

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
POLITICIANS' PERSPECTIVES – AN ELECTION FORUM
14 October 2008; Knox Church Christchurch

Opening speeches 4 mins per speaker

Nicky Wagner National

Sustainability is an important issue. Nicky has been deeply involved in the Sustainable Cities Trust and served on ECan. While NZ portrays itself as clean and green 100% pure it's important that all of us in this country stand up for these values. Environment needs to be watched closely, to keep overseas business, and she doesn't believe it's currently being managed. There are new pests coming in weekly, deteriorating rivers and the forest estate is shrinking. This govt has failed. National environment policy is known as blue/green and for over ten years have held the principals for a better future. 4 principles. Sciences to look at good ? decision making and their party believes it should be through incentives rather than rules. The key issue for Nicky was that NZ is a unique birthright to access the environment and the blue/green vision is the new framework with a distinctive NZ flavour through collaboration.

Ivor Watson ACT

Would you change your credit card ? this country has. Three times since the 1960s NZ has spent more overseas than it exports. It is not sustainable and kiwis have stopped saving. Borrowed \$15 billion, and owe over \$61 billion. Act has 20 points to put NZ back on the path of sustained economic growth. People are voting with their feet. Harder to maintain as the elderly grows and the workforce shrinks. It is a burden on the next generation and is unsustainable. Cut taxes. Young men would rather not work and be drug pushers and we don't need young men as drones. Act would give them scholarships and knowledge skills and not to be dependent on welfare. Clean green, we can only use up to what we can sustain. We should take responsibility.

Hector Matthews Māori Party

The Māori Party is for all New Zealanders. There are three principals. Treaty of Waitangi and Whanau Ora (healthy whanau) and economy. Collaboration is the fruit of dialogue. Tick to the Kyoto Protocol, tick to better public transport and need to get more people cycling and walk kids to school. The emission of greenhouse gases leaves us with twice the average of the OECD. Not putting more carbon into the atmosphere than is offset. Climate change is too big, too critical and the economy is part of the environment and not the other way round. There is an obsession with a growing economy which is insane. Need to sustainably contribute to targets to offset emissions.

Steve Campbell NZ First

Sustainability must be achieved without damaging our living standards. People must be brought along and it must not be demanded of them. The NZ Forest policies do not focus on sustainability. There is a genuine concern for the environment without being a fringe environment movement. It can only be achieved through government industry and community and the image now has problems that need to be addresses. Energy power is a necessity and should be renewable energy if possible but must consider all options. Transport is a key to

rural lifestyles and our place in the world. Industry has been overlooked by recent governments. Fisheries are a valuable natural resource 1.3 billion. ??? To keep it sustainable we cant deplete our fisheries. Vital for our agricultural sustainable practices are important for all sectors.

Lianne Dalziel Labour

The sustainable forums are the most important forums. A challenge to the public - people want instant gratification and we must be future focused as a trustee society and we do not have the right to do?? She endorses the Parliamentary commissioner and no one component of the system functioning, must have regard to the physical/ecological/social values. Must become one with all things. Those who stopped the carbon regime which they knew as the 'fart tax' stymied what were attempts to improve environment., as is the case with domestic showers. People need to wake up and smell the fair trade coffee. Government cannot legislate but must lead by example. Smart active government working with key stakeholders, leadership important, Helen Clark has given that leadership, she was not a follower and important to show way forward. Rail, public transport, meaning across all sectors. Not to think low carbon future but to think post carbon future.

Russell Norman Green Party

Looking at the diagram if you sacrifice the environment for the economy then you are losing. Principles are for sustainability, peace and democracy and to integrate into the policies Treaty of Waitangi. Trying to relearn the lesson of our ancestors and how to live sustainably. Since the 15th century on the greens say we have lost our way and that limits to growth to not apply to people. This is the generation that has to face the reality of living well. Have to ask the hard questions such as why the next motorway? Invest in public transport. Have rules around cycling, to make it safe for cyclists, that car drivers should be more responsible to cycling,. The dairy sector is wrecking the rivers and lakes and aquifers. Good that sustainability on the mainstream agenda, and this county needs green new deal. Not building gasfire energy, only build renewable energy. Stand up for the environment and sustainable environment.

Vanessa Roberts United Future

The environment is at a personal level. In her schooldays Vanessa can remember picking up cartons from sides of roads so people cared for the environment before the green party was around. United Future principal on the environment is that people are an integral part of it. Her picture is different. She sees the environment as the foundation of the house, the base to build the framework of the home. The economy is the jib board and if we steal from the foundation then the economy is weak. Water standards, huge desire for research and require zoning insulation energy retro fit solar panels. An up front cost stops people from doing anything at the moment. Public transport , United Future wants to make sure economy supports the environment and not the other way round.

Jim Anderton Progressives

Angus Tait used to use the analogy of a 3 legged stool. Jim uses it to show the economy, the environment and the social. All together. Most people don't think that we should be destroying the planet, need a good work life balance. Deforestation – illegal wood important issue. Water quality. Sustainability the most hard to achieve. As Minister for the Resource Management Act in court more than

any other minister. Good progress with examples of dolphins, blue cod and kawhai being protected important for the future of the species to be available for future fishing. There is more awareness now. Not at the final destination yet. Confidence that the coalition is moving in the right direction. Taking into account the 3 legged stool.

Notes taken by Lorraine Leonard (Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch)

Questions from organising groups

Living Streets Aotearoa Questions

1. Would you support increasing expenditure on existing road and footpath maintenance and expenditure on walking and cycling rather than spending tens of millions on brand new road projects?

YES – Maori Party, NZ First

NO – ACT, Labour, Jim Anderton

No card – National, Greens, United Future

Spoke to the question – National, ACT, Greens, United Future

2. Currently central government funding for walking and cycling only covers the transport component whilst central government funding for motorised vehicles includes both recreational and transport components. Will you ensure that all modes of transport are treated equally and are funded for both recreational and transport purposes?

YES – National, Maori Party, NZ First, Green, United Future, Jim Anderton

NO – ACT,

No card/undecided – Labour

Spoke to the question – United Future

Forest and Bird Questions

3. Water is a big issue in Canterbury. There are concerns about our rivers and streams, aquifers and drinking water. The Regional Council, ECan, has declared some zones as 'red zones', ie, already allocated or even over-allocated. Yet the Environment Court allowed Synlait to be issued a permit to further extract river water, from a designated 'red zone'. Would your party call a moratorium on further major water takes until major studies on Canterbury's water use are completed?

YES – Maori Party, NZ First, Greens

NO – Labour, Jim Anderton

No card/undecided – National, ACT, United Future

Spoke to the question – National, Maori, Greens, NZ First and Jim Anderton

4. NZ is one of the least efficient users of electricity and water in the OECD. Would your party introduce compulsory national building codes for new housing, requiring, at least, water collection tanks, greywater systems and solar water panels?

YES – Maori party, NZ First, Greens, Jim Anderton

NO – ACT,

No card or undecided – National, Labour & United Future

Spoke to the question – Labour & United Future

Sustainable Business Network Questions

5. Green House Gas Emissions are only one of the problems that we are facing in terms of environmental degradation, will your party provide incentives for companies to reduce/mitigate their environmental impacts (other than offsetting through a trading mechanism)?

YES – National, Maori party, NZ First, Labour, Greens, United Future, Jim Anderton

NO – ACT,

No card –

Spoke to the question – Jim Anderton

6. Currently businesses are only required to file financial reports with the Companies office. Does your party have a policy framework that will support the adoption of triple bottom line reporting as standard amongst all businesses?

YES – Maori Party, Labour, Greens, Jim Anderton

NO – NZ First, United Future

No card – National, ACT

Spoke to the question – Maori Party, Labour

Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch Questions

7. Do your party's policies support the protection and improvement of indigenous biodiversity values and habitats, and the recognition of kaitiakitanga?

YES – National, ACT, Maori Party, NZ First, Labour, United Future

NO –

No card – Greens, Jim Anderton

Spoke to the question – National, Maori Party, Greens & Jim Anderton

8. Do your party's policies address the implications of the declining availability of affordable petroleum.

YES – National, ACT, Maori Party, NZ First, Labour, Greens, United Future & Jim Anderton

NO –

No card –

Spoke to the question –

New Zealand Association of Environmental Educators Question

9. Sustainability is now a key theme of the New Zealand Curriculum. Does your party agree with this being the case, and will it work to ensure that education for sustainability is actively implemented within school learning programmes?

YES – National, Maori Party, NZ First, Labour, Greens, United Future & Jim Anderton

NO – ACT,

No card –

Spoke to the question –

Question from the Organising Committee as a whole.

10 Much work to further sustainability is being done voluntarily, through a wide range of environmental, conservation, sustainable transport advocacy and alternative energy groups, and through the transition towns movement. Does your party have policy designed to encourage the Tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector, and are you prepared to fund initiatives such as 'The Clearing House' www.communityresearch.org, that seek to foster and distribute research into developments in this area?

YES – National, Maori Party, NZ First, Greens, United Future

NO – ACT

No card – Labour, Jim Anderton

Spoke to the question – Labour

Notes taken by Carolyn Brown – Sustainable Business Network

Questions from the floor

Questions were asked of 2 politician's each.

1. How would you see the RMA being strengthened

Green: When the Act was drafted it was assumed that there would be a lot of National and Regional Policy Statements to guide the application of the Act. That hasn't happened and we need strong National Policy Statements to guide local and regional councils.

Labour: Leanne acknowledged that this was not an area of expertise for her. She noted that National wanted to loosen the Resource Management Act.

2. In the light of the events of recent weeks, will your party pursue a new economic model to pursue integrated environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability?

National: Sustainability must underpin everything. The economy and the environment must go hand in hand. National wants to see greater use of national standards and stressed that there is a lack of consistency in the RMA, so there is a need to streamline this to strengthen our ability to make gains in all of the areas noted above.

Labour: Labour wants to boost:

- Education and skills training
- Innovation
- Export incentives'
- Sustainability
- Infrastructure
- Savings

and believes that this would address the question. Drew attention to the negative impact of Nationals plan to remove \$ from research and development and to undermine savings initiatives such as Kiwisaver.

3. How will your tax policy benefit the environment?

ACT: Tax coming down will stimulate economy. Wealthier societies are better able to look after environment, e.g. Ireland

Green: Tax changes the relative prices of things. Ecological tax shifting off work and enterprise and onto pollution and resource use. Reductions in income tax under this model would be offset by resource charges e.g. a water levy. This approach would make the market put more value on environmental goods and services.

4. Given that design is an essential part of cradle to cradle sustainable innovation, how does your party's policy support creative industries, and research and development?

Labour: Labour's policies are based on investing for the future, and economic growth that is sustainable. We need to retain the kiwi identity through creativity. Labour, and particularly Helen Clark, has shown leadership in creative areas such as culture and the arts.

National: Stressed the need to do away with grants so that industries don't become dependent on them. It hinders their creativity to be having to scabble around for grants. Stressed the need for economic development, so that creative industries develop to a place that they are sustainable in their own right, without reliance on grants. Stressed the importance of protecting intellectual property in this.

5. So many products are now packed in sealed, non-recyclable plastic (also hard to open). These materials are non-biodegradable. We could serve the planet in a better way than this. What is your party's policy about packaging?

National: The Waste Minimisation Bill requires people to have to think about the other end of a product's life and how it can be disposed of. This would lead to the redesign of the product and packaging.

Green: The Greens supported the Waste Management Bill and the Product Stewardship Scheme. These can be used to ensure a product can't be sold in New Zealand unless it creates minimal waste. The problem is not policy but enforcement – who would be willing to reduce packaging by enforcing the Act against a very strong business lobby?

6. I hear that the government is proposing to kick-start the economy by think-big infrastructure projects such as major road projects. Is this correct, and does it make environmental sense?

Labour: During a downturn in the economy employment can be stimulated by bringing forward infrastructure spending that is already planned. This might include projects such as retrofitting older houses with insulation. Labour does not intend to stimulate the economy by starting up new projects.

National: We are nervous of big promises from Labour, many of which have not been costed. Labour is promising a mini-budget if it gets re-elected. We should be concerned.

7. We've just been told that New Zealand will negotiate a Free Trade Agreement with the USA. Australia, in order to get its FTA with the US, weakened its equivalent of Pharmac. As a consequence pharmaceuticals became more expensive for the Australian public. How do we know that a similar thing won't happen to us?

Labour: This won't happen as the continuance of Pharmac is not negotiable

Green: Pharmac, our limits on foreign ownership, and our GE-free status, are seen as obstacles by the US, who want to knock them over. There is great danger in this deal.

8. Science is a key component to understanding sustainability and environmental protection. How do you propose to increase science funding, notably the Fast Forward Fund and keep scientists in New Zealand?

Green: We agree with this premise and support the Fast Forward Fund. The research and development tax incentive should be retained. Basic science is lacking funding and scientists are spending lots of time chasing funds. We need more funding for basic science, especially related to sustainability. The Dept of Conservation has lost its marine scientists because of a lack of funding, and must now purchase its marine research from NIWA, who also have fisheries contracts. Concerned that NIWA's reliance for funding on contracts from the primary sector could cause conflicts in terms of the research it produces for DoC.

Labour: There are three main areas of research that get funded: FRST has had increased funding; universities do much research in NZ; and there is the Fast Forward Fund. (Leanne then handed over to Progressive's Jim Anderton, as this was his area of speciality in the current government.)

Progressive: It is unbelievable that National would take away the research and development tax credit, or that they intend to scrap the Fast Forward Fund. This latter is the biggest investment in agricultural research in New Zealand's history.

Closing statements

Parties were given 1 minute each to make a closing statement

- Jim Anderton (Progressive)

Noted that 65% of NZ's foreign exchange earned by agriculture and that NZ would be 3rd world without it. Stressed the need to increase Fast forward and Research and Development fund. Stressed that we must produce food in order to help the 3rd world and need be grateful for having such a lovely country.

- Vanessa Gordon (United)

NZ best to focus on research, development, and technology for the things we need to continue to live in our current manner. NZ is a good place to be, clean and green. Science and development are the future. We can have a clean green future.

- Russel Norman (Green)

Focused on practical responses e.g. insulation in homes. Need to be the guardians of NZ, guardians of the environment and the economy. Protecting the economic foundations of a green economy

- Lianne Dalziel (Labour)

NZ must be clean and green. Hard questions need to be answered by us all. No misinformation. Priorities must be established and we must stand by them. NZ is blessed as a wealthy country and functioning democracy. If NZ can't tackle climate change who can?

- Steve Campbell (NZ First)

NZ lucky to have good food and welfare and a clean green image. Need to work hard to maintain this image. Must hold image sacred and make decisions based on scientifically proof.

- Hector Matthews (Maori)

We are lucky to be here, wealthy and educated. Need to be courageous and take steps to lead us. Some people will hurt as a result of changes. There is a need to confront issues, protect NZ. Maori Party in partnership with others will assist.

- Ivor Watson (ACT)

- Sees role of government as being much narrower. Government should not impede progress. Progress and sensible development will preserve a clean green environment.

- Nicky Wagner (National)

Water and trees are depleting and under Labour things have got worse. Fuel usage is increasing and carbon emission increasing. Labour has left a bad legacy. Time for Change.

Notes taken by Sharon Torstenson (Christchurch Council of Social Services), Ian Burn (Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch), and Wendy Everingham (Living Streets Aotearoa).