

## BOOK REVIEW

### **CLIMATE CHANGE IN NEW ZEALAND: SCIENTIFIC AND LEGAL ASSESSMENTS**

KLAUS BOSSELMANN, JENNY FULLER AND JIM SALINGER, NEW ZEALAND CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW. AUCKLAND: UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND, 2002: 144 PAGES

Although this work was first published in 2002 it continues to provide an interesting and authoritative perspective on one of New Zealand's, and indeed, the Earth's, most pressing environmental problems.

In this second volume in the New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law's monograph series, the authors have structured the monograph on climate change into three parts beginning with the 'science', and moving on to the government's preferred policy and the role of the *Resource Management Act* 1991. The remaining third of the study is devoted to the role of local government to address New Zealand's climate change obligations.

What is immediately noticeable to those interested in climate change and inundated by a plethora of literature on the subject over the past decade, is that this relatively short work, from the outset, comes across as eminently readable. It affords both the expert and the non-expert a concise and focused insight into the core issues underlying the phenomenon of climate change from a scientific perspective and then proceeds to discuss in an ordered fashion how these issues are likely to be addressed by New Zealand in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

Part I familiarises the reader with the science of climate change by explaining the latest science assessments and international perspective (as it pertains to New Zealand) in understandable, non-technical language aided by the liberal use of diagrams and schematics. It provides an overview to basic climatic processes including the factors causing climate change and the human influences or anthropogenic factors thought to be involved. In the context of the international perspective, Part I reviews the conclusions reached in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Emissions Scenarios setting out a range of

plausible future greenhouse gas scenarios developed in 2000. This part concludes with a brief discussion of the Kyoto Protocol and New Zealand's place within its parameters.

Part II deals primarily with the formation of the Government's domestic climate change policy and the implications on that policy of the *Resource Management Act* 1991 (RMA) and its use to enforce climate change policy. It provides a good overview of the National Government's Domestic Policy Options Statement and the 2002 Preferred Policy Package reviewing the policy objectives both in the short and long term. Both the strengths and weaknesses of the RMA are considered as well as how climate change policy could be implemented under it without the necessity of additional legislation.

Part III contains an interesting discourse on the role to be played by Regional and District Councils in the implementation of New Zealand's climate change obligations. The authors illustrate how local government, under the legislative framework of the RMA (subject to suitable amendments), should be in a position to effectively implement obligations imposed on the State by Kyoto provided that clear direction is given to ensure a consistent and focused approach by each local authority. Detailed suggestions are made for the effective management of emissions and control of land use that are summarized for easy reference in diagrammatic form.

As is the case with any study dependent upon the vagaries of complex negotiations amongst large numbers of States as well as political changes at the domestic level, the need to update and modify both approaches and conclusions to reflect the reality at any moment in time becomes paramount. The Kyoto COP negotiations continue to be a moving feast, and notwithstanding optimistic predictions to the contrary, the Kyoto Protocol has still not obtained the ratification of Russia necessary to bring it into force.

Although a rewrite of some aspects of this monograph might be in order to reflect more recent developments, it nevertheless leaves the reader with a sense that the authors have managed to successfully condense a significant amount of complex information and policy options into a well-written, well-organised, insightful work that will provide ongoing guidance to those seeking a better understanding of the issues involved with respect to this global phenomenon.

I commend the authors of this publication and the New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law for providing a wide and diverse audience with an excellent addition to its monograph series and a significant contribution to the literature in this area.

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