

## Media Release

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### **New programme to accelerate Climate Action for SMEs**

**A Sustainable Business Network (SBN) report shows Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) want to fight climate change but don't know where to begin so a new easy-to-use programme, *Climate Action 20/25*, is being set up to help them.**

SMEs make a significant contribution to the New Zealand economy and account for 97% of all New Zealand businesses and generate 35% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). They are responsible for a significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions, as these are closely tied to our current economic activity.

Rachel Brown, SBN CEO, says: "SMEs are now more than ever focused on cashflow management. Energy and transport are two of the biggest expenses in business. If we get these more efficient and reduce costs, we get a better financial position for SMEs and a positive climate impact".

*Climate Action 20/25: Accelerating Climate Action by New Zealand SMEs* reveals that many SMEs feel overwhelmed by the range of climate tools and vast amounts of information available. Some respondents said they felt like they were drowning in a sea of tools, resources and conflicting advice. This busy climate landscape means businesses simply don't act. The poor use of incentives like low carbon procurement, from corporates and councils, isn't helping either.

Other challenges include a lack of clarity about the responsibilities and opportunities new climate laws might present.

Rachel Brown says: "*Climate Action 20/25* will create an easy pathway for SMEs to follow. It will guide them from taking the first step through to being climate positive and very importantly to building financial resilience in their business.

"Partnering with experts like EECA and Waka Kotahi (New Zealand Transport Agency), it will provide tailored, affordable tools that draw upon the latest information and research to meet SMEs' needs for time and cost savings. Working with larger organisations committed to climate action, it will also offer the incentives needed to encourage adoption of climate action through procurement decisions. The outcome will be, those acting on climate action will win jobs over those that don't."

*Climate Action 20/25* will measure and report on impact metrics of climate action among New Zealand's SMEs. The work is designed to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, especially in the key challenge areas of energy and transport. It will also stimulate increased investment in local offsetting initiatives.

"SMEs play a vital role and must be engaged in climate action now if New Zealand stands any chance of meeting our international commitments, especially to make the rapid progress required by 2030 under the Zero Carbon Act," says Brown.

**Case Study: Soar Print**

With bases in Auckland and Hamilton, Soar Print has been in business for 100 years this year. It is a third-generation family business. This gives it a special insight into long-term sustainability.

The company has been carbonzero certified by Toitu since 2009. Its initial target was to reduce greenhouse emissions by 15% by 2015. It has now reduced them by more than 40% compared to 2009. This includes significant reductions in fuel and power consumption. The company estimates close to \$500,000 in cost savings over the last 10 years. This more than covers the cost of compliance, independent certification and buying carbon offsets.

Businesses can download the report here <https://sustainable.org.nz/climate-action-20-25-report-download/>

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