

The transition to a healthy low-carbon world – sticking points and opportunities

We know better than ever the reasons to act, but there is still resistance to serious change to reduce climate risk. What is really difficult about climate change is not understanding the science, it is accepting the consequences of the science, and the low-carbon transition requires fundamental changes to the way we do business. Other sticking points include the long delay between emission reduction and climate response, the need for coordinated international action, and the lack of simple technical fixes. But opportunities abound. There are plenty of low carbon technologies already to hand. None of them are complete solutions, however altogether the gains are, potentially, considerable. A global approach means everyone can benefit from innovation, and the sum of the whole effort may exceed the sum of its parts. Think of a cycling peloton – the speed of travel together exceeds the velocity that anyone can sustain on their own. The long lag between release of carbon dioxide and climate impacts means there is time to invest thoughtfully in adaptation. And the radical changes in consumption that are necessary (not just filters in vehicle tail-pipes, but fewer tail-pipes) opens up new prospects for cleaner, happier, healthier settlements everywhere.