

UCLA

Electronic Green Journal

Title

Review: Carbon Neutral by 2020. How New Zealanders Can Tackle Climate Change
edited by Nikke Harre and Quentin D. Atkinson

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2j14869f>

Journal

Electronic Green Journal, 1(27)

Author

Milfont, Taciano L.

Publication Date

2008

DOI

10.5070/G312710772

Peer reviewed

Review: Carbon Neutral by 2020. How New Zealanders Can Tackle Climate Change
Niki Harré and Quentin D. Atkinson (Eds.)

Reviewed by Taciano L. Milfont
Victoria University of Wellington & Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, New Zealand

Harré, Niki and Atkinson, Quentin D. (Eds.) *Carbon Neutral by 2020. How New Zealanders Can Tackle Climate Change*. Wellington, New Zealand: Craig Potton Publishing, 2007. 310pp. ISBN 978-1-877333-69-9. NZ\$35.00, paper.

The inconsistencies between New Zealand's clean green image and its low sustainability practices are addressed in *Carbon Neutral by 2020. How New Zealanders Can Tackle Climate Change*, edited by psychologists Niki Harré and Quentin D. Atkinson. The book heeds the Prime Minister's call to New Zealand to be carbon neutral.

Carbon Neutral by 2020 prompts discussion on the timely and topical issue of climate change, and was written by 25 contributors from a variety of backgrounds (e.g., psychologists, lawyers, architects, environmental educators, and entrepreneurs). The book is divided into 16 chapters, besides the appendices and index, with each chapter devoted to a specific theme related to climate change, including housing, food production, design, transport, technology, legislation, business, and political activism.

A very remarkable feature of the book is the way in which each chapter opens with the author's perception of the current situation, their vision for 2020, and strategies to achieve that vision. This approach not only assists with the organization of the chapters, but also helps the reader to visualize practical alternatives for addressing issues on climate change.

Another important characteristic of the book is the way in which it deliberately highlights the pioneering nature that characterizes much of New Zealand society. New Zealanders are challenged to draw on this aspect of their national psyche to tackle carbon neutrality. As expressed by the editors, "Imagine living in a country united by an effort to protect the planet for future generations" (p. 8). The vision here is to unify New Zealanders into leading the world on sustainability by being the world's first carbon-neutral country. A positive response to this challenge was taken up by the publisher who explains in the appendices how they attempted to minimize the CO₂ emissions in the production and distribution of *Carbon Neutral by 2020*.

While more attention to some of the structural details and final editing would have undoubtedly improved it, most readers are likely to see beyond these to the content which is both relevant and informative. The style of writing makes *Carbon Neutral by 2020* accessible to a wide audience/readership, but particularly for anyone seriously interested in environmental issues and climate change.

Carbon Neutral by 2020 was meant to provide New Zealanders with tools for tackling climate change but it does much more. It provides a pioneering initiative that should be followed by individuals from other countries. It is therefore highly recommended for anyone attempting to understand how as humans we need to change our behaviour to address the carbon-neutral challenge, and in doing so help to solve some of the major environmental problems of the world. Recommended for general and academic library collections.

Taciano L. Milfont, Ph.D. <taciano.milfont@vuw.ac.nz>, Lecturer in Cross-Cultural Psychology, School of Psychology & Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand. TEL: +64-4-463-6398.