

Time to speak truth to power

Last October's COP-out locked our children into a 2 degree rise future on an overheating earth where unsurvivable 40+C days become common in many countries, where global trade falters as container ports go underwater and drought, flood and tornados cause food and water shortages, mass migrations, failed states and resource wars.

Many of us working on good green change now live with constant grief and rage. We sounded the alarm, got the declarations of climate emergency – and watched Business As Usual grind on, no drop in greenhouse gas emissions, no pause in the trajectory to resource overshoot, just the super-rich getting richer.

If we don't go for a major reset now, when will we? If Greens don't lead that charge, who will?

There's growing broad agreement on what needs to be done. Something like:

- Shift to a steady-state economy based on collective welfare. A carbon tax to force high-emitters to change behaviour. Change the banking system. Identify the vested interests standing in the way of our collective survival and remove their genocidal voices from decision-making.**
- End wasteful consumption. Jason Hickel's book *Less is More* shows how. Stop planned obsolescence. Move from ownership to usership. Stop advertising. End food waste.**
- Stop Aotearoa's big greenhouse gas emitters. Now. Cease coal production and use. Cease fracking and off shore oil exploration. Cease intensive dairying and convert the land to sustainable food production or rewilding.**
- Change our relationship with land, water and nature to prioritise climate safety (urban trees canopy, bush/wetland carbon sinks) and local food self-sufficiency and survival.**

Can't be done? Of course it can. What else do governments do, faced with the emergency of war, if not commandeer land and resources? This is an emergency!

None of this is doable without the support of the majority of New Zealanders. Or without the support of those whose whenua was taken and colonised in the first place.

Right now so many people are struggling with housing and income security. They are angry, hurting and disillusioned with politicians and those who run the system.

If Greens want people to listen to us on climate and nature, we must address their immediate concerns in ways that make sense. Like:

- **Slamming Labour's inaction on housing, income and the wealth gap. Max Rashbrooke shows how – tax the superrich to fund income security for the poorest. Guaranteed minimum income/ UBI/UBS, a capital gains tax, free access to education.**
- **Replacing the dominant voices of the vested interests driving the fossil-fuelled growth model with new forms of governance and participatory democracy. Aotearoa has the amazing opportunity of Matike Mai, the process set up by tangata whenua to re-vision shared values and more equitable power relationships for this country. Let's do it.**

What do we have left to lose by speaking truth to power?

While we benefited from having a climate minister to get the Climate Commission off the ground, 2021 also made clear how little power Greens out of cabinet really have.

We're a year out from an election. There are a lot of disaffected Labour voters out there, growing numbers of disillusioned Green voters and a mass of disengaged non-voters. If we don't speak to them, who will? I hate to think.

Many of these statements are contestable. We can spend our time endlessly debating the detail, or we can get out there, find our allies and work with them to put together a public plan of action that offers real solutions to all those ordinary people who are getting hurt and angry enough to drive change.

Because the planetary crisis is reaching us like an unstoppable tsunami.

We have a short time within which to swing our country round to meet it in collective strength, rather than fragmented chaos.

If we don't go for a major reset now, when will we? If Greens don't initiate this, who will?

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