

Energy policies in the election year

September 2023

Election season is here! It is easy for energy professionals (or anyone with an interest in energy matters) to feel courted, valued and heard – almost every political party has an energy policy as a major part of its platform. Advance voting starts on 2 October 2023 with polling day on 14 October 2023, so it is timely to look at what the major parties are promising in terms of energy policies.

Energy and Resources Spokespersons

| | ACT | Greens | Labour | National | NZ First | Te Pāti Māori |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Name | Simon Court MP | Hon Julie Anne Genter MP | Hon Dr Megan Woods MP | Stuart Smith MP | Hon Shane Jones <i>(not officially listed as spokesperson – attends events to speak on energy).</i> | Not available at time of writing |
| Previous career background | Civil and Environmental Engineer | Transport and urban planning | Business Manager at Plant & Food Research | Marlborough grape grower and chairman of New Zealand Winegrowers Association | Business and public sector leadership | |

Energy policies

| | ACT | Greens | Labour | National | NZ First | Te Pāti Māori |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Renewable energy | Simplified permitting regime for offshore wind projects by adopting standards from equivalent OECD countries. | Goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2030. Increase renewable electricity generation available to all households, businesses, transport, and industry. Solar panels on public buildings eg hospitals, Kāinga Ora. | New Zealand's Energy Strategy to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2030. Transition to domestically generated renewable energy. Establish a Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy. New National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation and Electricity Transmission. Spatial Planning Act 2023 and Natural and Built Environment Act 2023 (RMA reforms) designed to enable faster roll out of renewable electricity generation projects. Offshore renewable energy projects. Establishment of All-of-Government Power Purchase Agreements to drive investment into new renewable electricity generation projects. | Opposes the 100% renewable electricity target. Double the amount of renewable electricity produced – particularly solar, wind and geothermal. Increase the minimum duration of consents for all renewable energy projects to 35 years and minimum lapse times to 10 years. One year limit to re-consent existing generation assets. Introduce a National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation within a year of taking office. | Build a Waste to Energy plant located in Northland replacing the Dome Valley landfill. | Plan to achieve 100% renewable electricity and energy production. Work alongside interested whānau, hapū, iwi to develop a national Māori strategy for renewable energy and clean technology and ensure the Crown supports Māori-led clean technology projects. |
| Fossil fuels, coal and gas | Repeal the ban on offshore oil and gas exploration. | Ban new extraction of fossil fuels. Replace industrial coal and gas with low-emissions alternatives. Prohibit fossil gas connections in buildings with viable alternatives. | Maintain ban on offshore oil and gas exploration. Gas Transition Plan to identify the opportunities and benefits provided by the energy transition for the gas sector and identify pathways for the fossil gas sector. End Government's use of coal by 2025 through the State Sector Decarbonisation Fund. Remove diesel generators from all schools. | Repeal the ban on oil and gas exploration. | Develop a Fuel Security Plan. | Ban new coal mine permits. Phase out industrial burning of coal by 2030. End new onshore oil and gas permits and withdraw existing onshore and offshore oil and gas permits within five years and aim to decommission sites by 2030. Ban seabed mining permits nationwide and withdraw existing seabed mining permits. |
| Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) in relation to energy | Refund ETS to New Zealanders with carbon dividend. Amend current regulatory settings of ETS, including recognising Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage as a removal activity. | Empower the Climate Change Commission to directly set unit supply in the ETS. | ETS amended to prioritise gross emissions reduction. | ETS funds added into general government expenditure. Climate Change Commission to have more independence in setting ETS volume and price controls. | Repurpose money from the ETS and purchase overseas credits to fund mitigations, including low-methane genetics | |
| Industry and infrastructure | | Reform of the electricity market in favour of renewable energy suppliers and distributed generation, remove incentives for fossil fuel use in generation, and change wholesale pricing systems. | Promoting hydrogen production. | Remove consents for upgrades to existing transmission and local lines infrastructure and consents for new transmission and local lines to be issued within one year, extend consent durations (35 years), and set minimum lapse times for consents not used (10 years). Address first mover disadvantage for new local lines connections, including claw back rules to allow first movers (eg EV charging stations that pay 100% of the upfront cost of lines upgrades) to recover a share of those costs from future connections to that infrastructure. Change cost recovery rules to increase sharing of new connection costs for activities like EV charging stations. Establish an information disclosure regime to monitor and ensure reasonable connection costs. | Committing to keeping Tiwai Point Smelter open. | |
| Household / community | | Clean Power Payments including grants for solar and energy efficient upgrades to homes, interest-free loans for additional zero carbon home upgrades, tax deductible zero carbon upgrades for rental homes. Scale up support for community energy solutions, including community and marae based clean-energy hubs, with solar and wind generation, local markets, battery storage solutions and peer-to-peer retail trading. Transition away from gas powered heating and cooking. Expand Warmer Kiwi Homes to cover more zero carbon upgrades such as replacing gas heaters. | Household rebates for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retrofitting gas to electric Double glazing Insulation – wall, ceiling, underfloor. Subsidies for households to adopt solar. Community solar projects to enable more people to benefit from solar. Instal solar panels on Kāinga Ora houses. | | | \$1 billion fund for Māori-owned energy projects. Solar panel and insulation installations on marae, kura, homes and papakāinga housing developments. |
| Electric vehicles | End the Clean Car Discount. | | Continue the Clean Car Discount. Keep the Clean Car Standard. Double the number of public electric vehicle chargers through EV charging hubs every 150-200km on main highways and between 600-1000 EV chargers at community facilities in smaller rural communities. Implement and release a national EV-charging infrastructure strategy. | End the Clean Car Discount. 10,000 EV charging stations. Nationwide network of EV charging stations. No resource consent required for EV charging stations. | | |
| Investments | Stop the Lake Onslow energy project from proceeding as a government project. | Support the investigation into the Lake Onslow energy project and the alternative option. Government dividends from energy companies reinvested into clean energy generation. | Continue the investigation into the Lake Onslow energy project and the alternative option. Invest \$300 million more through NZ Green Investment Finance (total commitment \$1 billion). | Opposes Lake Onslow energy project. | Invest \$100m into transmission upgrades. | |
| Government – roles, legislation, rules | Repeal the relevant provisions in the Climate Change Response Act 2002 that were amended with the Zero Carbon Act, including the Climate Change Commission, and replace with new climate change plan. | | Establish a Minister for Just Transitions. | Update the Commerce Act and associated regulations for cost recovery of regulated infrastructure. Introduce new National Environment Standards for each generation type. Restore “remedy and mitigate” options. National Policy Statement for Distribution for infrastructure building – including poles, lines, transformers and substations. National Policy Statement – Hydrogen. | Establish a Ministry for Energy. | |