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Media Release:

Major Climate Change and Business Conference to be held in Auckland, New Zealand, October 2015

The Environmental Defence Society (New Zealand) has announced that in conjunction with the Climate Change and Business Centre (Australia) it is hosting a major international summit on climate change for business.

The Australia-New Zealand Climate Change and Business Conference will take place at the Rendezvous Hotel, Auckland, on 20-21 October 2015.

“This resumes a successful event that we both ran on a regular basis during the period 2004-11,” said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

“Support entities for the conference include Business New Zealand, Local Government New Zealand and the Insurance Council of New Zealand. We are in dialogue with other potential supporters here and in Australia.

“2015 is a very important year in the evolution of climate change responses. We have new policy settings emerging in Australia, and New Zealand’s Emissions Trading Scheme is being reviewed.

“COP21 in Paris in December will seek a mandate for a universal binding agreement as a successor to the Kyoto Protocol.

“We believe that it is important for the business community to understand these domestic and international policy changes in order to manage risks and explore new opportunities for investment and innovation.

“The conference is specifically designed to be a safe place for business to be engaged in a dialogue with political leaders and policy-makers. It will be a great opportunity to compare the evolving business environments in both Australia and New Zealand.

“A key focus for the conference will be on the business opportunities that transformation to a low carbon economy should bring. We’ll be profiling leading initiatives from key trading partners and exploring how the market is responding to fresh policy and pricing signals from governments.

“Another key theme for the event will be that of adaptation: how do we respond to a changing climate? This is a big issue for the finance, insurance, energy, transport and local government sectors as we see evidence of more regular extreme weather events causing damage to communities and infrastructure,” said Mr Taylor.

Tim Grafton, CEO of the Insurance Council of New Zealand, says that adapting now to reduce risk is essential because insurance can only transfer risk.

“Without adaptation some risks will get too high so insurance no longer becomes available or accessible to all. But insurance is needed to speed economic recovery after a disaster. So every dollar invested in adaptation now saves many more post-disaster,” he said.

Lawrence Yule, President of Local Government New Zealand, says we have an opportunity to partner with Government and the private sector in managing the risks.

“Councils across New Zealand are acutely aware of the need to understand and manage the risks of natural hazards. But we are part of a bigger picture and, given an increase in adverse weather events, we need to partner with others to collectively manage risks, recovery and outcomes for our communities,” said Mr Yule.

Mr Taylor said the conference organisers were now inviting expressions of interest from those willing to support the event with sponsorship and relevant presentations.

“This is a significant opportunity for us to stimulate discussion and action from business and to share emerging lessons from both countries. There is no doubt that climate change presents a big challenge and demands a joined-up effort from business and governments,” Mr Taylor concluded.

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