

Country: New Zealand

Agenda Item: Health Issues Caused by Air Pollution

Position Paper-New Zealand WHO

New Zealand is an island country in the South Pacific Ocean, southeast to Australia. It is composed of two large islands, including many smaller islands. New Zealand does not have any land borders, can only be reached by sea or air. The total land area is around 268-838 km². In 2025, New Zealand's population is about 5.27 million. In New Zealand, 83-84% of the people live in urban places. Population density is low. New Zealand's main industries are agriculture, including meat, dairy and wool, tourism, forestry such as wood products, horticulture and film and digital production. The healthcare systems in New Zealand are universal and publicly funded by taxes. In public health care, most of the hospitals are free for residents. Private health care is optional and mostly used for faster access to procedures that are not urgent. In New Zealand, most of the schools are public schools, but private schools also exist. Primary schools are age 1 to 8, and secondary schools are age 9 to 13.

5.7 million people died because of air pollution in 2025 worldwide. Air pollution causes breathing problems, such as coughing, wheezing and asthma attacks, lung diseases like emphysema and lung cancer, heart problems including heart attacks and high blood pressures, brain and mental effects like headaches, problems for children causing children's lungs grow slower and pregnancy risks, such as low birth weight and premature birth. Most of the air pollution on earth has been produced by developed and highly industrialized countries. However, undeveloped countries suffer the most. Developed countries should take responsibility and support suffering countries to tackle this problem. In 2015, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted the Air Quality & Health resolution. This resolution recognized air pollution as a reason for diseases and deaths. This resolution called for countries to strengthen cooperation, promote policies, improve monitoring and raise public awareness. WHA has followed up these initiatives since then. It set a target to halve the health impacts of air pollution by 2040. The UN General Assembly declared 7 September as the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies. In summary, the UN and its agencies recognize air pollution as a major problem and set goals and take initiatives to make countries reduce air pollution and its impacts.

As a clean aired country, New Zealand does not have major problems about health issues caused by air pollution. Even though the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines are not a law in New Zealand, New Zealand still uses them. However, New Zealand still has a role in international efforts to fight air pollution causing health issues. New Zealand is a member of Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) which works to reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs) and Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (AGG) which works to reduce methane emissions from livestock. New Zealand's solution ideas are phasing out polluting heating, cleaner transport focus and indoor air quality. New Zealand can share its experience and potential for these solutions. New Zealand's expectations from the United Nations are stronger global standards, funding and technology transfer, cross-sector action and global monitoring network.

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