

‘Getting Sh*t Done’ for climate impact

Session 2 - Perfect is the Enemy of Good.

Esther Whitehead

14 August 2024

Te Pūaha o te Ako

Inside Out

What is perfectionism?

Whatever it is, getting started is the only way we will finish.

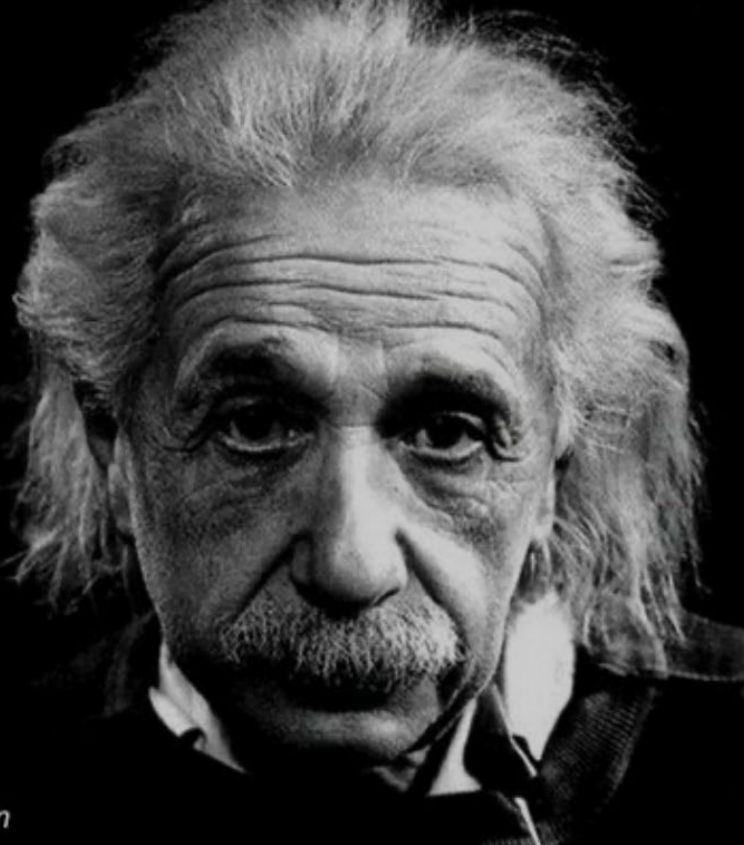


Te Pūaha o te Ako

Identify the perfectionist slowing down action

"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than 5 minutes."

- Albert Einstein



What problem are you trying to solve?

Seek perfection only in identifying the problem, don't seek perfection in finding the solution.

For example, **systems failure** is a significant cause of environmental degradation, so **systems change** is a big part of the solution.

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Climate Impact

A year's work on some problems can help a lot more than a year's worth of work on other problems. In fact, 80000hours.org's analysis suggests that which problem areas you choose to work on may be the single biggest determinant of the climate impact you have with your career or your organisation.

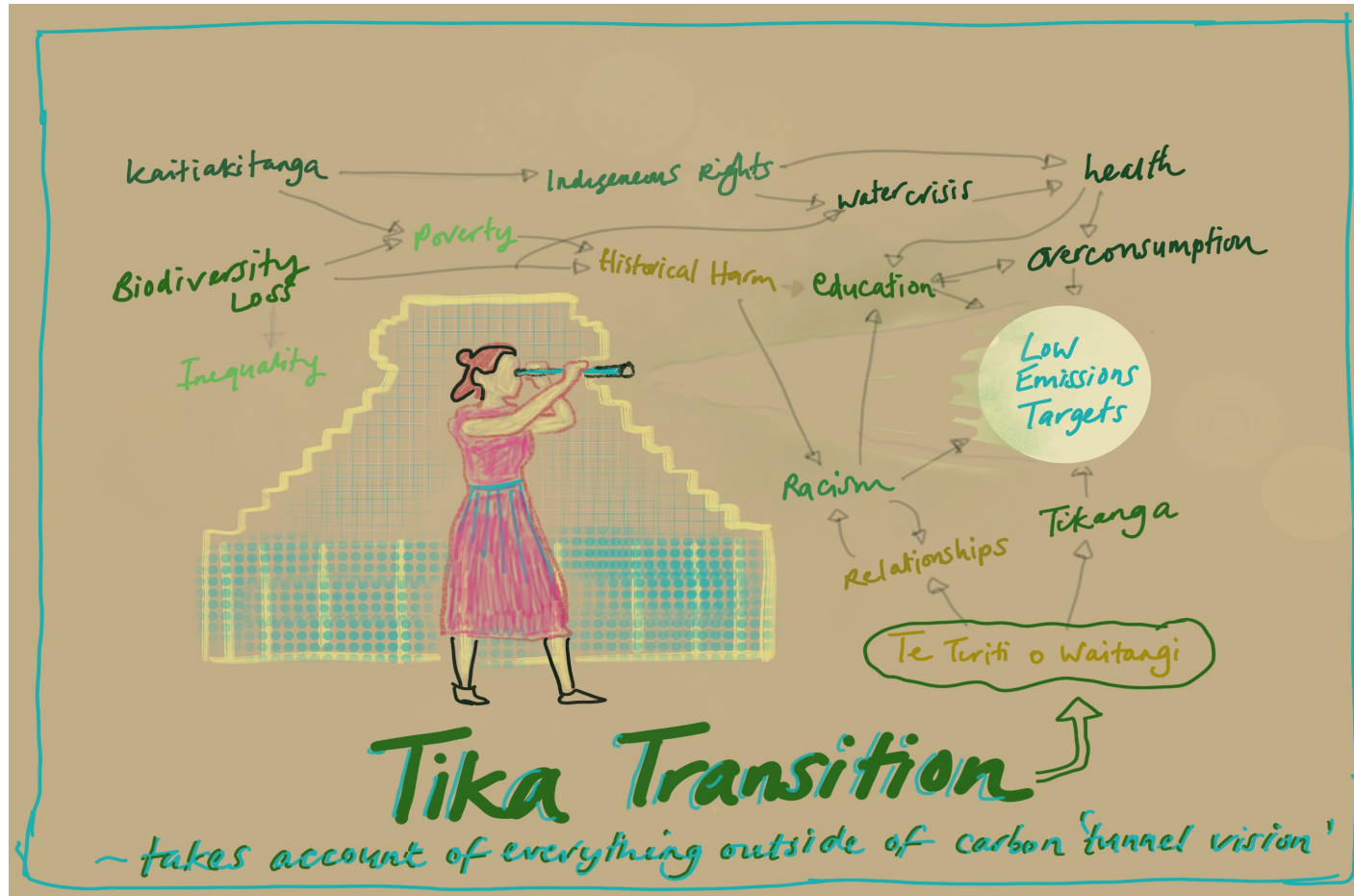
The bottom line

The most pressing problems are likely to have a good combination of the following qualities:

1. Big in scale
2. Neglected
3. Solvable

To find the problem *you* should work on, also consider **personal fit**. Could you become motivated to work on this problem or find someone who is?

Finding the problem and the right fit



Spending on climate change is gigantic but may neglect key things.

Can you find an area of neglect?

Let's use a community case study as an example

Te Pūaha o te Ako

What's the problem we're trying to solve here?



Spending on climate change is gigantic but may neglect key things.

Can you find an area of neglect?

What's the problem?

Te Pūaha o te Ako

What's the problem here? Waste to Event Waste

Scale – if we solved the problem, how good would it be? ‘Me’ scaled to ‘We’ our community

Solvability – if we increased the resources dedicated to solving this problem, what fraction of the problem do we expect to solve? Is it worth it?

Neglectedness – how many resources are already going towards solving this problem? What's the problem we're trying to solve.

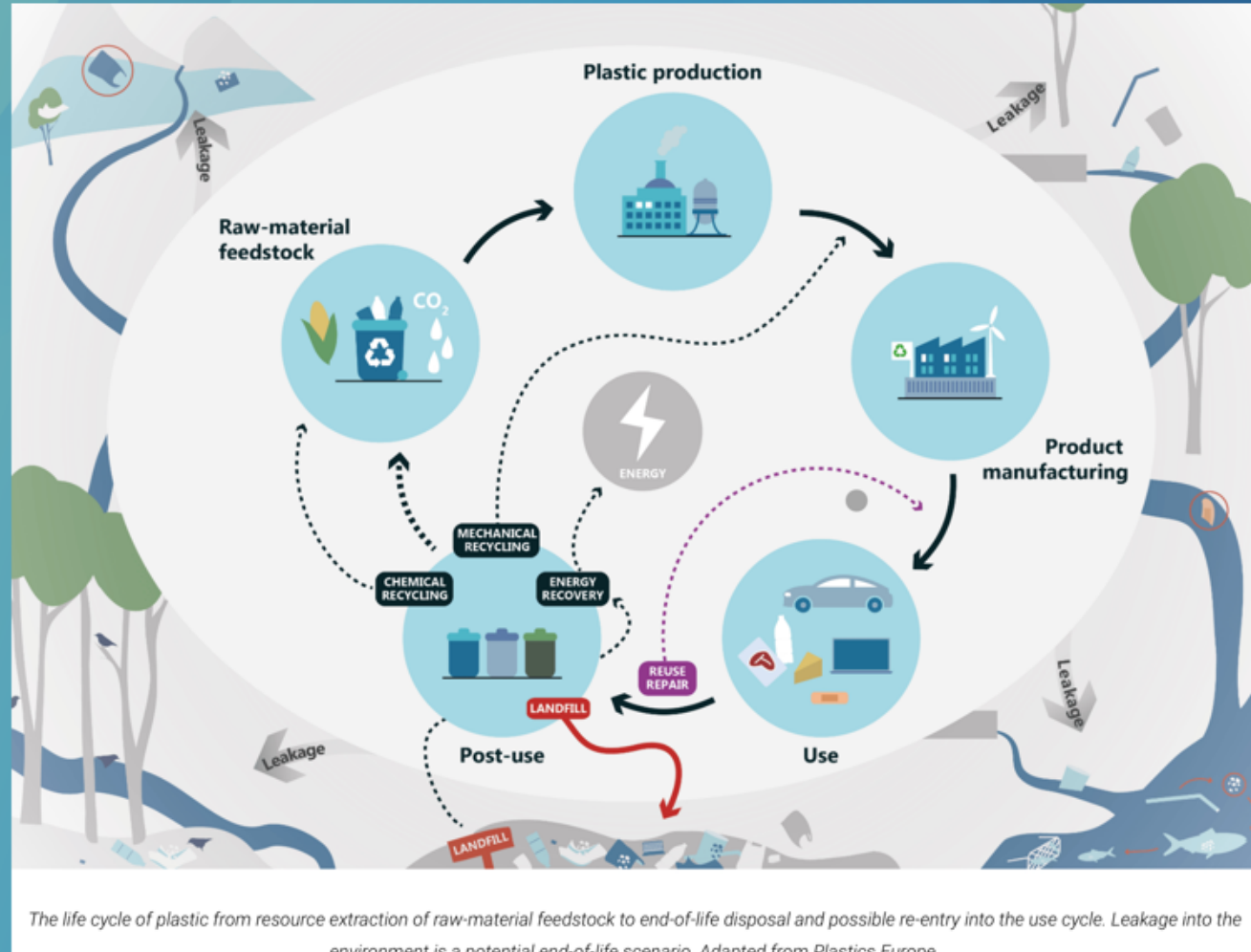


Sustainable Queenstown co-founder Esther Whitehead hands over food to Queenstown's Mayor Jim Boulton at the Luma Southern Light Project in the resort in June last year. Photo: Paul Green



Te Pūaha o te Ako

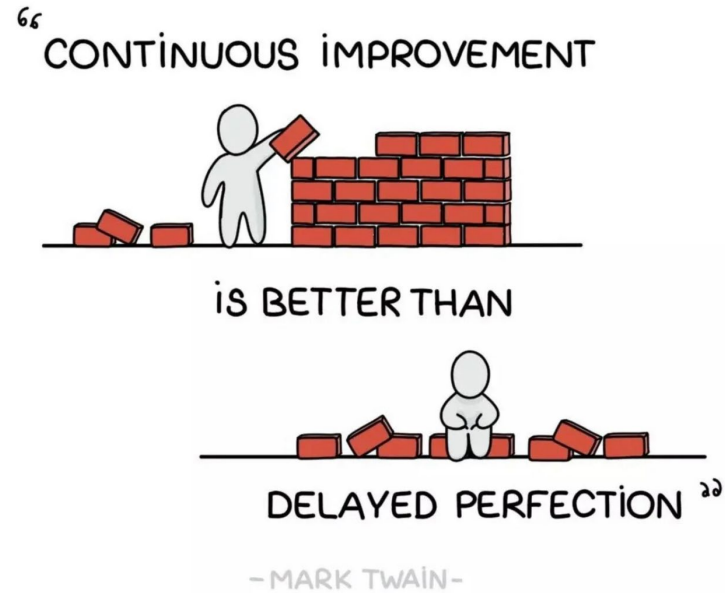
Systems failure- we have enabled a life-cycle which puts accountability at the post-use stage



Moving to our corporate worlds

Is Greenwashing a symptom of corporate perfectionism?

Defining a problem carefully – in net-zero goals, we often have a delayed approach to a ‘perfect’ goal or we tell the wrong part of the story.



WHAT IS PERFECTION vs WHAT IS ACHIEVABLE & TRUE?

Te Pūaha o te Ako

What does net-zero mean?



A simple graphic doesn't explain what is achievable & true

Greenwashing Cases: Challenging net-zero claims

NZ Advertising Standards Board complaints

Misleading because not substantiated Eg. First Gas claim re “ensuring” it was “going zerocarbon”

Consumer NZ, ELI and LKANZ take Z Energy to High Court

Misleading as claimed it was “getting out of the petrol business” because of its provision of ev charging stations. It’s the second largest emitter of CO2 in NZ.

UK Advertising Standards Authority (October 2022)

Ban on HSBC advertising of net zero goals because of failure to disclose continued financing of fossil fuel projects and links to deforestation

Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility v Santos (2022)

Santos claims it will achieve netzero emissions by 2040. Criticism that reliance on projected CC&S technology that either does not exist or has not been disclosed

-EDO complaint against Glencore (2022)

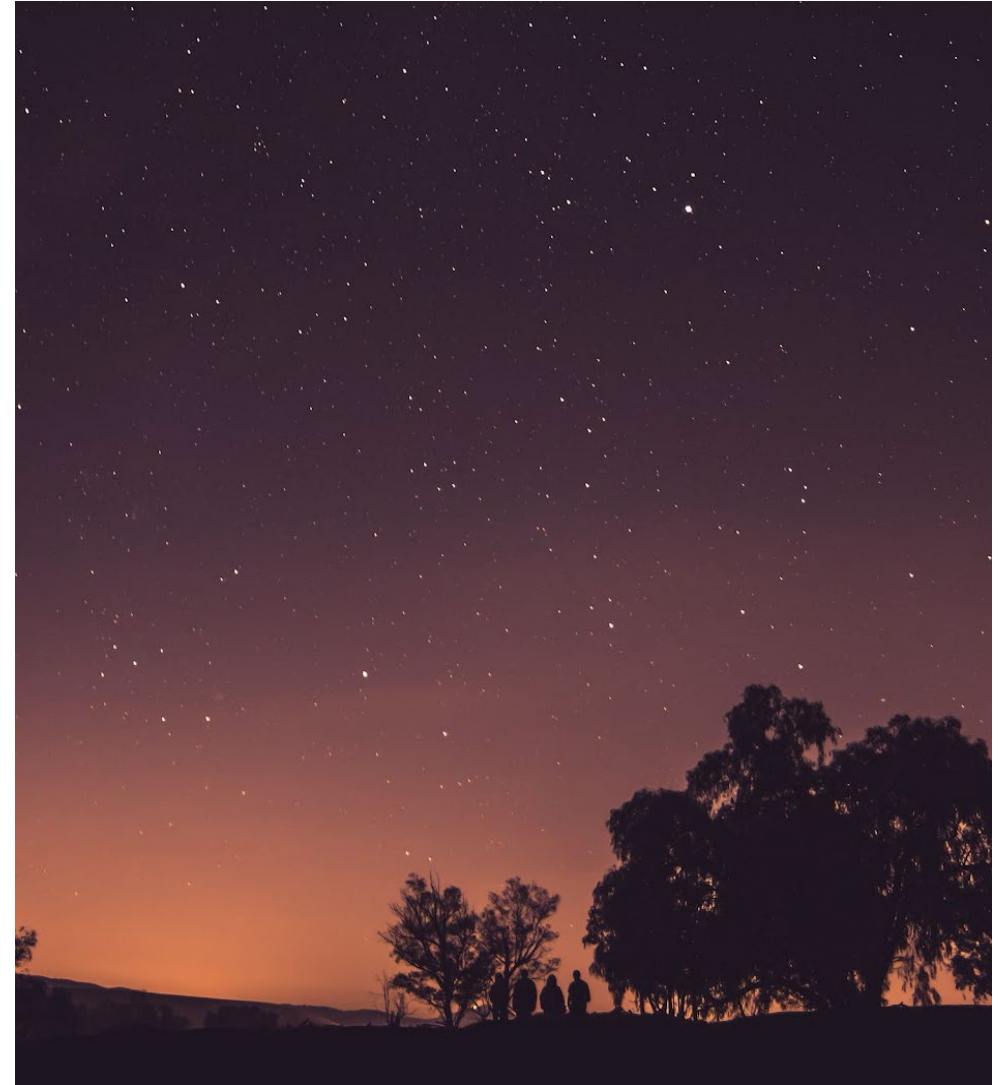
Claims that Glencore’s net zero by 2050 claims are unsubstantiated

EU banning “carbon neutral” claims where offsets used (September 2023)

Te Pūaha o te Ako

If you have a board of trustees, this is something they need to upskill on- speak to your board chair

For now. The best course of action is to be aware and open to learning and understanding the relevance of climate impact, which in turn commits you to the journey of improving the board's climate literacy and climate competencies.



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Understanding Board Risks or Organisational risks

Risks can be in many forms, at this stage a relevant risk on this journey is related to greenwashing. Boards with genuine intentions to deliver on clear sustainability/climate strategies will need to protect the organisation from greenwashing risks.

There are three key aspects to consider:

Greenwashing could be when an organisation states its target of, for example, Netzero 2050 but has its investment portfolio committed to fossil fuels whilst it focuses operations on netzero targets. If the operations are not proportionally material against the organisations net worth it could be viewed as greenwashing. See [HSBC example](#) or [Z Energy example](#)

Greenwishing is when an organisation states its target, for example, of Netzero 2050 but has no transparent pathway to how it will achieve its goal. Simply put, we can't state something if we don't have a robust and testable pathway to how we're going to get there and measure achievements as we go.

Greenhushing is when a company under-reports its sustainability progress (or doesn't talk about it at all) to avoid being criticised for not doing enough.

Defining a problem carefully – in Carbon accounting, we have a delayed perfectionism approach!

For example, if we were evaluating 'carbon emissions' in our home or organisation we would need to be clear about:

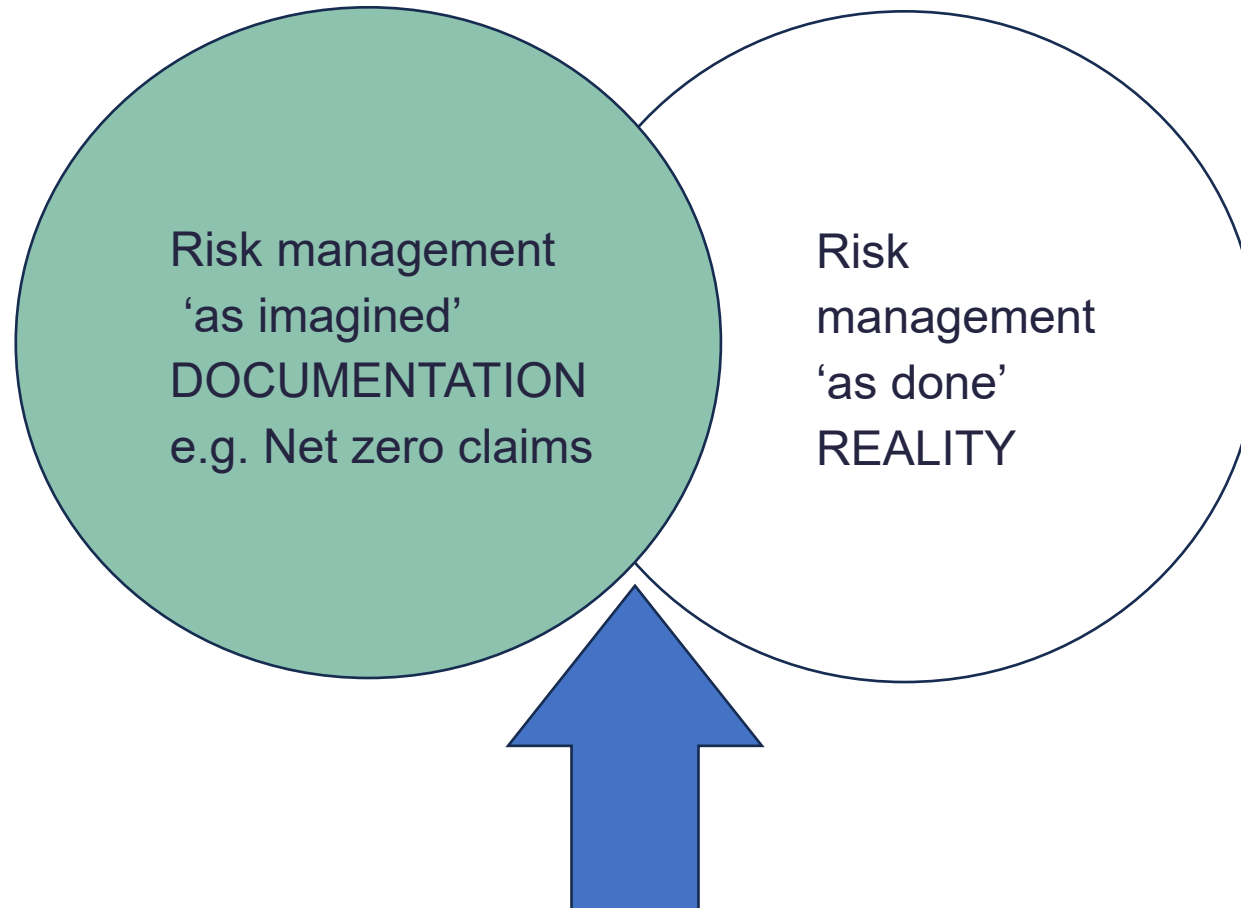
- The scope of emissions we are measuring scope 1, 2 or 3 (all)
- The goal or target we are setting - **net zero** claims (perfectionism including offsets) versus reduction which is simply stated as **reducing our carbon emissions** (step by step)
- How we communicate any progress to stakeholders

WHAT IS PERFECTION vs WHAT IS ACHIEVABLE AND TRUE?

A closer look at problematic ‘perfectionist’ language

Problematic Language	Sector	Context
“Clean green”	Mining	Prospectus
“Clean energy”	Energy	Prospectus
“Low-carbon”	Philanthropic Investment	Annual Report
“Robust sustainable practices”	Investment	Product disclosure statement
“Responsibly sourced”	Mining	Prospectus/website/ investor presentation
“Carbon neutral” “Net zero carbon”	Energy	ASX announcements

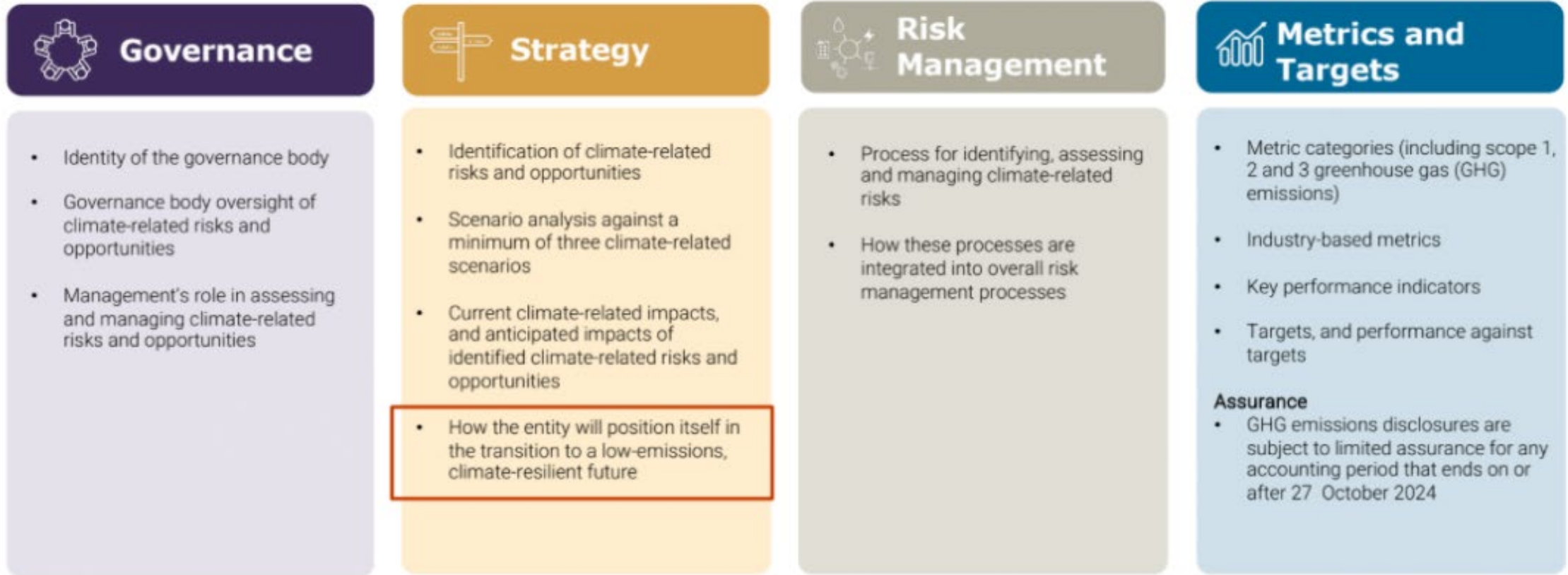
What we document vs what we do



Align these views is the closest you get to PERFECT

Te Pūaha o te Ako

How a transition plan fits



Equals transition planning

Te Pūaha o te Ako

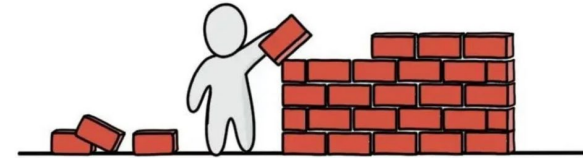
What do we mean by transition plan?

Transition plan

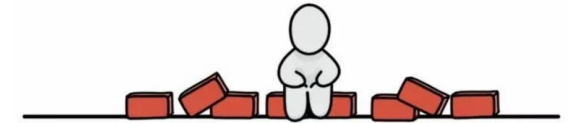
An aspect of an entity's overall strategy that describes the entity's target, **including interim targets**, and actions for its transition towards a low-emissions, climate resilient future

XRB NZ CS 1 Defined Terms

“CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



IS BETTER THAN



DELAYED PERFECTION”

-MARK TWAIN-

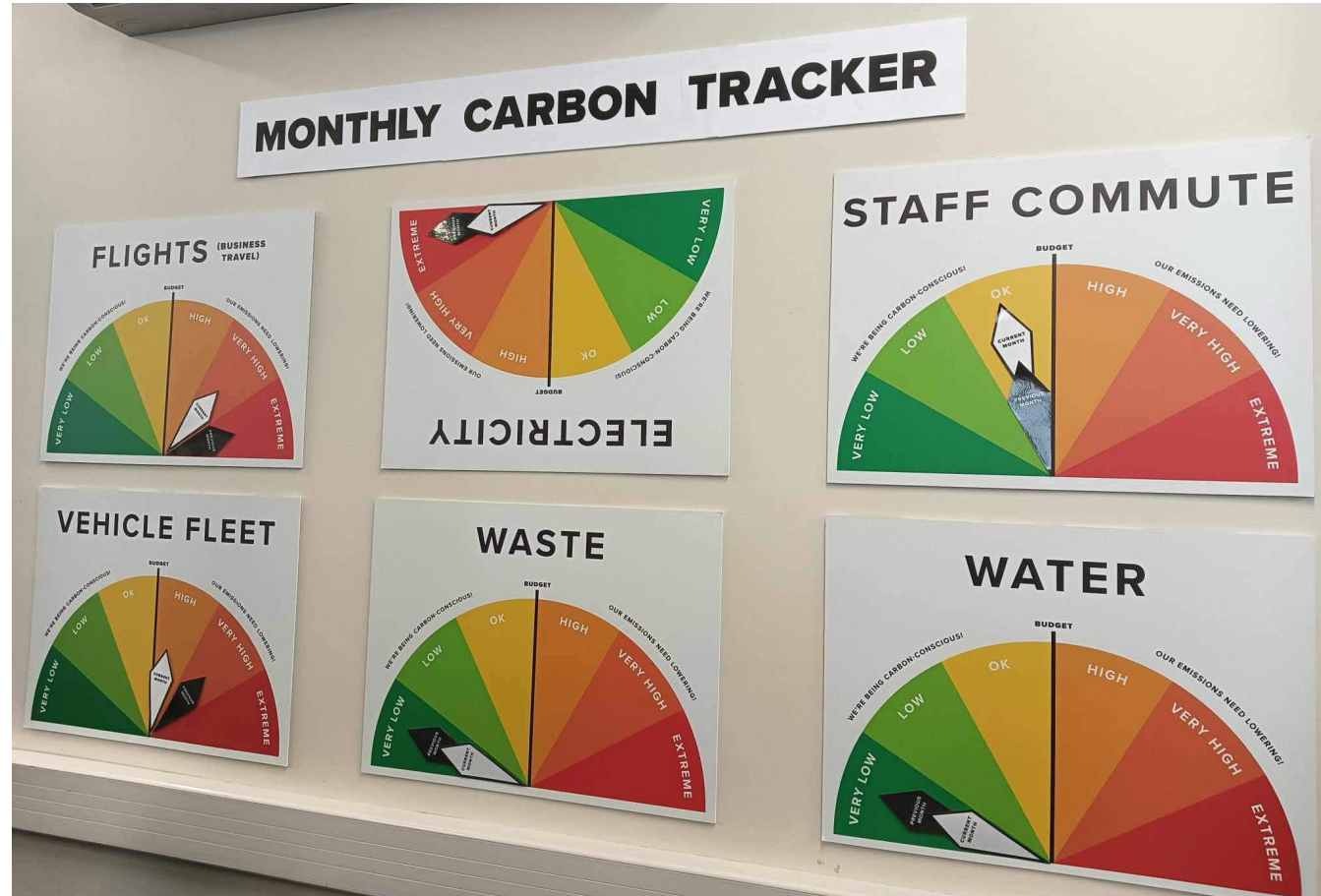
Te Pūaha o te Ako

Start, take steps, share wins, adapt, start again!

- **Identify the problem**.....go back, identify it again!
- **Involve everyone**, change can't and won't happen with only one champion or specialist.
- **Start Small**. Identify manageable changes that fit into our lifestyle/organisation and are within our capability to achieve
- **Set Realistic Goals**. Set **achievable** targets that **everyone understands** and can be committed to and taken up in incremental steps.
- **Focus on Progress**. Recognise that trying to do something perfectly all the time is unrealistic. Instead, focusing on making continuous improvements is more practical. Progress will involve some kind of **change** in you or your organisation's habits, practices.
- **Celebrate Wins**. To stay motivated and inspired, we should celebrate our achievements and milestones, no matter how small they are.
- **Embrace Missteps**. If we slip up or revert to less sustainable habits, we should not give up; we can get back on track at any time.
- **Adapt and Adjust**. Remain willing to adapt and adjust strategies as needed based on new information, changing circumstances, and evolving priorities.

Te Pūaha o te Ako

Set Realistic Goals. Set achievable targets that everyone understands and can be committed to and taken up in incremental steps.



Te Pūaha o te Ako

Celebrate wins up
and adapt and adjust
as you need.

Community board
Pārongo
(information)

Aotearoa Bike Challenge Results

NZ position	Govt & Public svs 20-49 Staff	4 th	= 5,089 points
	All industries 20-49 staff	34 th	

Southland
position { 1st in our category !!!
3rd across all industries !!!

Thanks team

Top departments

1. Strategic Projects
2. Space Ops
3. Events

Top riders

1. Steve
2. Paula
3. Oli

CD OUTLET
OPEN Tuesdays
to
OPEN FRIDAYS
10:00am - 4:00pm
Saturday 10 - 1pm
For Cardiac Patients Viewings
email info@prothorntons.co.nz
www.prothorntons.co.nz
127 HARBOR STREET, HIVERCAUGHL

THE SOUTHERN MAN'S GROUP
Cancer Society

WiFi

**TOTAL ANNUAL
CARBON EMISSIONS**
GREAT SOUTH & SPACEOPS NZ COMBINED
JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024

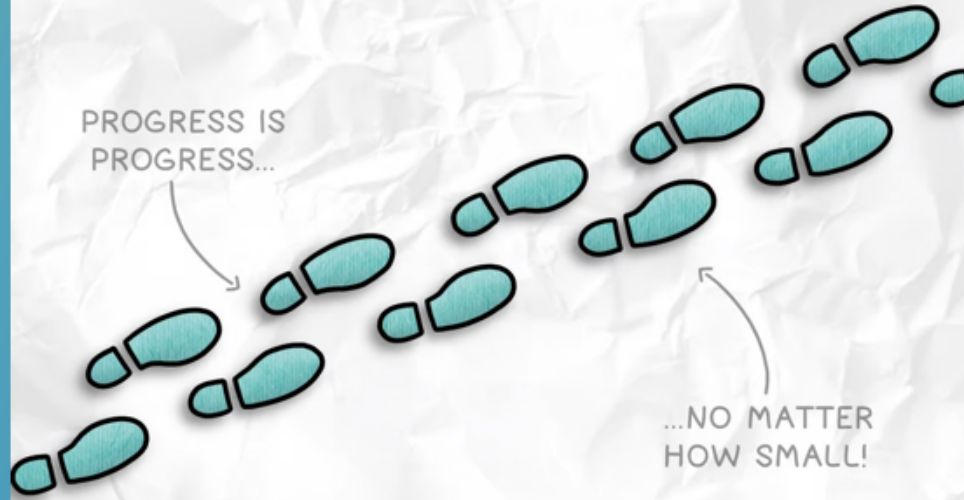
December year to date
emissions 1817

December year to date budget
emissions 1428

Te Pūaha o te Ako

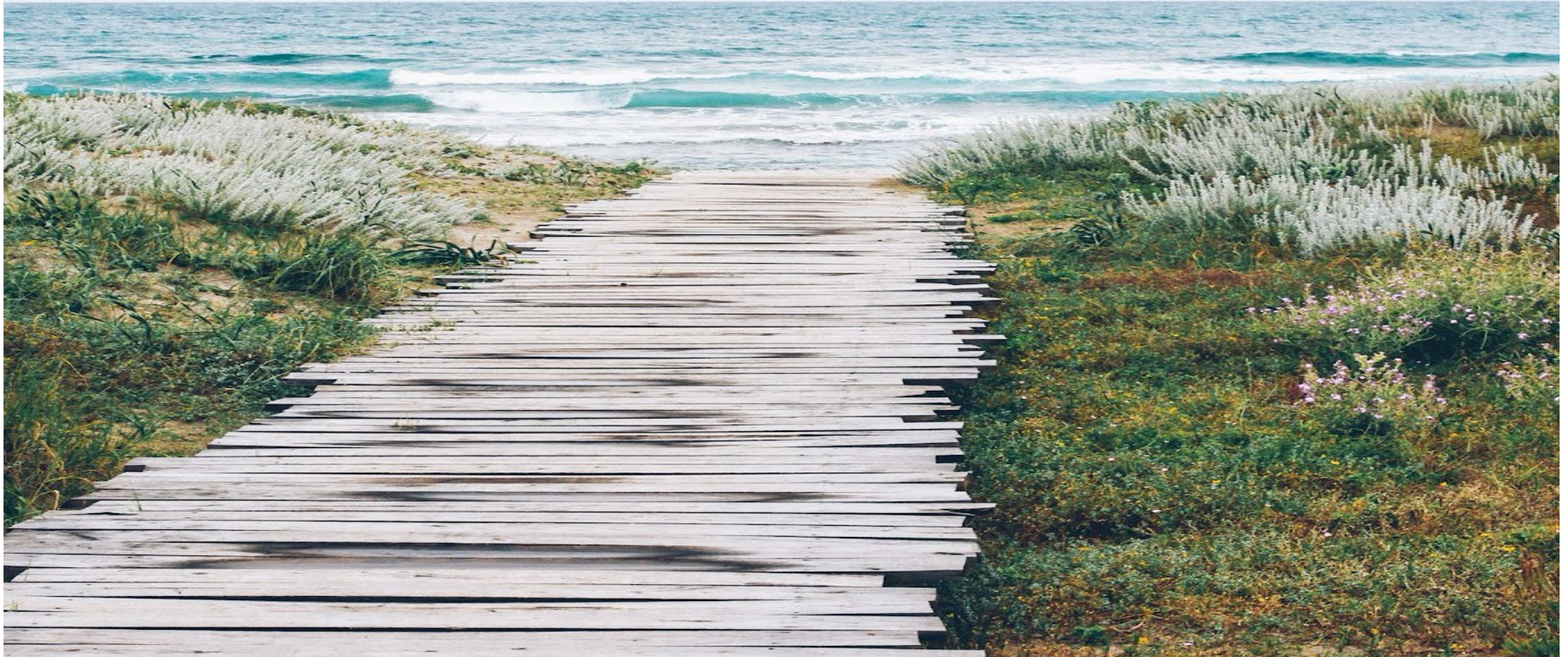
SMALL STEPS ARE STILL STEPS

PROGRESS IS
PROGRESS...



...NO MATTER
HOW SMALL!

When you start to walk the way, the way appears - Rumi



Te Pūaha o te Ako

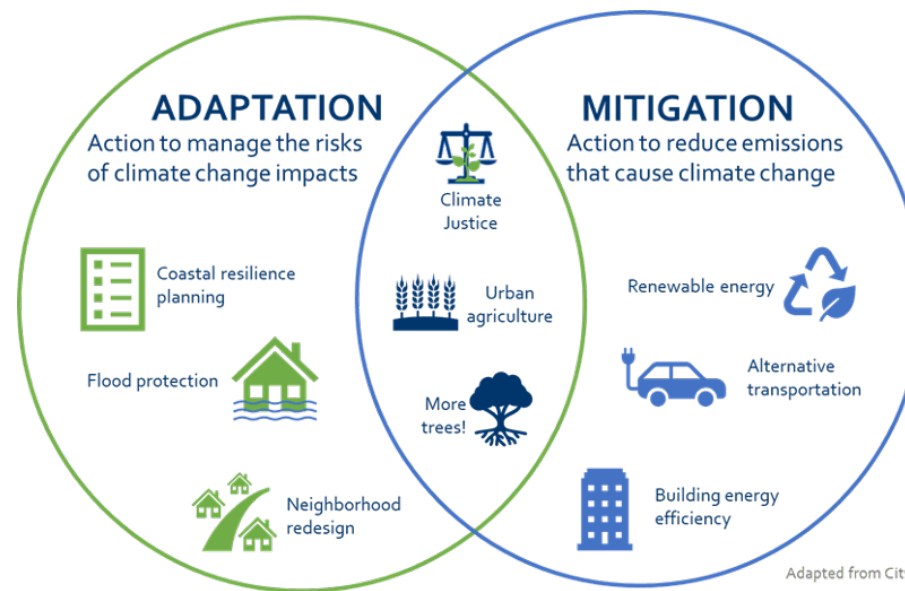
Start, take steps, share wins, adapt, start again!

Building Resilience -

It can look like a range of things from supporting food banks, gathering relevant data, decarbonising investments, emergency planning, research and innovation, eco-psychology and much more- see what the right fit is.

Climate action shouldn't be confined to a box.

See our [Climate Action 101](#) resource for more.



Adapted from City of Calgary, CA

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Closing Comments

- Identify the perfectionism (individual or corporate) slowing down climate action
- Identify the problem – is it at scale, -neglected, and solvable
- How does it align with a Tika transition?
- Has your organisation got a transition plan- do the documents reflect reality?



Te Pūaha o te Ako

I highly recommend checking out:

- Climate Action Aotearoa. <https://www.climateactionaotearoa.co.nz/key-documents>
- Greenwashing and greenwashing <https://sustainable.org.nz/learn/news-insights/greenwashing-and-greenhushing-how-to-strike-the-right-balance>
- Article in Guardian on Perfectionism <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jun/04/the-rise-of-perfectionism-and-the-harm-its-doing-us-all>
- Article in the Spin-Off about Carbon Accounting <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/30-06-2022/what-the-calorie-counting-myth-teaches-us-about-carbon>
- All We Can Save Project www.allwecansave.earth
- Good Grief Network www.goodgriefnetwork.org
- Gen Dread newsletter <https://gendread.substack.com>
- Project Inside Out <https://projectinsideout.net>
- Uncomfortable Knowledge Hub <https://uncomfortableknowledge.com/about-ukh/>

Te Pūaha o te Ako

Te Pūaha o te Ako

Thank you