

Appendix A Global and New Zealand climate change

Key messages

- The global climate system is warming and many of the recently observed climate changes are unprecedented.
- Global mean sea level has risen over the past century at a rate of about 1.7 mm/year and has very likely accelerated to 3.2 mm/year since 1993.
- Human activities (and associated greenhouse gas emissions) are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels.
- Estimated human-induced global warming is currently increasing at 0.2°C per decade due to past and ongoing emissions.
- Continued increases in greenhouse gas emissions will cause further warming and impacts on all parts of the global climate system.

Warming of the global climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed climate changes are unprecedented over short and long timescales (decades to millennia) (IPCC, 2013). These changes include warming of the atmosphere and ocean, diminishing of ice and snow, sea-level rise, and increases in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Climate change is already influencing the intensity and frequency of many extreme weather and climate events globally. Increases in average temperatures will result in related increases in the occurrence of extreme temperatures. The Earth's atmosphere has warmed by approximately 0.85°C on average over the period 1880-2012. The rate of sea-level rise since the mid-19th century has been larger than the mean rate of change during the previous two millennia. From the start of New Zealand's records (1901) to 2018, national mean coastal sea levels have risen 1.81 (±0.05) millimetres per year (Ministry for the Environment & Stats NZ, 2019).

Global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide have increased to levels unprecedented in at least the last 3 million years (Willeit *et al.*, 2019). Carbon dioxide concentrations have increased by at least 40% since pre-industrial times, primarily from fossil fuel emissions and secondarily from net land use change emissions (IPCC, 2013). In December 2021, the global carbon dioxide concentration of the atmosphere was 416.9 parts per million (NOAA, 2022). The ocean has absorbed about 30% of the emitted anthropogenic carbon dioxide, causing ocean acidification. Due to the influence of greenhouse gases on the global climate system, it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century (IPCC, 2013; IPCC, 2018).

Published information about the expected impacts of climate change on New Zealand is summarised and assessed in the Australasia chapter of the IPCC Working Group II Sixth Assessment Report (Lawrence *et al.*, 2022), as well as a report published by the Royal Society of New Zealand (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2016). Key findings from these publications include:

The regional climate is changing. The Australasia region demonstrates long-term trends toward higher surface air and sea surface temperatures, more hot days and heatwaves, fewer cold extremes, and changed rainfall patterns. Increasing greenhouse gas concentrations have contributed to rising average temperatures in New Zealand. Changing precipitation patterns have resulted in increases in rainfall for the south and west of the South Island and decreases in the north of the North Island

(Ministry for the Environment & Stats NZ, 2020). Some heavy rainfall events already carry the fingerprint of a changed climate, in that they have become more intense due to higher temperatures allowing the atmosphere to carry more moisture (Dean *et al.*, 2013). Frosts have become less common, while the number of warm days and heatwaves days is increasing (Ministry for the Environment & Stats NZ, 2020).

The region has exhibited warming to the present and is virtually certain to continue to do so. Based on observations, New Zealand's mean annual temperature has increased by an average of 1.07°C ($\pm 0.24^\circ\text{C}$) per century since 1909 (Figure A-).

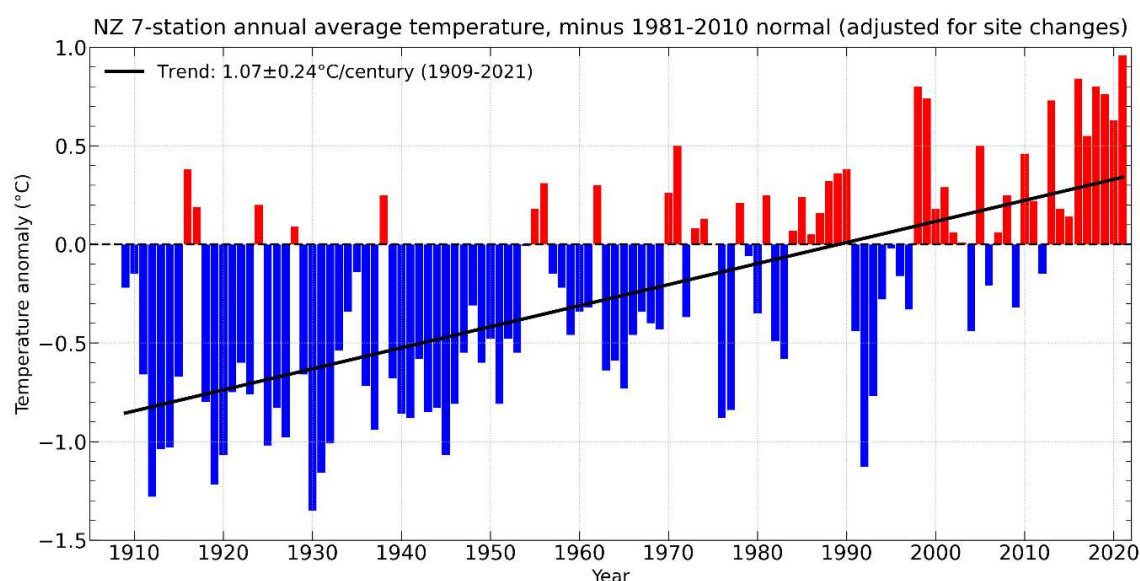


Figure A-1: New Zealand national temperature series, 1909-2021. More information about the New Zealand seven-station temperature series can be found at <https://niwa.co.nz/seven-stations>.

Warming is projected to continue through the 21st century along with other changes in climate.

Warming is expected to be associated with ongoing significant glacier retreat, more frequent hot days, less frequent cold days, and increasing rainfall intensity. Annual average rainfall is projected to decrease in the north and east of the North Island, and to increase in southern and western parts of the South Island (Ministry for the Environment, 2018). Fire hazard is projected to increase in many parts of New Zealand, especially on the eastern coast in the southern half of both islands (Watt *et al.*, 2019). Regional sea level rise will very likely exceed the historical rate, consistent with global mean trends (Ministry for the Environment, 2017).

Impacts and vulnerability: Without adaptation, further climate-related changes are projected to have substantial impacts on water resources, coastal ecosystems, infrastructure, health, agriculture, and biodiversity. However, uncertainty in projected rainfall changes and other climate-related changes remains large for many parts of New Zealand, which creates significant challenges for adaptation.

Additional information about recent New Zealand climate change can be found through the Ministry for the Environment (2018), and the Ministry for the Environment & Stats NZ (2020).

Appendix B Year to year climate variability and climate change

Key messages

- Natural variability is an important consideration in addition to the underlying climate change signal. It will continue to affect the year-to-year climate of New Zealand into the future.
- El Niño-Southern Oscillation is the dominant mode of inter-annual climate variability and it impacts New Zealand primarily through changing wind, temperature and rainfall patterns.
- The Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation affects New Zealand through drier conditions in the east and wetter conditions in the west during the positive phase and the opposite in the negative phase.
- The Southern Annular Mode affects New Zealand through higher temperatures and settled weather during the positive phase and lower temperatures and unsettled weather during the negative phase.

Much of the material in this report focuses on the projected changes to the climate of Taranaki over the coming century due to increases in global anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations. However, natural variations will also continue to occur. Much of the variation in New Zealand's climate is random and lasts for only a short period, but longer term, quasi-cyclic variations in climate can be attributed to different factors. Three large-scale oscillations that influence climate in New Zealand are the El Niño-Southern Oscillation, the Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation, and the Southern Annular Mode (Ministry for the Environment, 2008). Those involved in (or planning for) climate-sensitive activities in Taranaki will need to cope with the combination of both anthropogenic change and natural variability.

The effect of El Niño and La Niña

El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is a natural mode of climate variability that has wide-ranging impacts around the Pacific Basin (Ministry for the Environment, 2008). ENSO involves a movement of warm ocean water from one side of the equatorial Pacific to the other, changing atmospheric circulation patterns in the tropics and subtropics, with corresponding shifts for rainfall across the Pacific.

During El Niño, easterly trade winds weaken and relatively warm water moves eastward across the equatorial Pacific, accompanied by higher rainfall than normal in the central-east Pacific. La Niña produces opposite effects and is typified by an intensification of easterly trade winds, retention of warm ocean waters over the western Pacific. ENSO events occur on average three to seven years apart, typically becoming established in April or May and persisting for about a year thereafter.

During La Niña events, the strengthened trade winds usually cause New Zealand to experience a stronger than normal north-easterly airflow. This generally brings higher seasonal temperatures to the country and wetter than normal conditions to the north and east of the North Island, as well as to Taranaki (Figure B-2).

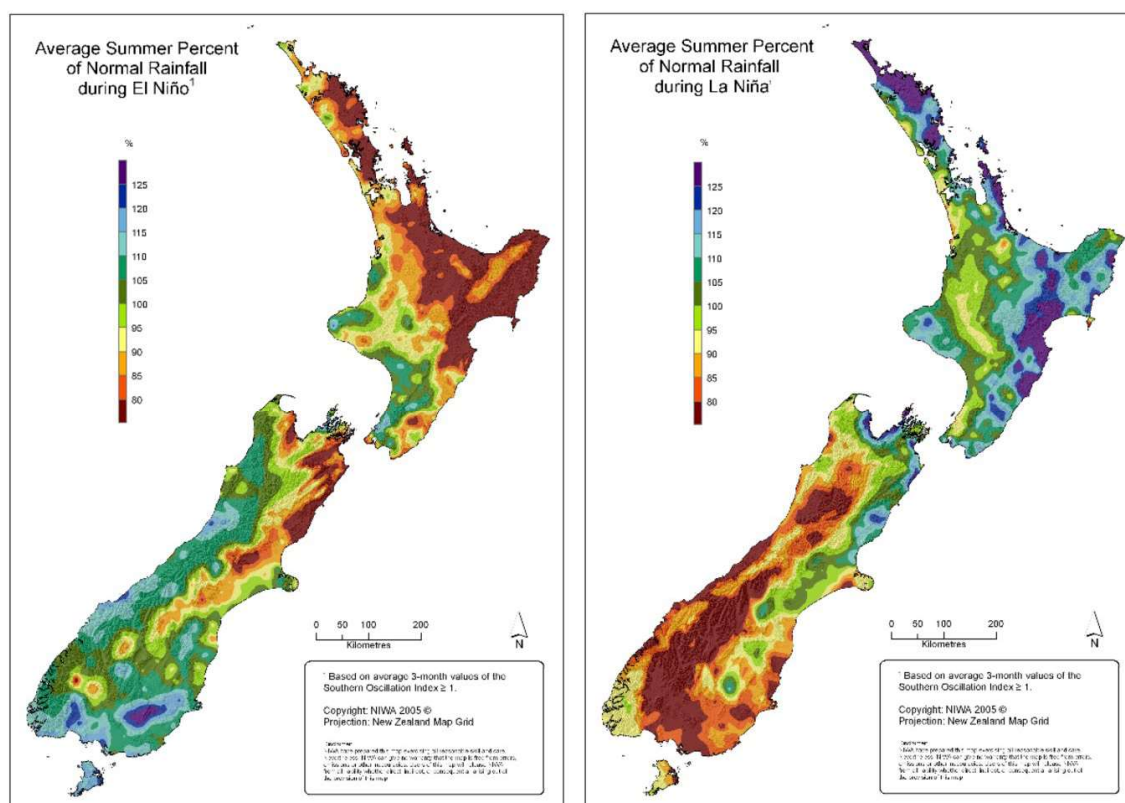


Figure B-2: Average summer percentage of normal rainfall during El Niño (left) and La Niña (right). El Niño composite uses the following summers: 1963/64, 1965/66, 1968/69, 1969/70, 1972/73, 1976/77, 1977/78, 1982/83, 1986/87, 1987/88, 1991/92, 1994/95, 1997/98, 2002/03. La Niña composite uses the following summers: 1964/65, 1970/71, 1973/74, 1975/76, 1983/84, 1984/85, 1988/89, 1995/96, 1998/99, 1999/2000, 2000/01. This figure was last updated in 2005.

According to IPCC (2013), ENSO is highly likely to remain the dominant mode of natural climate variability in the 21st century, and that rainfall variability relating to ENSO is likely to increase due to increased moisture availability. However, there is uncertainty about future changes to the amplitude and spatial pattern of ENSO.

The effect of the Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation

The Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation (IPO) is a large-scale, long-period oscillation that influences climate variability over the Pacific Basin including New Zealand (Salinger *et al.*, 2001). The IPO operates at a multi-decadal scale, with phases lasting around 20 to 30 years. During the positive phase of the IPO, sea surface temperatures around New Zealand tend to be lower, and westerly winds stronger, resulting in wetter conditions for western areas of both North and South Islands (including Taranaki). The opposite occurs in the negative phase. The IPO can modify New Zealand's connection to ENSO, and it also positively reinforces the impacts of El Niño (during IPO+ phases) and La Niña (during IPO- phases).

The effect of the Southern Annular Mode

The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) represents the variability of circumpolar atmospheric jets that encircle the Southern Hemisphere that extend out to the latitudes of New Zealand. The SAM is often coupled with ENSO, and both phenomena affect New Zealand's climate in terms of westerly wind

strength and storm occurrence (Renwick & Thompson, 2006). In its positive phase, the SAM is associated with relatively light winds and more settled weather over New Zealand, with stronger westerly winds further south towards Antarctica. In contrast, the negative phase of the SAM is associated with unsettled weather and stronger westerly winds over New Zealand, whereas wind and storms decrease towards Antarctica.

The phase and strength of the SAM is influenced by the size of the ozone hole, giving rise to positive trends in the past during spring and summer. In the future other drivers are likely to have an impact on SAM behaviour, for example changing temperature gradients between the equator and the high southern latitudes would have an impact on westerly wind strength in the mid-high latitudes.

The influence of natural variability on climate change projections

It is important to consider human-induced climate change in the context of natural climate variability. An example of this for temperature is shown in Figure B-3. The solid black line on the left-hand side represents the annual average temperature for New Zealand based on the average of a number of climate simulations forced by historic greenhouse gas concentrations. All the other line plots and shading refer to the modelled air temperature averaged over the New Zealand region from individual simulations. Post-2005, the coloured line plots show the annual temperature changes for the New Zealand region under four different scenarios of future greenhouse gas concentrations, with the heavier lines showing the six-model average temperature projections for each concentration scenario, and the lighter lines showing the results for each of the six downscaled climate models for both historical and future periods.

For the future 2006-2100 period, the models show very little warming trend after about 2030 under the low greenhouse gas concentration ("RCP2.6", blue shading) scenario, whereas temperature changes between +2.0°C and +3.5°C by 2100 are projected under the high concentration ("RCP8.5", red shading) scenario.

Figure B-3 should not be interpreted as a set of specific predictions for individual years. However, it illustrates that although we expect a long term overall continuing upward trend in temperatures (other than for the RCP2.6 scenario), there will still be some relatively cool years. For this particular example, a year which is unusually warm under our present climate could become typical by about 2050, and an "unusually warm" year in 30-50 years' time (under the higher concentration scenarios) is likely to be warmer than anything we currently experience. The strength of future anthropogenic trends in other climate variables will be smaller in relation to their large year-to-year variability, with the notable exception of sea-level rise.

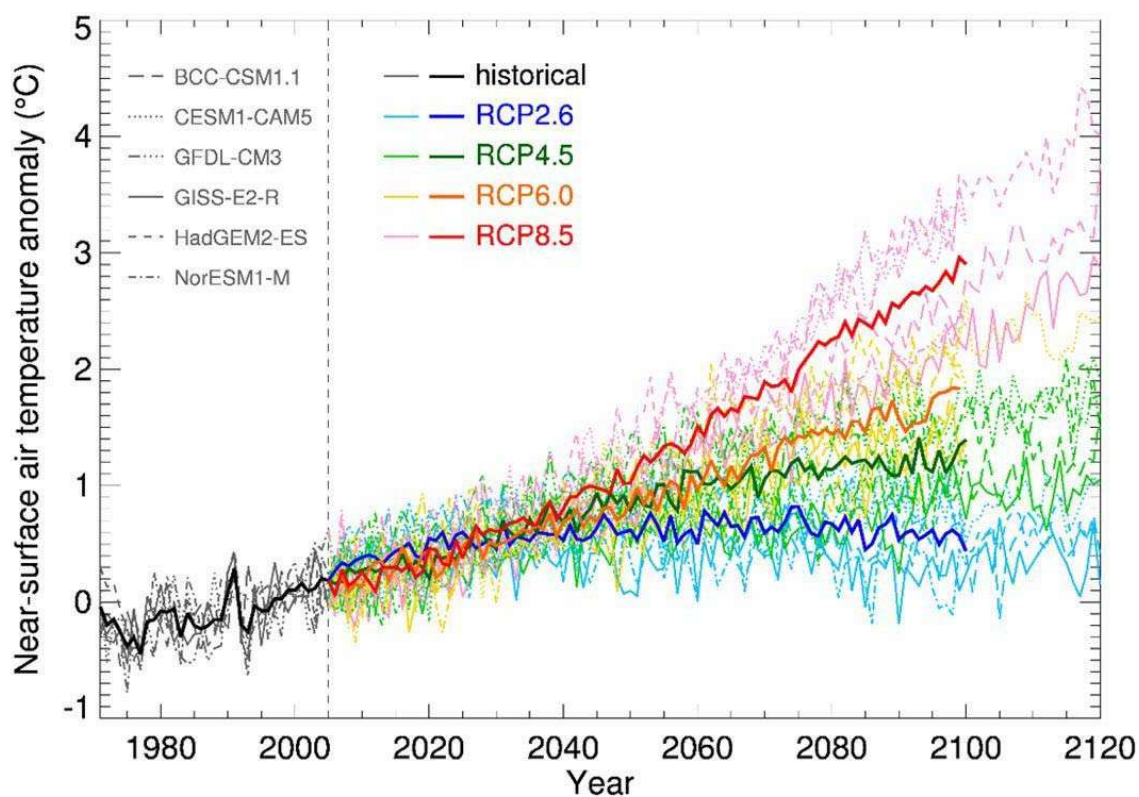


Figure B-3: New Zealand modelled air temperature. Historical (black) and future projections for four RCPs and six downscaled climate models, illustrating future year-to-year variability. See text for full explanation. From Ministry for the Environment (2018).

Appendix C Methodology

Climate modelling

NIWA has used global climate model simulations from the IPCC Fifth Assessment to generate climate change projections for New Zealand using both dynamical (regional climate modelling, RCM) and statistical downscaling procedures. These are described in more detail in a climate guidance manual prepared for the Ministry for the Environment (2018), but a short explanation for the dynamical procedure is provided below. All climate variables and indices presented in this report are based on the dynamical downscaling approach.

Coupled global atmosphere-ocean general circulation models (GCMs) are used to generate climate change projections for prescribed future greenhouse gas concentration scenarios, and results from these models are available through the Fifth Coupled Model Inter-comparison Project (CMIP5) archive (Taylor *et al.*, 2012). Simulations from six GCMs were selected by NIWA for dynamical modelling, and the bias corrected sea surface temperatures (SSTs) from these six CMIP5 models were used to drive a global atmosphere-only GCM, which in turn drives a higher resolution regional climate model (RCM) for the New Zealand domain. These CMIP5 models were chosen because they produced the most consistent results when compared to historical climate and circulation patterns in the New Zealand and Southwest Pacific region. Additional selection criteria for the parent global models was that they were the least similar to each other such that they spanned the likely range of model differences. The dynamical downscaling procedure involves forcing a higher-resolution regional climate model (RCM) with data from a coarser global model (GCM) at the lateral boundaries to obtain finer scale detail over a limited area.

The six GCMs chosen for the sea surface temperatures were BCC-CSM1.1, CESM1-CAM5, GFDL-CM3, GISS-E2-R, HadGEM2-ES and NorESM1-M. The NIWA downscaling (RCM) produced simulations that contain daily climate variables, including precipitation and surface temperature, from 1971 through to 2100. The native resolution of the regional climate model is approximately 30 km (0.27 degrees). However, climate models are known to have considerable biases due to inadequate representation of some critical processes and features (e.g. clouds, precipitation). The daily precipitation projections, as well as daily maximum and minimum temperatures, were bias corrected so that the probability distributions from the RCM were aligned with those derived from the Virtual Climate Station Network (VCSN) data on the model resolution when the RCM is driven by the observed large scale circulation across New Zealand (known as ‘re-analysis’ data, REAN; Sood, 2015). When the RCM is driven from the free-running GCMs, forced by CMIP5 sea surface temperatures (SSTs), additional biases occur due to biases in the large-scale circulation in the global model without data assimilation. Therefore, the climate variables from the RCM nested in the free running GCMs forced by historic greenhouse gas concentrations (RCPpast) are expected to have larger biases than where the lateral boundaries of the RCM are forced by reanalysis (REAN) data derived from observations.

The RCM output is then downscaled using interpolation and physically based models from ~30 km to a ~5 km grid at a daily time-step. The ~5 km grid corresponds to the VCSN grid⁹. Figure C-4 shows a schematic for the dynamical downscaling method used in this report.

⁹ Virtual Climate Station Network, a set of New Zealand climate data based on a 5 km by 5 km grid across the country. Data have been interpolated from ‘real’ climate station records (Tait *et al.*, 2006).

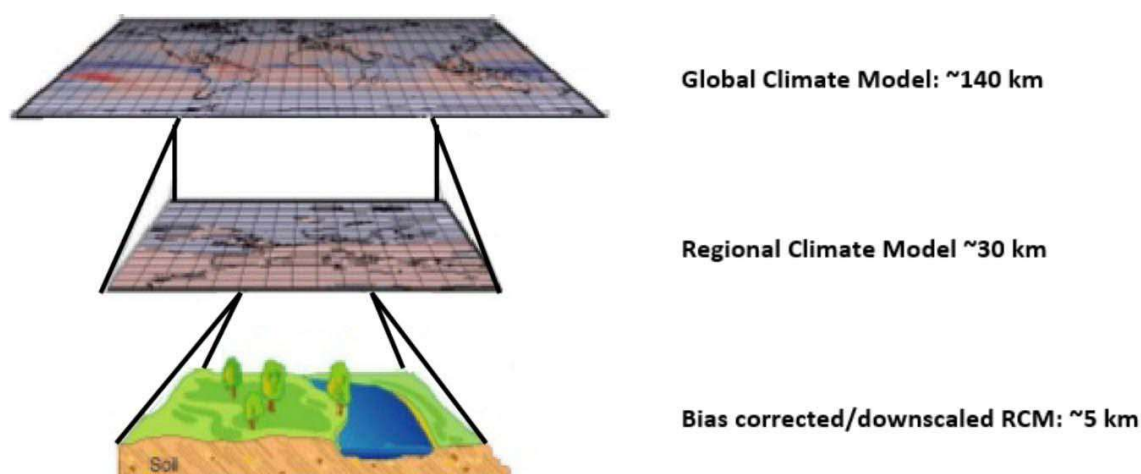


Figure C-4: Schematic diagram showing the dynamical downscaling approach. This approach utilises outputs from global climate models (relatively low spatial resolution; ~140 km) to generate regional climate model projections of a relatively high spatial resolution (~5 km) that better accounts for New Zealand's complex topography.

The change in the mean climatologies of climate variables averaged from the six model simulations, the 6-model ensemble mean, is presented for the climate simulations rather than for any individual model. The model ensemble mean climatology of climate variables is a better representation of the corresponding climate change signal (i.e. projected change of climate variables compared to historic average; also termed signal), since the averaging process reduces the internal variability of the climate system (also termed noise). This is particularly relevant where the signal to noise ratio is small. Though only a small number of model simulations (six) were possible due to large computing resources required for running climate model simulations, they were very carefully selected to cover a wide range of the larger CMIP5 model ensemble.

Climate projections are presented as a 20-year average for two future periods: 2031-2050 (termed '2040') and 2081-2100 (termed '2090'). All maps show changes relative to the baseline climate of 1986-2005 (termed '1995'), as used by IPCC (2013). Hence the projected changes by 2040 and 2090 should be thought of as 45-year and 95-year projected trends. Note that the projected changes use 20-year averages, which will not entirely represent and smoothen the natural variability of the selected period. The baseline maps (1986-2005) show modelled historical climate conditions from the same six models as the future climate change projection maps.

Representative concentration pathways

Assessing possible changes for our future climate due to human activity is challenging because climate projections strongly depend on estimates for future greenhouse gas concentrations. In turn, those concentrations depend on global greenhouse gas emissions that are driven by factors such as economic activity, population changes, technological advances and policies for mitigation and sustainable resource use. This range of uncertainty has been dealt with by the IPCC through consideration of 'scenarios' that describe concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The wide range of scenarios are associated with possible economic, political, and social developments during the 21st century. In the 2013 IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, a selection of these scenarios were called Representative Concentrations Pathways (RCPs).

These representative pathways are abbreviated as RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6.0, and RCP8.5, in the order of increasing radiative forcing in Watts/m² of area from increasing greenhouse gases (i.e. the change in net energy in the atmosphere due to greenhouse gas concentrations). RCP2.6 requires net global emissions to reduce to zero around the 3rd quarter of this century, leading to low anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations (also requiring removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere), and called the ‘mitigation’ pathway (and the scenario closest to the aspirational goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement of reducing global temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial times). RCP4.5 and RCP6.0 are two ‘stabilisation’ pathways (where greenhouse gas concentrations stabilise by 2100), and RCP8.5 represents continuing high global emissions without effective mitigation, which will lead to high greenhouse gas concentrations (a ‘high end’ pathway). Therefore, the RCPs represent the outcomes of a range of 21st-century climate policies.

Table C-1 shows the projected global mean surface air temperature for each RCP. The full range of projected globally averaged temperature increases for all pathways for 2081-2100 (relative to 1986-2005) is 0.3 to 4.8°C (Figure C-5). Warming will likely continue beyond 2100 under all RCPs except RCP2.6. Warming will continue to exhibit inter-annual-to-decadal variability and will not be regionally uniform.

Table C-1: Projected change in global mean surface air temperature. For the mid- and late- 21st century relative to the reference period of 1986-2005 for different RCPs. After IPCC (2013).

Scenario	Alternative name	2046-2065 (mid-century)		2081-2100 (end-century)	
		Mean (°C)	Likely range (°C)	Mean (°C)	Likely range (°C)
RCP2.6	Mitigation pathway	1.0	0.4 to 1.6	1.0	0.3 to 1.7
RCP4.5	Stabilisation pathway	1.4	0.9 to 2.0	1.8	1.1 to 2.6
RCP6.0	Stabilisation pathway	1.3	0.8 to 1.8	2.2	1.4 to 3.1
RCP8.5	High end pathway	2.0	1.4 to 2.6	3.7	2.6 to 4.8

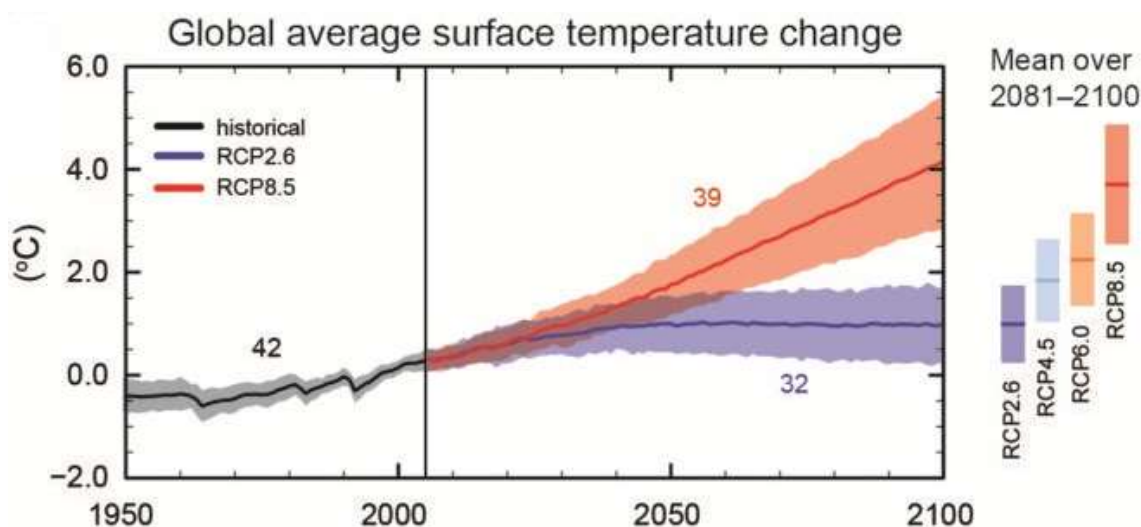


Figure C-5: CMIP5 multi-model simulated time series from 1950-2100 for change in global annual mean surface temperature relative to 1986-2005. Time series of projections and a measure of uncertainty (shading) are shown for scenarios RCP2.6 (blue) and RCP8.5 (red). Black (grey shading) is the modelled historical evolution using historical reconstructed forcing. The mean and associated uncertainties averaged over 2081–2100 are given for all RCP scenarios as coloured vertical bars to the right of the graph (the mean projection is the solid line in the middle of the bars). The numbers of CMIP5 models used to calculate the multi-model mean is indicated on the graph. From IPCC (2013).

Cumulative greenhouse gas emissions will largely determine global mean surface warming by the late 21st century and beyond. Even if emissions are stopped, the inertia of many changes in global climate will continue for many centuries to come, with the longest lag effect being sea-level rise. This represents a substantial multi-century climate change commitment created by past, present and future emissions – particularly for coastal areas facing ongoing sea-level rise.

Hydrological modelling

To assess the potential impacts of climate change on agricultural water resources, a hydrological model is required that can simulate soil moisture and river flows continuously and under a range of different climatic conditions, both historical and future. Ideally the model would also simulate complex groundwater fluxes but there is no national hydrological model capable of this at present. Because climate change implies that environmental conditions are shifting from what has been observed historically, it is advantageous to use a physically based hydrological model over one that is more empirical, with the assumption that a better representation of the biophysical processes will allow the model to perform better outside the range of conditions under which it is calibrated.

The hydrological model used in this study is NIWA’s TopNet model (Clark *et al.*, 2008), which is routinely used for surface water hydrological modelling applications in New Zealand. It is a spatially semi-distributed, time-stepping model of water balance, that is used commonly in New Zealand for catchment, regional and national scale hydrological modelling. It is driven by time-series of precipitation and temperature, and of additional weather elements where available. TopNet simulates water storage in the snowpack, plant canopy, rooting zone, shallow subsurface, lakes and rivers. It produces time-series of modelled river flow (without consideration of water abstraction, impoundments or discharges) throughout the modelled river network, as well as evapotranspiration, and does not consider irrigation. TopNet has two major components, namely a basin module and a flow routing module.

The model combines TOPMODEL hydrological model concepts (Beven *et al.*, 1995) with a kinematic wave channel routing algorithm (Goring, 1994) and a simple temperature based empirical snow model (Clark *et al.*, 2008). As a result, TopNet can be applied across a range of temporal and spatial scales over large watersheds using smaller sub-basins as model elements (Ibbitt and Woods, 2002; Bandaragoda *et al.*, 2004). Considerable effort has been made during the development of TopNet to ensure that the model has a strong physical basis and that the dominant rainfall-runoff dynamics are adequately represented in the model (McMillan *et al.*, 2010). TopNet model equations and information requirements are provided by Clark *et al.* (2008) and McMillan *et al.* (2013).

For the development of the national version of TopNet used here, spatial information in TopNet was provided by national datasets as follows:

- Catchment topography based on a nationally available 30 m Digital Elevation Model (DEM).
- Physiographical data based on the Land Cover Database version two and Land Resource Inventory (Newsome *et al.*, 2012).
- Soil data based on the Fundamental Soil Layer information (Newsome *et al.*, 2012).
- Hydrological properties (based on the River Environment Classification version one (REC1) (Snelder and Biggs, 2002).

The method for deriving TopNet's parameters based on GIS data sources in New Zealand is given in Table 1 of Clark *et al.* (2008). Due to the paucity of some spatial information at national/regional scales, some soil parameters are set uniformly across New Zealand.

To carry out the simulations required for this study, TopNet was run continuously from 1971 to 2100, with the spin-up period 1971 excluded from the analysis. The climate inputs were stochastically disaggregated from daily to hourly time steps. As the GCM simulations are "free-running" (based only on initial conditions, not updated with observations), comparisons between present and future hydrological conditions can be made directly (as each GCM is characterised by specific physical assumptions and parameterisation), but this also means that simulated hydrological hindcasts do not track observational records.

Hydrological simulations are based on the REC 1 digital river network aggregated up to Strahler catchment order three (approximate average catchment area of 7 km²) used within previous national and regional scale assessments (Pearce *et al.*, 2017; 2018); residual coastal catchments of smaller stream orders remain included. The simulation results comprise hourly time-series of various hydrological variables for each computational sub-catchment, and for each of the six GCMs and two RCPs considered. To manage the volume of output data, only river flows information was preserved; all the other state variables and fluxes can be regenerated on demand.

Hydrological projections are presented as the average for two future periods: 2036-2056 (termed 'mid-century') and 2086-2099 (termed 'late-century'). All maps show changes relative to the baseline climate (1986-2005 average). The periods analysed are slightly different from the corresponding time slices of the atmospheric modelling because the modelling was done before this project was initiated. We do not expect that the conclusions drawn would be substantively different if the periods were aligned. Hydrological projections were analysed for the following hydrological statistics: Mean annual discharge and Mean annual low flow (MALF).

Because of TopNet assumptions, soil and land use characteristics within each computational subcatchment are homogenised. Essentially this means that the soil characteristics and physical properties of different land uses, such as pasture and forest, will be spatially averaged, and the hydrological model outputs will approximate conditions across land uses. The data used in the hydrology section of the report is consistent with Collins and Zammit (2016).