



The New Zealand Psychological Society

Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa

Media Release

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For immediate release

Attention: Health, Social Issues and Environment Reporters

Climate Change

The New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) passed a remit at its AGM to promote the use of psychology to help government and non-government agencies to tackle climate change.

This responds to the recent World Health Organisation (WHO) conference where over 300 heads of government and leading scientists called for urgent action. They linked climate change to major health consequences and called for cross-sectorial collaboration and health sector leadership.

NZPsS Director of Scientific Affairs Dr Jackie Feather with Australian colleague Dr Amanda Shea Hart gave a presentation at the NZPsS annual conference on the psychology of unsustainable human behaviour. They proposed that our behaviour as the 'dominant species' contributes to climate change and causes environmental destruction. Initial strategies and approaches to motivate behavioural change were put forward. It was suggested that we need to develop a more collaborative, connected and compassionate relationship with the planet. This is found in the Māori concept of kaitiakitanga or guardianship that promotes kinship and a healthier relationship with the natural world.

The NZPsS recognises that psychologists have a role in identifying behavioural contributions to climate change, and in the management of the psychosocial, mental health and community consequences of climate change. Psychologists are already contributing through research to an evidence-based understanding of human impact on the environment. The Society encourages the application of psychology to one of the most pressing problems for humankind in our time.

Ends

Background to the New Zealand Psychological Society

The New Zealand Psychological Society is the largest professional association for psychologists in New Zealand. It has over 1400 members and subscribers and aims to improve individual and community wellbeing by representing, promoting and advancing the scientific discipline and practice of psychology.

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