

How to inspire New Zealanders to tackle climate change



RESEARCH

‘The interplay between knowledge, perceived efficacy, and concern about global warming and climate change: A one-year longitudinal study’

by Dr. Taciano Milfont (2012)

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Background

Scientific evidence suggests that global warming and climate change are real, and rapid action is necessary to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming.

New Zealand requires political leadership and widespread public support to achieve these goals. The challenge is how to motivate New Zealanders to take action.

The Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research, part of Victoria University of Wellington, undertook a study about how to inspire New Zealanders to tackle climate change.

Main research findings

Greater knowledge about global warming and climate change leads to higher concern about their inherent risks.

This greater level of concern leads to the belief that a person can act as an individual to improve the issue.

Concern makes someone who already has knowledge about the problem feel greater responsibility to personally take action and strengthen their belief that they can address the issue.

Unfortunately, increased knowledge about global warming and climate change does not necessarily lead to behavioural change.

It is important the public is informed about what kind of mitigating action has the greatest positive effect on global warming and climate change.

Relevance of findings to New Zealand

The findings suggest that for New Zealand to maintain its ‘clean, green image’, New Zealand businesses need to differentiate themselves as leaders in preventing climate change.

New Zealand businesses can do this by promoting how they are reducing global warming, and how individuals purchasing their products or services can take action and contribute.

Government agencies running campaigns to address climate change need to disseminate action-related knowledge about how to tackle the issue.

General information does not lead to behavioural change, even if it raises the level of concern. Clear instructions about what people can do as individuals to address climate change and global warming is necessary.