

# Think Ahead, Act Now

Speech by James Shaw & Marama Davidson

25 July 2020

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**  
**Check against delivery**

Part One: Marama Davidson

Think ahead.

There it is. Our message for Election 2020.

We are really proud of it.

And you can expect to see it a lot more, starting today.

Now welcome.

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Kia ora, to everyone joining us here in Wellington today.

Kia ora koutou to all of you viewing from home, on livestream.

We're really grateful to each and every one of you for being with us on – another – incredibly exciting day for the Green Party.

Every year, our Annual General Meeting is a chance to connect, reflect, and look forward.

To come together as one big Green whānau across Aotearoa.

To celebrate our successes, and affirm our vision.

But this year, our AGM's a little bit different.

And that's probably no surprise. I'm sure we can all agree that this year has been unlike any other.

We've **had** to do things differently.

To come together in a way like never before, to protect all of us.

Our response to COVID-19 has, in many ways, brought out the very best in our communities.

The connectedness and compassion of Aotearoa has never been clearer.

Our collective actions have shown us that we can shake up the status quo for the better - if we work together.

Through COVID-19, we cooperated to overcome something that is bigger than each of us alone.

And we cannot overlook this success.

Nor can we overlook the fact that despite the enormous challenges and disruption, we have still made incredible progress for our people, and our planet.

We are finishing up our first term in Government with a truly stunning track record.

And we've proven ourselves a focused, responsible, and hard-working Government partner.

We are more determined than ever before to keep that momentum going.

James and I are privileged, and proud, to lead the Green Party of Aotearoa through this exciting next chapter in our history.

We are pushing to bring us all forward together, with policies which take us further and faster towards a country which treats everyone with dignity.

That is who the Green Party is.

And that is who the Green Party has always been.

This week, we had a memorial to farewell Jeanette Fitzsimons.

A founding voice in the Green movement here in Aotearoa, our party's first female co-leader.

A mentor to myself, my colleagues, and grassroots activists around Aotearoa.

And, in reflecting on her life and her immeasurable contribution to our movement, I was reminded of the vision that Jeanette and her original Values Party colleagues released in 1975.

It was called, "Beyond Tomorrow".

It was a vision which not only made decisions to benefit everyone then – but thought about future generations.

They were thinking about us, here, today.

And today I'm really proud to be continuing that Green tradition of asking that we... think ahead.

And that we act now, for all of us – and for all of us to come.

The Green Party is led by four key principles, under a commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi.

We are guided by an unwavering commitment to ecological wisdom.

To social responsibility.

To appropriate decision making.

And to peace and non-violence.

When we came into Government almost three years ago, we committed to delivering on climate action, to protect the environment, and to strengthen support for our people.

Three years on, that promise stands stronger than ever.

Returning to the status quo is not an option, because the way things are isn't working for too many of us.

Aotearoa is at a crossroads.

The decisions we make now will not only determine what kind of Aotearoa we live in –they will shape the future our mokopuna inherit.

We must think ahead, and act now.

---

We know that successive governments put profit before people, and the planet.

Those in power created rules which favour a few at the expense of the rest.

They allowed polluters to destroy our natural environment for economic gain.

And they ignored the growing calls for action on the looming threat of the climate crisis.

These decisions put us all at risk.

If we continue under the system as it stands, our grandchildren have an incredibly uncertain future.

And the gap between the few at the top and everyone else will get bigger.

One of the privileges of this job is being able to get into communities, and meet people doing incredibly important mahi all over the country.

And what I see, over and over again, is that people are doing their best.

And they are trying their hardest to make a difference in their communities.

But the system is working against them.

---

More of us are struggling to get by – and having to make the impossible choice between keeping the heating on, and putting food on the table.

Our homes have become more and more unaffordable while incomes have barely moved, especially for those earning the least.

Our social safety net no longer supports us when we need it.

We've inherited housing stock which is making our children sick.

And – if we continue as we are - we cannot assure future generations that they will have a stable planet to live on.

This is the stark reality.

But it's also a call to action, because we can change.

COVID-19 has impacted all of us – but it has not done so equally.

We know that those with the least, are suffering the most.

Future generations will judge us by the decisions we make today.

I want my grandchildren to know that we made smart decisions with their wellbeing in mind.

That we thought ahead, that we acted while we had the chance.

---

The Green Party is the only party that is willing to be bold enough.

To be brave, and challenge the status quo.

We know that right now, we are not doing enough for our people or our planet, and that we must do more.

The barriers standing in the way of all of us reaching our potential, and living good lives, did not appear by accident.

But anything that is designed, can be re-designed.

There is another way.

---

Today James and I want to share with you our platform:

Think Ahead. Act Now. Our Green vision for Aotearoa.

A comprehensive outline of the Aotearoa we all deserve.

Our crew are handing out copies right now.

Think Ahead, Act Now is to us, what Beyond Tomorrow was to the Values Party in 1975.

A guide to how we will empower all of our communities to thrive, and look after this small blue planet that sustains us and gives us life.

When you open it up, you'll see it's organised into three pillars of sustainability that the Greens have always sought to uphold – healthy nature, fairer communities and a clean economy.

It's been a long time since we last published a full vision document.

Why now?

Because this election should be a contest of ideas.

The choices we make as a country over the next term of Parliament will shape this country for decades.

And on that note, it is my great honour to introduce my Green Party Co-leader, James Shaw.

## **Part two: James Shaw**

This document, Think Ahead, Act Now, will serve as the basis for negotiations as we seek to form a new Government after the election with the Labour Party.

It's a reference document that will guide our Caucus and our Ministers as we navigate the everyday choices that our Government will have to make.

In addition to this broad vision for the future, we are going into this election with a set of much more detailed policy priorities for our next term in Government.

We're holding some of them back for the next few weeks – but a couple of them you already know about.

Like: Our Clean Energy Plan.

Part one of our plan to transition away from the fossil-fuels causing the climate crisis, once and for all.

This plan builds on the climate action we've taken in Government.

The centrepiece of our success: the Zero Carbon Act, one of the first pieces of climate legislation in the world to oblige a country to operate within the limit of 1.5°C of global warming.

We established the Climate Change Commission, and set up the Green Investment Fund, which has just financed the full decarbonisation of Wellington's port.

We reformed the Emissions Trading Scheme so that it actually does the job it was intended to do, and cut climate pollution.

And we banned new offshore oil and gas exploration.

New Zealand can lead the world on climate action.

And the Green Party has the solutions to make it happen.

We will kickstart this future, today, and leave the polluters of the last century where they belong – in the last century.

Intertwined with a sustainable economy is healthy nature.

We should all be able to enjoy the dawn chorus in our forests, and swim in our rivers.

The responsibility to protect our forests, our rivers, and our wildlife belongs to all of us.

And the Green Party is leading the way.

In Government, we got rid of single use plastic bags.

We doubled the protected area for Hector's and Māui dolphins.

And we secured \$1.3 billion to employ people up and down the country, cleaning up our rivers, planting native trees, clearing wilding pines, and ridding the bush of predators.

But we know we must do more.

Because when nature is healthy – we all benefit.

But for nature to flourish, it must be prioritised.

And that is exactly what the Green Party is doing.

We know that climate justice, environmental justice, and social justice, are inextricably intertwined.

And that none of these can be achieved without the others.

We knew that back in 1975 when the Values Party released Beyond Tomorrow.

And we know it, today.

In Government, we've made real progress towards greater equality.

We've ended the unkind sanction on mothers who don't name their child's father, we've increased benefits, and we've had benefit increases tagged to wage increases.

We've rewritten the rules around residential tenancies, to make it fairer for people who rent.

And yesterday, so more families have a chance at owning their own home, we announced funding for the first two providers under our Progressive Home Ownership scheme.

But we know we must do more.

Last month we launched our Poverty Action Plan.

A fully-costed, detailed proposal which means everyone has enough to live with dignity.

The challenges that face our country and our world are significant. We need to match those challenges with boldness and vision.

The Green Party is today putting forward real solutions, which empower communities to thrive.

Which ensure that our natural environment is protected as the taonga it is.

And which will make us a world leader in climate action, by moving to a truly sustainable economy which harnesses the clean energy that nature can provide.

Not only do we have the vision: but we have the track record.

We get stuck in and we get stuff done.

Because that is our job.

We can have the future we all deserve.

We can have swimmable rivers.

- solar on our rooftops.
- warm, dry and affordable homes for everyone.
- good jobs which protect nature.
- and a safety net which allows people to put food on the table and a roof over their head.

What we're releasing today is 100% possible.

But only with your support.

The Green Party is taking absolutely nothing for granted.

We know that to face the great challenges of our time, we must be bold.

Over the next month we'll be announcing our other priorities for this election beyond the two already announced.

And what we ask of you, is that when you make that incredibly important decision on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September.

That you think ahead. And act now.

With our environment, our people, and our planet, in mind.

The Green Party has the vision.

We have the track record.

And with your support, we can make that vision a reality for all of us now, and for future generations.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.