

MEDIA RELEASE
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Health groups call for fast, fair climate action

Health groups have come out today in an editorial in the New Zealand Medical Journal, highlighting serious health disparities as a result of climate change. They state that urgent action, based on a fair approach to reducing global climate emissions, is essential for health and equity.

The editorial was written by Dr Scott Metcalfe, for the New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine and OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council.

“It is unfair that poor countries, who have contributed the least to climate change, are being affected first and worst,” says Dr Rhys Jones, co-convenor of OraTaiao and fellow of the NZ College of Public Health Medicine.

This unfair situation extends to New Zealand, where the most vulnerable households will be hit earliest and hardest. “Unless we do something dramatic to address disparities, Māori, Pacific peoples, children, older people and low income households will bear the brunt of the health impacts of climate change,” says Dr Jones.

Dr Jones says that New Zealand, as a developed country and a high emitter, needs to walk the talk at the upcoming international climate negotiations in Paris. “The emissions reduction target New Zealand will be taking to Paris falls well short of what is required to do our fair share. If most countries followed New Zealand’s approach, global warming would exceed 3–4°C –double the internationally agreed limit.”

“Joining the global team by taking real action now that’s fair gives enormous health opportunities – including for the most disadvantaged groups in New Zealand and globally,” says Dr Jones.

The New Zealand Medical Journal editorial is freely available [online](#).

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Dr Rhys Jones (Ngāti Kahungunu) (rg.jones@auckland.ac.nz) is a Public Health Physician and Senior Lecturer at the University of Auckland, and Co-convenor of OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council.

Background

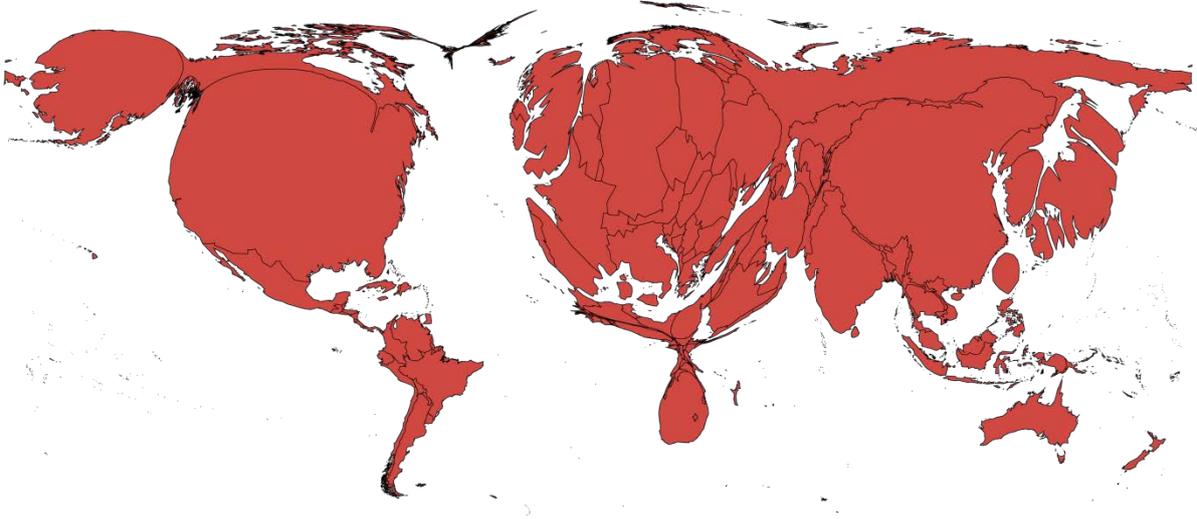
OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council are health professionals concerned with climate change as a serious public health threat. They also promote the positive health gains that can be achieved through action to address climate change. See: www.orataiao.org.nz

Today's NZ Medical Journal editorial is at: <https://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/read-the-journal/all-issues/2010-2019/2015/vol-128-no-1425-20-november-2015/6741>

Previous NZ Medical Journal editorial is at: <https://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/read-the-journal/all-issues/2010-2019/2015/vol-128-no-1415/6544>

The climate gap: those who have emitted most vs. those impacted first and worst

1. Cumulative fossil CO₂ emissions, 1950-2013



2. Additional deaths attributable to climate change from five climate-sensitive consequences, 2030

