

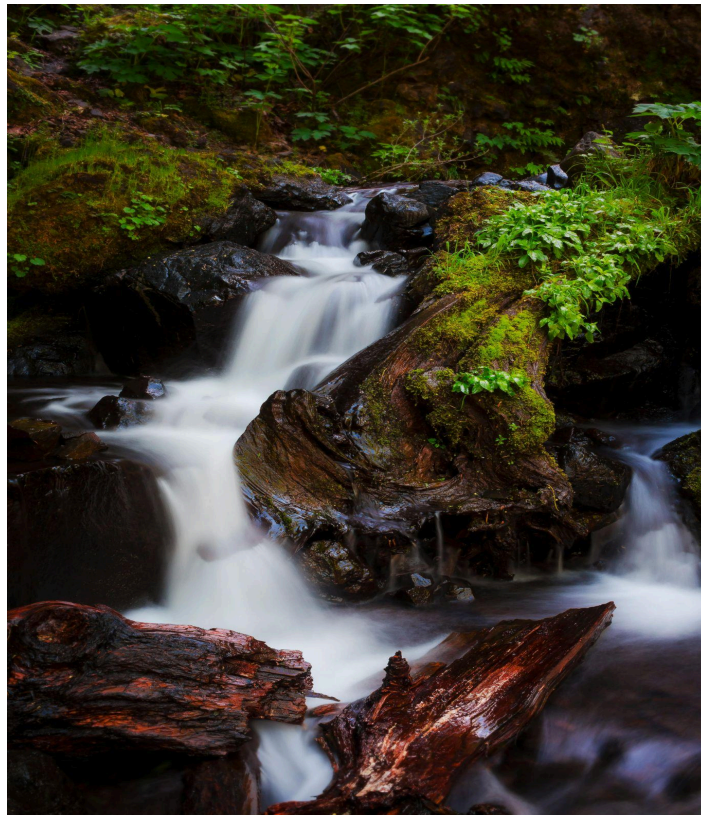
Climate advocacy

What is it?

Climate advocacy is about influencing people and policy to bring about positive change for people and the planet.

Advocacy can help to catalyse a 'tika' or just transition to a regenerative future and occurs through education, raising awareness, offering solutions, and supporting policies and practices that build community resilience and mitigate climate change risks and impacts.

Impactful advocacy is about ensuring that the collective impact of the climate movement is greater than the sum of its parts. Many people are doing many things in diverse ways. 'Good' advocacy tends to be evidenced-based, equipping the climate movement with skills and connections that help build scalable, sustained mechanisms towards equitable solutions.



Climate advocacy includes, but isn't limited to:

1. **Political advocacy:** Systemic change is needed to combat the climate crisis. This can be achieved through rallying community support, submissions, petitions and influencing policymakers through education and evidence-based research, to enact laws and regulations that honour the mana and mauri of our environment.
2. **Legal advocacy:** Legal advocacy is about using legal tools to hold polluters and decision-makers to account, to ensure that our climate laws and policies are fit for purpose and will be effective in enabling the transition to a low-emissions, regenerative future.
3. **Raising awareness:** Educating the public about how we can think and act differently to nurture our environment and mitigate climate effects - when we know better, we do better.
4. **Community engagement:** Mobilising our communities to be resilient, and more self-sufficient and to take collective, local action on environmental issues.
5. **International cooperation:** Supporting global agreements and initiatives such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which reaffirms the rights of indigenous people as custodians of the land.
6. **Empowering the voices of Rangatahi:** Amplify 'by rangatahi, for rangatahi' approaches to engaging young people in climate action. This can be in the form of wānanga, rallies, petitions or submission writing, or in other ways as led by young people.



Pictured: Successful KONS fund recipient, Para Kore implementing a carbon system at a local school in Waikato.

Why should philanthropy fund advocacy?

In essence: *advocacy drives impact.*

In the past, the philanthropic sector has generally been reluctant to provide funding for political advocacy due to concerns about compromising their neutrality. Political advocacy can occur without overstepping boundaries and appearing partisan. It can be achieved by providing evidence-based research to inform decisions, supporting public petitions, writing submissions, resourcing groups to advocate, and supporting local and public involvement in law-making processes.

Why is education a key component of advocacy?

Key outcomes of advocacy can be systems change and behaviour change. To achieve either of these we need to raise collective consciousness so that our communities better understand and ultimately welcome change.

When advocacy is done well our communities feel engaged, empowered and well-resourced to welcome systems and behavioural change.

Example: Many local councils are reducing the size of kerbside collection bins to cut landfill waste. If these smaller bins are introduced without educating the community on

the reasons for the change or how to adapt, they may not be well-received. However, if councils provide information through pamphlets, newspaper articles, or social media before distributing the new bins, explaining the purpose and offering resources like compost bins or food waste collection, communities are more likely to feel empowered to effectively manage the transition.

No one must be left behind. We must be particularly mindful of our most vulnerable whānau and communities to ensure a 'tika' or just transition.

In simple terms; *when we know better, we do better.*

How can we support climate advocacy?

Community trusts and the philanthropic sector are in a privileged position to support climate advocacy, raise collective consciousness, educate, promote awareness, and support systems change through empowering community mobilisation and involvement.

The Kaupapa of National Significance Climate Action Fund (KONS) is a collaborative fund from the Combined Community Trusts. It has funded three initiatives, all of which have some advocacy components. Due diligence is done by a specialised team and funding advocacy collectively is a powerful way to promote change.



Pictured: Riparian planting being done by successful KONS fund recipient; Para Kore.

Addressing risks

- Community trusts and philanthropic funders can, and should, be involved in evolving public policies to better benefit the lives of the communities they serve, using more than just funding as a tool.

The focus can be on meeting funder strategy goals and upholding evidence and expert advice; rather than showing alignment or bias to any particular political party.

- It is important to note that Māori, Pacific Peoples, immigrants, young people, members of the rainbow community and other marginalised groups are more likely to be political by nature, as they have lived experiences of inequity. To ensure a tika (just) transition, these people should have a genuine voice and be actively involved in evolving policy, especially on issues that affect them.

Funders and decision-makers are less likely to come from marginalised groups. Trustees may need personal and professional development to help them recognise and understand their privilege.

Good practice examples and learnings:

Clare Foundation

What sort of advocacy does Clare Foundation fund?

- Political advocacy (Lawyers for Climate Action NZ, Environmental Defence Society, 350 Aotearoa, Right to Repair Aotearoa Coalition)
- Legal advocacy (Lawyers for Climate Action NZ, Environmental Defence Society)
- Raising awareness (350 Aotearoa, Right to Repair Aotearoa Coalition)
- Community engagement (Love Rimurimu, composting initiatives, 350 Aotearoa, Right to Repair Aotearoa Coalition)
- International cooperation (The Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Global Plastics treaty)
- Empowering the voices of rangatahi (climate justice hui)

Clare Foundation has funded advocacy within all four of its strategic areas: environment, oral health, youth wellbeing, and women.

What is Clare Foundation’s ideal outcome for funding advocacy?

“This depends on what the funding is for. For example, the Clare Foundation supports Lawyers for Climate Action as they transition from a volunteer to an employee-run organisation. The ideal outcome would be for the organisation to increase its capacity to hold the government to account for emission reduction targets. If it’s for a specific campaign, then the ideal outcome will be whatever the organisation or collective is campaigning for (eg passing of right-to-repair legislation). But we’re also aware that seeds planted now may result in change later on. Advocacy that contributes to raising awareness, mobilising communities, connecting people, and shifting narratives and mindsets is also a success even if it doesn’t result in legislative or systems change now.”

Does the Clare Foundation have any reservations about funding advocacy? If so, how are these addressed?

“We see advocacy as a key lever for transformation so do not have any reservations in funding it. We carefully consider the political context for each advocacy project and whether the project/movement leaders will be able to mobilise communities and generate the support needed to create systemic shifts. We also look for opportunities to support collaboration.”

Bay Trust

At a BayTrust planning day held with Trustees in 2020, the breadth of activities that philanthropy could be involved in was discussed beyond just granting into advocacy groups (see below).

Advocacy Activities Available to Philanthropics					
Commission Research	Raise awareness	Fund/support Advocacy Organisations	Build Coalitions	Engage with local government	Engage with central government
Shape the debate by surfacing new insights via independent objective research	About emergent or pressing issues via communications	Fund organisations for whom advocacy is core or non-core business	Coordinate an alliance of stakeholders to support a shared position or engage in joint activity	Make submissions to Annual and Long-term plans and Strategies	Make submissions on planned policy and legislative reforms and changes through to lobbying
BayTrust e.g. Housing research (2016) conducted by CSI	BayTrust e.g. Face to face through meeting with community organisations, partners etc	BayTrust e.g. Currently fund a few: Socialink, Baywide Housing Advocacy Service	BayTrust e.g. Bay Brighter Futures Healthy Housing Forum	BayTrust e.g. BayTrust has in the past made submissions to Councils	BayTrust e.g. Through PNZ and Community Trusts
Lower level advocacy Less political			Higher level advocacy More political		

BayTrust Impact Scoring Framework: Relationship between systems change and advocacy

A central component in the BayTrust impact scoring framework is a “Bold Meaningful Change (BMC) score” (related to its purpose to “*Accelerate bold meaningful change, assisting BOP communities and the environment to flourish*”). This particular element of the framework attempts to ascertain the extent to which applications are involved in systems change activities¹ and therefore most likely to create bold meaningful change and further the purpose.

A lower BMC score indicates groups’ activities that contain little or no systems change elements or activities that respond to ongoing issues, endeavouring to meet demand/largely for individual benefit and where BayTrust support won’t change demand (e.g. event funding, foodbanks etc). Whereas a higher BMC score reflects groups’ activities that respond to ongoing issues, endeavouring to meet demand *and* may facilitate some change over and above the individual benefit or activities that explicitly include elements of systems change along with service delivery (e.g. youth advocacy groups, some social services and housing groups, environmental groups).

“To give you an example of a group receiving a higher BMC score, we have supported Wai Kokopu doing catchment restoration in the WBOP, but their activities go beyond planting and include: convening industry and Farmer workshops (eg Ballance, Agrichemicals, Zespri, Fonterra) to reduce nitrates used, working with farmers in supporting them in land use change, to retire marginal land and restoration/planting, fencing of streams, developing a catchment wide strategy and catchment-wide weed management strategy, and being instrumental in the National Catchment Group interfacing directly with ministers – so we would call this systems change work.” - *Lisa Hickling, BayTrust Research and Evaluation Manager.*

The Impact Assessment Framework contains weightings that can increase the scores of particular activities to enable the Trust to lean into one of its *priority areas* (Kaitiakitanga, Tū Māori Mai) or values: responding to climate change or the principles of the ToW. The overall impact score informs granting decision-making. The Framework continues to be refined over time and is reliant on organisations’ understanding and responses to application questions: There is some qualitative interpretation that varies across organisations and activities, particularly around

¹ Systems change activities

e.g., Advocacy, influencing policy, key players and markets, submissions, addressing inequities, public awareness campaigns, grassroots leadership and change agents, coalitions and networks for collective action, innovative models that challenge status quo coalitions and networks for collective action, innovative models that challenge status quo, participatory budgeting processes, environmental projects aimed at increasing biodiversity etc.

beneficiaries and intergenerational benefits. However, it does provide a framework to inform decision-making that supports the BayTrust purpose and is more robust and objective compared to what has been used in the past.

In general, BayTrust opex funding allows for advocacy across most of their funding and they encourage this.

Examples of advocacy BayTrust has funded:

- *The film Toitū te Whenua* - This work was commissioned by BayTrust initially as just visual footage of the state of the environment - a snapshot in time - so in 10 years the process could be repeated and provide some visual indication of the impact of the projects BayTrust has supported (advocacy for the environment, raising awareness). The impact of the film was that it exposed some environmental degradation that did not reflect favourably on the local council. Whilst initially, the council was not particularly happy about the film, ultimately it resulted in a much closer and more fruitful working relationship between BayTrust and the council including the creation of a sub-regional environmental funders group.
- Sustainable Bay Of Plenty supported by multi-year funding has a strong advocacy (and sometimes political) focus, holding councils to account to provide better public transport options and other issues, also supporting sustainable tourism.
- Socialink supported by multi-year funding has an explicit role to advocate for social issues facing the community and the community sector (amongst other roles) and they do this through submissions, campaigns, and convening the Child Poverty Action group.



Conclusion:

As we reach 1.5 degrees warming and experience exacerbated impacts of the climate crisis such as increased food and water insecurity, more frequent severe weather events, and rising temperatures, we must be prepared to do things differently. After all, **If we always do what we've always done, we'll always get what we've always got.**

We are in such a privileged position in philanthropy, and we have less than a decade to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change. Our mahi can evolve to spend greater time and investment on evidence-based pursuits or strategies that create systems and policy change that translate to behaviour change and effective outcomes for our people and planet. We have the power and the capital to make a significant difference.

Extra Resources:

[Why Advocate for Climate Change? - Tearfund Report](#)

['The importance in understanding nonprofit advocacy' a Giving Compass article](#)

[Three Steps to working with your board to advance Advocacy - BoardSource Blog](#)

[Advocacy in the New Zealand Not-For-Profit Sector](#)

