For Immediate Release

**Maori Climate Commissioner criticizes Shaw’s Interim Climate Change Committee for lack of focus**

Maori Climate Commissioner Donna Awatere Huata has challenged the Interim Climate Committee established by Hon. James Shaw for treating Maori concerns in a superficial fashion.

“I have heard many anxieties expressed from Maori and other community leaders in rural New Zealand about the costs and the distributional impact of the proposed 2050 climate zero target.

“Maori leadership are aware of the importance of our international reputation In matters of trade and sustainability. These considerations however have to be linked to ensuring whanau, hapu and iwi are not stranded because of the heavy economic burden that could fall on their communities,” she said.

“The Interim Climate Change Committee does not seem to have taken into account, the costs and complexity for rural communities in the carbon transition. We understand they are working towards a package of ideas to assist the future permanent Climate Change Commission to develop carbon budgets. However the practical challenges of local economic adjustment must not be fudged. This policy area has been driven by too many global speeches, and the Maori perspectives on the ground and in the household needs to be addressed.

“Whilst its true we have international responsibilities, Maori are acutely aware that they will bear the brunt of substantial land changes. This is a great issue of equity. Many tribes have only just recovered the ownership of their land estates through the Treaty of Waitangi process. Now they will be required to undergo significant disruption and associated costs.

“It is essential that Minister Shaw does not allow his ambition for 2050 to be disconnected from the realities of genuine rural hardship for those who will pay the costs. The volume of bad news locally arising from downplaying domestic cost pressures will drown out any international benefits to New Zealand.

“It is essential that the Government gives clear signals over the critical issues of carbon pricing, transitional packages for rural industries, methane targets and sectoral impacts. Maori have a fear that the language of global aspiration is hiding the facts and figures of transition. The lack of engagement and resulting uncertainty will do tremendous damage to the Government’s relationship with Maori.

“For example, I wonder how much exposure has the Hon. Kelvin Davis in his Te Arawhiti role actually had in relation to the burden which will fall on the Maori asset base.”

“Minister Shaw is procrastinating and is tied up in bureaucratic processes. Enough of the ambiguity, time to move now from political fudge to policy certainty. Our Maori communities deserve this at the very least. It is time Minister Shaw was transparent about his agenda and focus on the people actually affected, rather than relying exclusively on information from officials.”

For all media enquiries please contact:

Donna Awatere Huata **022 0700996**