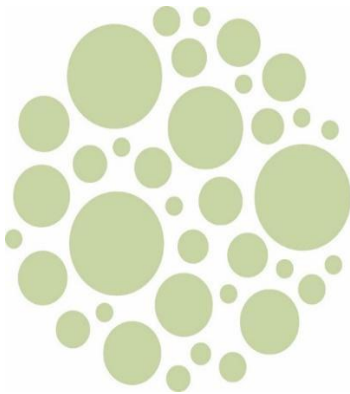


# **Sustainability Plan**

2020 – 2025

*Version: 15 May 2020*



NEW ZEALAND  
ECOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY



## The New Zealand Ecological Society's Sustainability Statement

The New Zealand Ecological Society (NZES) views strong sustainability as an issue of paramount importance. We strive to operate as a sustainable entity, respecting both planetary and social boundaries. We acknowledge that the current dominant economic model of growth without limits and measurement of success using GDP is not adequate for humans and nature to prosper long-term.

We acknowledge the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [2018 Special Report](#) on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and its call for large, immediate and unprecedented global efforts to avoid and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve net-zero-emissions by mid-century. We also acknowledge the key messages of the [Report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), including: '*Nature can be conserved, restored and used sustainably while other global societal goals are simultaneously met through urgent and concerted efforts fostering transformative change*'.

We feel it is our duty to reach beyond the current legal and regulatory requirements to be leaders in sustainable practice. We are committed to supporting NZES members and Aotearoa New Zealand society more broadly in making sustainable decisions in environmental (i.e. ecological), economic, and social contexts. We recognise these three systems are intertwined.

### We define sustainability as

*The ability to sustain a full range of systems: [environmental](#), [economic](#) and [social](#), indefinitely.*

*(Web links in coloured font below define in greater detail.)*

- [Environmental sustainability](#) is the ability to maintain rates of renewable resource harvest and pollution creation that can be continued indefinitely. It also includes development of renewable substitutes for non-renewable resource depletion
- [Economic sustainability](#) is the ability to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely.
- [Social sustainability](#) is the ability of a social system, at any level, such as a community or a country, to function at a defined level of social and cultural wellbeing indefinitely.



## We will focus on four key steps towards being sustainable:

- i. *Reduce the carbon footprint of our activities to net zero carbon, and encourage our members to do likewise*
- ii. *Be an example of and advocate for ecologically/environmentally sustainable practices*
- iii. *Encourage the social engagement and wellbeing of our members*
- iv. *Be good stewards of our finances*



## To achieve these four steps we will:

- i. **Reduce our carbon footprint to net zero carbon:** Aim to avoid generating greenhouse gas emissions, and offset unavoidable emissions. Ways to accomplish this in the context of the NZES may include:
  - a. Minimise air and car travel and instead use remote meeting methods whenever possible, including for council and the annual conference.
  - b. Eliminate meat from catered food consumption and instead support alternatives, particularly vegetarian/vegan.
  - c. Minimise use of paper by going digital and otherwise using recycled/recyclable eco-friendly office supplies.
  - d. Follow best practice for carbon off-setting, e.g. use electric vehicles and pay to offset unavoidable flights when booking, or via accredited certification schemes<sup>1</sup>.
  - e. Maintain a Conference Sustainability Guide available for conference organisers.
  - f. Encourage our members to become net carbon zero by providing tools and guidelines to reach this goal.
  - g. Conduct regular and repeatable carbon audits, using similar societies as benchmarks (e.g. online carbon audit websites or <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-certifications/>)
  - h. Upon future reviews of this plan, consider becoming a climate positive organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> For example: <https://ekos.org.nz/>; <https://calculators.enviro-mark.com/public?calculator=travel>; <https://millionmetres.org.nz/>; <https://www.treesthatcount.co.nz/>; <https://ekos.org.nz/>

**ii. Advocate for ecologically/environmentally sustainable practices:**

- a. When opportunities arise, we will make public submissions on policy or support our members to do so, including in collaboration with our overseas ecological society counterparts. These will align with sustainability as defined in our sustainability statement and include a specific focus on supporting native biodiversity where possible.
- b. We will use our voice through social media, our newsletter, and our website to share information on sustainable practices (like carbon reduction) with the public and our members.
- c. We encourage members who are not also members of the Royal Society of New Zealand and/or the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand to abide by the sustainability provisions of the codes of ethics and professional standards of those two organisations<sup>2</sup>.

**iii. Encourage the social engagement and wellbeing of our members**

- a. We will create opportunities for our members to adopt and encourage others to adopt sustainable practices and feel empowered to promote the earth's sustainable future.
- b. We will consider social equity ramifications during sustainability action implementation, especially in regard to social engagements (e.g. reducing carbon footprint by choosing remote meetings/conferences may reduce networking opportunities for early-career researchers).

**iv. Be good stewards of our finances:**

- a. Ensure investment of NZES funds is ethical, excluding fossil fuel exploration, exploitation or activities that promote the use of fossil fuels and any other activities promoting environmental or social degradation.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://royalsociety.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Code-of-Prof-Stds-and-Ethics-1-Jan-2019-web.pdf>;  
<https://www.eianz.org/document/item/2672>



## Monitoring, Reporting and Adaptation

- We will monitor our activities and outcomes via a genuine progress indicator (to be identified by Sustainability Officer) to see that we are achieving what we aimed for. This process will be embedded into the annual review of the NZES Strategic Plan. We will review the above four steps to sustainability to ensure our progress in fulfilling them and adapting as necessary.
- We will communicate our progress to our members through appropriate channels (our newsletter, social media and emails) and use their feedback to inform and adapt the sustainability plan.
- The NZES Council is responsible for ensuring this plan is implemented, and have therefore created a Sustainability Officer *ex officio* role which the council will appoint someone to fill. The Sustainability Officer will be responsible for supporting implementation of the key steps identified here. All others engaged by or employed by the NZES are encouraged to support the key steps outlined here.

### Acknowledgements

*The NZES council thanks the working group who drafted this plan: Dr. Kiri Joy Wallace, Sir Alan Mark, and Fred Overmars. We also thank the British Ecological Society, who shared documentation regarding similar environmental and sustainability initiatives, NZES members who provided feedback on drafts, and those who have provided the website resources we have linked to within this document.*