

Talk to 350 Christchurch hui Friday 13 May 2022 at WEA

I want to look at the bigger picture of what's happening in the world and how we as activists fit into it.

We often say to one another – what will it take to wake people up, get those in power to take notice. We need a Pearl Harbour, something to make the government declare a wartime emergency.

I'd argue we are moving towards a Pearl Harbour moment right now – but its social and economic tipping points that are sliding.

The last IPCC report didn't talk so much about collapsing ecosystems, it talks about crop failure, mass migrations, resource wars and rioting as fuel and food prices skyrocket. All of which is happening.

These tipping points are getting closer to us – Radio NZ today mused on the impacts of nuclear war for NZ – not radiation but collapsing global supply chains and shortages of fuel, food, pharmaceuticals and other imports we value.

It's suddenly become more conceivable that within the next year the government may actually be constrained to declare a civil emergency.

And this is becoming obvious to lots of New Zealanders in a way it wasn't even 6 months ago.

Two years of covid also showed us how quickly ordinary life can be turned upside down – and also how we can pull together, be the Team of 5 million, driven by kindness.

We've seen how a government can use its power to ensure the homeless get housing, and create funding so small businesses don't fall over and essential workers are protected.

And we've been having the debates over freedom versus protecting the weak, which are inherent in such emergencies. We know something about emergency now.

So we're facing unprecedented risk – food, fuel and import shortages, maybe war. What we most need now is a clear pathway through these crises, an alternative vision to the neofascist narrative that Freedom camp (and Trump) showed is so quick to spring up when people are angry, stressed and disengaged. We all need to see a way forward together.

So a bunch of us out of XR nationally have pulled together what we've called a Pathway to Survival.

It's all the transformative ideas that people are working on, looking at how we could do things differently, how we can tackle the interrelated climate, ecosystem, Tiriti and social justice crises.

Just as the crises are interrelated, so are the solutions:

To keep within global 1.5 degrees, we in Aotearoa must end our GHG emissions by 2030.

To do this we must cease coal, oil and gas production and imports by 2030. We must end intensive animal farming, especially dairy by 2030

The only way we can do this is to use increasingly less energy – it's too late to replace it with renewables, we have to drop our energy consumption steadily until we reach zero emissions.

Think about it - to do that we have to bring in a form of rationing or equitable quota allocation of energy for every person, one that steadily declines over time.

We can do this by cutting nonessential production, travel and consumption.

We also need to shift our economy to a degrowth model – measure wellbeing, not GDP, bring in a planned shift to a steady state economy that stays within ecosystem boundaries.

It can't be done! But in fact it can. It's what any government does in war-time –they ration scarce resources fairly to get people's buy-in and prevent fighting, they define what's essential activity and what's not, and they commandeer resources like land and production systems.

Another small and extremely poor island nation did this very thing in 1990 – when USSR collapsed Cuba suddenly found itself without fuel, fertiliser or pharmaceutical imports. Over 2 years Cuba localised and decentralised most of its activities (food production, work, health, education) to reduce travel. People walked, biked and bussed a lot. It was a hard time but they survived.

This points to the changes we will need – localisation, self-sufficiency of food production, and for that - protection of our land and water, a fast shift to regenerative farming, to pollinator protection.

The other thing we must protect and beef up is our carbon sink capacity – our bush, wetlands and urban tree canopy to soak up as much carbon as possible

So yes it can be done and many of you in this room have been part of these solutions for years.

But for any government to have the legitimacy to make such huge and harsh changes, they have to re-create that Team of 5 Million. This is how social and Tiriti justice are part of the solution to the climate and etc.

Rationing won't work unless everyone has income and housing security - just as we saw with Covid. So guaranteed minimum income, just transition, fairer taxation – these are part of the solutions to the climate crisis, not just nice to haves in themselves.

We must also grab the opportunity being offered us by tangata whenua of joining them in a formal process of constitutional transformation. This gives Aotearoa a unique pathway to create new forms of governance based on shared values of honouring Papatūānuku and all her creatures. It is a way to replace the old vested interests with the voices of ordinary people.

But what are you gonna DO, I hear you cry!

So we've got this scenario of what needs to be done to survive the crises coming at us

We're taking it to all those working on these solutions and inviting them to join in a coalition of climate, ecosystem, Tiriti and social justice organisations and people,

We want that coalition to take these ideas into the 2023 election (and this year's council elections), as a wero or challenge to all candidates and parties

We need to come together not just as climate groups but as citizens. We need to climb out of our silos, our specific campaigns and communities of interest and reach out to one another as citizens facing a common emergency – because that is what this is.