



Mission Zero

Businesses in Marlborough are struggling with climate change – due to complexities and confusion. There is will and capability in the community, the challenge is how do we bring this together to have a good transition to a low carbon economy.

Your vision in the Wellbeing Strategy is *‘For Marlborough to have a thriving economy balanced with a flourishing environment and vibrant communities’*. For this to be achieved, businesses in the region need support to transition to a low carbon economy.

Mission Zero a new initiative launched in 2022 by Businesses for Climate Action Trust, bringing together local businesses on the journey to decarbonise the economy. The initiative focuses on increasing businesses capability and collaboration (knowledge, tools, skills and networks), which creates huge value and resilience across the region.

The Marlborough Chamber of Commerce is supporting this initiative, helping to tailor key impact programmes specifically for Marlborough businesses. Council can support by enabling some workshops and a climate leaders programme.

Businesses want this support and are happy to contribute to its success. Council support will help unlock this potential in Marlborough.

A 90 second video for mission zero can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/681182380>

Background

Mission Zero is a new initiative of Businesses for Climate Action. It builds on our first 18-months of activities where we reached over 6,000 people. Businesses for Climate Action was recognised for this effort, being awarded the Communicating for Impact Award at the 2021 Sustainable Business Awards.

The funding would support ‘carbon coaching’ and a Climate Leaders Programme unique to Marlborough.

The Problem

For many of us, the issues around climate change are big, confusing and complex. This is on top of the already urgent, complex issues of our daily business. We often face competing demands, resource constraints and evolving risks (climate change being only one of many).

With a longer-term horizon for impact, climate actions are often pushed back until either the solutions are easy (understandable, achievable and viable) or the demand too great (regulatory or commercial). This results in risks and costs continuing to increase unmanaged, as well as competitive edge opportunities being lost.



The problem with the current business landscape for carbon reduction solutions is that it requires knowing exactly what you are looking for. To find that needle in a haystack, businesses must first have a detailed understanding of their climate exposure risk, their product and marketing opportunities and likely tap into highly specific staff capabilities.

Our businesses in Te Taihū have expressed an appetite and willingness to build a collaborative, climate resilient economy. Receipt of the 2021 SBN award for Communicating for Impact reflects the community's openness to these key messages.

The Te Taihū Intergenerational Strategy also demonstrates the connectivity and responsibilities we share; as we reduce emissions across the economy, we add value to our businesses, community and environment.

However, most businesses, especially SMEs, are largely left to their own devices to figure out what to do next. Many lack the level of climate savviness needed to navigate the current market. There is no existing mechanism to coordinate and drive the necessary individual and collaborative actions required.

The Solution

The world's climate challenges are great, and they cannot be solved without unleashing the vast human, financial, and innovative resources of business. And that takes deliberate and coordinated effort.

Carbon Coach

Mission Zero acts as a 'carbon coach', connecting businesses with the knowledge, tools, skills, networks and collaborations they need to measure, reduce and benefit from taking climate action. We do this through our conversation and coaching catalogue (Mission InSights), 1-1 support, and regional impact projects. We host a Climate Leaders Programme and work closely with our regional organisations to attract investments in community level solutions.

The modular design of the initiative means each component can be targeted at specific sub-sections of the economy, such as the Focus Sectors from the Wellbeing Strategy.

Climate Leaders Programme

We are a few months into our first Climate Leaders Programme cohort in Nelson. This programme brings together about a dozen individuals from different businesses to work on their own climate project while receiving industry leading professional development as well as support for their project.

Projects need to have a regional benefit and the present cohort are looking at projects such as: how can our lawyers and accountants give better climate advice, how as a region we can reduce product packaging, and helping architects reduce the climate impacts of their work.

Those on the programme meet monthly for 10 months.



In Kind Support from Businesses

A key part of the solution is the support we are harnessing from businesses. Work is often offered for free or at wholesale rates – for example, last year we had over 2,500 voluntary hours. Businesses want this support and are happy to contribute to its success.

Success Metrics

Navigation: Through our onboarding technology, we can see the number of businesses that engage with us and if they progress on their carbon reduction journey.

Incubation: Success through our project-based leadership development programme can be measured in terms of projects initiated, membership in each cohort and the volunteer hours provided by our professional mentors.

Amplification: Our free, open source/open access model is intentionally designed for other regions and organisations to be able to adopt, enhance and re-purpose. We see Te Taihupo not as the leader to follow, but the pilot to build upon. Uptake of our actions by others is a key indicator of success.

Regional emission reduction: StatsNZ emissions data is used to track reductions on a regional economy level.

Our Differentiator

We aren't interested in telling people what they should do. We are here to enable what they can do now.

We focus on what is achievable and viable for an individual business at each step in the journey (the 'Circle of Control'), while building an enabling and action-oriented culture around it.

We believe that becoming a zero-carbon economy does not mean being perfect or doing everything at once. Our approach is therefore to galvanise and equip both individual businesses and regional initiatives to get going now, enabling them as they take step after step on their journey towards a climate positive future. In doing so, we generate a resilient economy that supports our people, places, community and businesses to thrive.

From an individual business perspective some of us have a long way to go and many of us have limited resourcing. But it doesn't mean we all must wait to act. Every single business can do something. The goal of Mission Zero is to connect that business with that 'something'.

Our free, open source and open access approach supports a just and inclusive transition for all businesses. (However, that does mean financial support is required from community partners to deliver on this wellbeing priority.)



When we take an intergenerational, whole region approach (rather than thinking every business must work in isolation to achieve zero), we can see how millions of single steps guide us collectively towards a climate positive region.

Target Audience

Our target audience is in ownership, executive and operational roles in businesses across Te Taihū, from individual farmers and growers to the COOs of our biggest emitters. We would like to offer more in Marlborough, hence the request for your support.

Most of our target audience are already subscribers to communications from our initiative partners, so we also tap into these to distribute our key messaging. In the Nelson region, we already work closely with the Council, Chamber of Commerce, Regional Economic Development Agency, national government agencies and sector bodies.

Most businesses are aware of their carbon reduction responsibility but vary on how much action they have taken to reduce their emissions so far. They may feel lonely or confused due to the complexity of what they find when they 'google'. They are looking for clarity and simplicity. They do want to reduce their footprint, but it must be done in an achievable, viable way.

Our messaging is optimistic, people focused and brings to life our ability to play a role in a thriving, climate positive future for Te Taihū.

Our customer experience attributes are;

- frictionless experiences (ensuring a seamless journey),
- people-centric communication (ensuring human connection) and
- meet-me-where-I-am approach (ensuring relevant context AND content no matter where the business is on their carbon reduction journey).

Our early adopters are those that have had good intentions but lack of resourcing to figure out how to take their next step (due to time, financial or capability constraints). Our goal is to remove that one barrier for them so they can become fast movers.

Once a business is onboard, we have tailored correspondence to focus on how they take 'the next step' (wherever they are on their carbon reduction journey).

Future Revenue/Funding Streams

Businesses for Climate Action was launched in April 2020 and set up as a Charitable Trust in December 2021. We currently have three-year seed funding from Nelson City Council.

Services are largely provided at wholesale or highly subsidised rates, including a part-time Chief Action Officer who is responsible for coordinating the initiative. Business leadership



provided to project work and professional development programmes is currently unpaid. Volunteer time last year was estimated at over 2,500 hours.

Each project we facilitate has a bespoke business model and funding arrangement (which may be direct from the sponsor company, through targeted funds like the Plastics Innovation Fund, or private donations). Campaigns are currently funded through targeted donations from local businesses. We also actively pursue efforts in kind, including advertisements and amplifications. We provide sponsorship opportunities for Mission InSights, tutorials, webinars and workshops. Contributors (like those being interviewed or presenting) are unpaid.

Any contributions (funding, donations and discounts) secured beyond our current commitments will not determine whether we exist or not. Funding ultimately determines just how far we can go and how fast we can get there.

Our present major funder is Nelson City Council, focusing our efforts in this city.

Funding Ask

We are seeking funding for \$50,000 over two years to enable;

- Carbon coaching (hosting Carbon & Coffee sessions, developing online how-to webinars, facilitating in person workshops): \$15,000/year
- Climate Leaders Programme: \$10,000/year

The funds would cover a local contractor to administer and facilitate tailored coaching and leadership programmes for Marlborough. We are currently seeking separate funding for overhead, technology, campaign and communication costs.

Council Value

Through supporting Mission Zero, MDC helps businesses build economic resilience in the face of climate change and make progress towards emissions reduction targets.

‘For Marlborough to have a thriving economy balanced with a flourishing environment and vibrant communities’...we need to have a good transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy.

Businesses want this support and are happy to contribute to its success. Council support will help unlock this potential in Marlborough.