

To fellow rebels in XR - some thoughts about Roger Hallam's recent talk with us

I really like his energy, commitment and organisation, and how that has inspired many people on the call to get into action fast and to work on coordinating action nationally.

I also want to honour the journey that many of us in XR have been on since early 2019, building experience with NVDA in many different actions throughout the motu, wrestling with the reality of building and maintaining a national structure, and responding to the tangata whenua challenge that our activity be relevant to the colonised reality of Aotearoa. We have learnt a lot and it's useful to take time to reflect on it.

I can totally understand why some want to just get out there and block the streets, using the template and support offered by Hallam's team. And I totally support people doing that.

But I'd like to say what I personally want to do instead of that, and why. It's not either/or, it's yes/and

I don't believe the government is persuadable to do what's needed, however many people get arrested for however long. Moreover corporations are legally responsible to deliver profit to their shareholders, not the public good. We are out of time for incremental change to work.

This is the implication of the IPCC report in real terms -

- IPCC says rich countries must cease their GHG emissions by 2030 (to give Global South a chance to catch up.)
- That means stopping coal, oil, gas production & imports, and intensive dairy, in NZ by 2030
- Only way that would be done under current structures is if govt is faced with an immediate civil emergency. Like a serious break in global supply chains resulting in no fuel, fertiliser or food imports for the foreseeable future.
- Then govt would/could re-nationalise the fossil fuel/energy sector and, as Mike Joy suggests, require dairy land to be used for regenerative farming to ensure food security. (Cuba did it in 1990, it can be done)
- As in wartime, scarcity means food and energy rationing – which is also the only feasible way now of ending GHG emissions in time. We are out of time for 'green growth' or a shift to renewables at the same level of energy usage. We have to power down.
- To do all this without social chaos requires radical action on inequality – basically taxing the richest to ensure income and housing security for all, so no one's left behind to join the next alt-right Freedom Camp.
- It also requires an active response to the festering injustice experienced by tangata whenua. Aotearoa has a hugely valuable pathway for this in the Matike Mai constitutional transformation project.

Thanks to the Ukraine war & IPCC report, the NZ public is far more aware of the fragility of our supply chains, the rocketing global price of fuel and food and the rising social/economic chaos overseas. People are now talking seriously in mainstream media about national food self-sufficiency, free public transport, using and consuming less, not re-starting tourism etc etc.

We're now much closer to social tipping points like rapid price-rise, food & petrol shortage and major economic depression – traditional triggers for major social change. I think Hallam's right when he says such transformational change can happen rapidly.

If/when that happens, we need to be ready with a clear programme of practical actions that have broad public support, especially from those who are hurting the most. A pathway through the crises that is an alternative to the neofascist rabbit-holes.

We've drafted a list of such actions in the Pathway to Survival website (www.pathwaytosurvival.nz). We're now taking it to ally groups and individuals to see if we can actively work together on joint campaigns eg clean water, tax reform, housing, free public transport, no airport extensions, tangata whenua land occupations etc

What we can bring to these groups is our urgency about the climate, our willingness to do NVDA, our focus on demanding decisive action by government – and we can convey that best by understanding their campaigns and linking them to ours and vice versa.

The aim is to build a broad movement of organisations that are no longer in their own silos and are willing to speak in one loud voice in 2023 – a citizens' coalition for transformational change.

That seems to me as doable and productive as aiming to get masses of people to undertake a national campaign of rolling arrestable actions centred on one concrete issue. It's also easier to tailor to local issues around the country, and it gives us a bunch existing groups to take our message to and form relationships with, rather than relying on the willingness of the general public to come to meetings.

But there's room for all of this – and that flexibility has been one of the strengths of XR over the past 3 years. It's great to have these conversations.

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