultural, economic and environmental future. This means our general focus on strengthening teaching and learning through the establishment of Te Poutāhū, the curriculum centre

Proactively Released

will equip ākonga with the knowledge, skills, and capabilities to make a positive contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

7. In terms of the redesign of TMoA, one of the overarching principles of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* is, 'Ko te Oranga Taiao, He Oranga Tangata – environmental health is personal health', and it is woven through several wāhanga ako. We expect te taiao to continue to be a core principle of a redesigned *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and integral in marau ā-kura that support Māori students in their own world and to connect students purposefully towards contributing to a sustainable environment. Final decisions about how te taiao will be incorporated into *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* will be confirmed through the redesign work, and be taken in partnership with whānau, hapū and iwi.

8. In terms of the refresh of the NZC, you will have noticed that the draft vision led by the Ministerial Youth Advisory Group includes a strong focus on collective wellbeing and responsibility, and that they are clear that they want the curriculum to grow them as kaitiaki of our environment [METIS 1267995 refers]. This supports the goals across the wider environmental portfolio, including in relation to climate change, and its prominence in the draft vision will influence the refresh of the learning areas.

9. We will be including the 'big ideas' that matter for kaitiakitanga within the Understand, Know, Do content model as we refresh the NZC learning areas. This is particularly visible in the draft Social Science content. For example, within the big 'Understand' idea of "Relationships and connections between people, across boundaries and with the environment have shaped societies.", within the 'Know' contexts of "Place and the environment" and "Economic Activity, and across the 'Do' practices which inform social decisions and actions by ākonga.

10. Environmental and climate change contexts will also be explicitly included within the key questions and learning experiences across the curriculum. For example, the Aotearoa New Zealand's histories curriculum content includes climate change advocacy as a learning experience example in relation to Aotearoa New Zealand's relationships with Pacific states. There are also a number of contexts which point to the history of our environment and our relationship with it. There are many more examples in the draft Social Science content [METIS 1267995 refers] and this approach will continue as we refresh the remaining learning areas.

11. Because we are strengthening the visibility of climate change in the refreshed NZC, this will flow through to our resources and supports when we review, update and extend them as part of the refresh and the shift to the Online Curriculum Hub. This could also flow through to other supports, such as programmes offered as part of Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom.

12. As part of the NCEA changes, for ākonga learning through TMoA this kaupapa will be woven through every and possibly all wāhanga ako in some shape or form. For ākonga learning through the NZC, themes of environmental sustainability and environmental concepts will appear in a number of subjects and, in addition, the new Environments and Societies secondary subject will refocus and enhance the existing Education for Sustainability subject. Engagement with Māori worldviews will also feature, especially in subjects like Environment and Societies, Geography, Earth and Space Science and Agribusiness, where comparing and contrasting approaches are likely to feature.

13. Similarly, we will look for opportunities to continue to provide resources that prompt children's engagement and enjoyment of science and climate change learning in the early years as part of strengthening our supports that help kaiako bring *Te Whāriki* alive for their mokopuna.

Proactively Released

Proactively Released

c. 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]

Risks

18. We are confident that our curriculum work programme will help to strengthen teaching and learning that is relevant to climate change, and wider environmental strategies and plans. There is a risk that without further investment we will be perceived as not having done enough. This is because this work will be occurring in the context of needing to strengthen supports across the whole curriculum, and we are managing a range of demands to include different foci. We will mitigate this risk by working with environmental agencies as we progress the refresh and looking for opportunities that integrate learning from across the curriculum.

Financial Implications

19. There are no immediate financial implications from this paper. [redacted]

Proactively Released

Proactive Release

20. We recommend that this Education Report is not released at this time 9(2)(f)(iv)

Annexes

Annex 1: Draft text for inclusion in Emissions Reduction Plan provided to MfE

Proactively Released

Annex 1: Draft text for inclusion in Emissions Reduction Plan provided to MfE

The Ministry of Education supports early learning services, schools and kura to integrate learning about climate change into their local curriculum and marau ā-kura. This includes learning which helps ākonga grow their understanding of climate change, as well as knowledge, skills and capabilities to respond to climate change and take action to reduce emissions. A range of supports are already available. This includes sustainability having prominence in the national curriculum, a range of teaching and learning resources on the Ministry of Education's Te Whāriki Online, Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) and Kauwhata Reo websites (eg *Climate Change: Prepare today, live well tomorrow* and *Pūtātara: A call to action*), and supports for kaiako and teachers in kura and schools to connect with each other and grow their confidence delivering environmental education, including through the Blake Inspire for Teachers programme and supporting the New Zealand Association of Environmental Education Network of Expertise.

The leadership and action we are seeing from our rangatahi on climate change are testament to the priority already given to climate change related teaching and learning by our early learning services, schools and kura, in partnership with their local communities. We are conscious, however, that worries about climate change can impact on ākonga wellbeing. New curriculum leads are working regionally with teachers and kaiako to strengthen the focus on wellbeing in their local curriculum and marau ā-kura, and new mental health education guidelines for schools and kura will be released during 2022. Climate Change: Prepare today, live well tomorrow also includes a wellbeing guide.

To support our kaiako and teachers to strengthen the climate change related teaching and learning opportunities for ākonga, the Ministry of Education is incorporating learning that is important for respecting and caring for Te Mana o te Taiao as part of the refresh the national curriculum for schooling (The New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa) and changes to NCEA. This includes mana ōrite mō te mātauranga Māori and describing climate change and emissions reduction contexts for learning within the national curriculum for schooling. In secondary schools, Environments and Societies will become a new secondary subject that schools can choose to offer for NCEA.

More generally, the Ministry of Education has a focus on strengthening curriculum, teaching and learning through the establishment of Te Poutāhū, the curriculum centre. This will contribute to all ākonga making progress in the knowledge, skills, and capabilities that will see them leave schooling as lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected to the land and environment as well as to societies and communities, and who are actively involved to secure a sustainable social, cultural, economic and environmental future. As curriculum resources and supports available to help early learning services, schools and kura are strengthened and expanded, there will be a focus on supporting climate change related teaching and learning, and supporting kaiako and teachers to work in partnership with communities and mana whenua to provide teaching and learning that connects to local environments and supports ākonga progress in learning that matters for Te Mana o te Taiao.

Proactively Released