

26th Annual Bluegreens Forum

The Bluegreens is the National Party's Policy Advisory Group on environmental issues

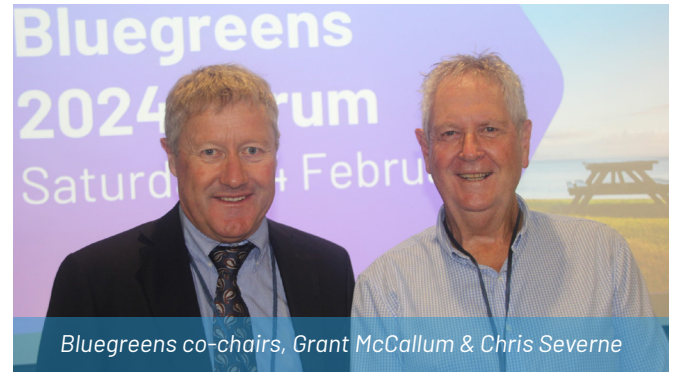


March 2024

The Bluegreens held their annual Bluegreens Forum at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds in Paihia, Bay of Islands. This was another fantastic Bluegreens event, attended by 12 National Party MPs – including Prime Minister Christopher Luxon – and more than 160 attendees in total.

It was great that our three senior Ministers – Hon Penny Simmons (Environment), Hon Tama Potaka (Conservation) and Hon Simon Watts (Climate Change), along with our National Party Leader, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, all set the scene with collective determination to drive the change, that electors clearly signalled in the election result,

for an outcomes orientated change to ensure that actions, and not just spin (as we saw over the previous 6 years of a Labour Government).



Bluegreens co-chairs, Grant McCallum & Chris Severne

Keynote Speaker - Christopher Luxon

The Prime Minister opened by confirming that he has been a long-standing supporter of the Bluegreens, noting our commitment of practical and pragmatic environmentalism being legendary.

The Prime Minister noted that National signed the Paris Agreement in 2015, and that we remain committed to it. He noted, however that how we achieve these goals is up to us for debate, but the road to Climate Change is undisputable.

He said that investment, growth and sustainability can, and must work together. He noted that Labour's Lake Onslow proposal was an example of a costly, impractical outcome for our environment.



The Prime Minister stated "If we are honest, resource management is not working for New Zealanders."

He said that over the last 15 years, resource consents have take 150% longer, for no meaningful improvement.



“We need low emissions yet high economic viability if we are going to remain a strong and economically vibrant economy. We are currently over 90% renewable and we need to be smart as to how we go positively forward from here.”

The Prime Minister noted that we need another \$40 billion spent on economic development to achieve infrastructure sustainability – noting **“New Zealand has become an obstruction economy – and it must stop.”**

- No-one wins from unnecessary compliance.
- Consents should not take more than two years. NZ will never achieve its Climate Change goals if consents continue to take up to 5 years – 1 year should suffice.
- Agriculture – we are going to take a technology approach to this problem. To make progress

on Climate Change we have to address the agricultural challenges. Closing down farms – as Labour was proposing – is not a solution. We will use gene-editing as a science-based technology to help our farmers.

- Biosecurity – the Prime Minister congratulated the previous government for their \$1bn to eradicate mycoplasma bovis. Our Government has just announced a \$5m fund to address the invasive marine pest, caulerpa brachypus, via a suction methodology.

The Prime Minister concluded by stating that **our new Government will take a much different approach compared to that of the last government while achieving a strong economy balanced with environmentally sustainable outcomes.**

Minister Penny Simmonds - Environment

Penny opened by acknowledging that Fresh Water is central to our health and well-being. She quoted Tim Shadbolt who once said **“Water will become more valuable than oil.”** She noted that water quality is the responsibility of all New Zealanders. She added “But let’s not exclude our urban neighbours.” Despite slogans and promises, she said that Labour did little to actually improve this degradation – saying figure pointing and blame will not help. We need pragmatic, realistic options if we are to improve our waterways.

- Penny noted that a sense of localism is the key to success. Regulations have become overly complicated and overly bureaucratic.
- She said it will take 18 to 24 months to review the Freshwater Management Act, and we need all stakeholders involved.



- Regarding Te Mana o Te Wai – she has no intention of changing the concept, but we do need to reassess the practical applications. A review is urgently needed, including with Iwi in a manner that is both consultative and respectful.

Penny closed by announcing a \$6.6m fund to clean up waste (landfill) sites.

Minister Simon Watts - Climate Change

Simon said he rejects the premise that Climate Change can’t be aligned with economic activity.

At COP23 he stated that New Zealand approaches the problem differently to many countries. We are united as to how we will achieve our outcomes, and the Bluegreens are a very good example of this.

He said that COP23 offers lots of opportunities for New Zealand.



- Mitigation - later this year we will outline a pathway to net zero. The problem is that we haven't inherited a viable plan to reach our 2030 target. Unlike the previous government we will meet our obligations. He said "We will leave a legacy of delivery."
- Adaption - Communities have an exceptional way of coming together and "We must adapt - not just mitigate." The Bluegreens framework says we must unite to ensure we all come together. - we will build a framework that is solution focused

to resolve Climate Change adaption.
"We must take action - and we will."

- Climate Finance - Our Pacific neighbours are at the front line of Climate Change's critical issues - and they will rely on Climate Finance to manage adaption.
- We haven't inherited a stable ETS.

He closed by saying "This Government is a government of Action. New Zealanders are relying on us to successfully face up to these challenges."

Minister Tama Potaka - Conservation

Tama opened by confessing that he hasn't been to the South Island very much, and never to the West Coast. He said with that in mind he might be unqualified but committed.

He said he has actually been a Conservation Dept employee in the past, and he has an absolute belief that conservation isn't just about the hui - it is also about doing the mahi - doing the work.

Tama said "I am absolutely at the flax basket part of conservation."

- He stated that the Conservation owns 30% of New Zealand's land mass (8.5m hectares), but only actively accounts for 0.4% of the Government's budget.
- He also noted that it is also responsible a huge EEZ in the marine environment.
- Tama said that the Department of Conservation can't be the answer for everyone. They just don't have enough money nor people. But he emphasised the National Party's philosophy "Things that we do we must do well."
- The Department is responsible for 15,000 km of tracks.



- He said that only 0.4% of marine species are currently protected, and we have to do better.
- Tama cited that recent cyclones have decimated many of our bird species, so it isn't just about the impact on humans. Currently we put just \$50/ha into the conservation estate, and we don't generate enough funds from concessions.
- He said we also need to be better co-ordinated in our treaty obligations, and we need a resolution regarding Mount Ruapehu.

Tama closed by saying "Conservation belongs to everyone but it is also everyone's obligation as well."

There was a very good Q&A session following the Ministers presentations.

Minister Simeon Brown - Energy

Unfortunately, Hon Simeon Brown was unable to attend in person, due to a flight cancellation - so he had to zoom in via Teams.

Simeon opened, noting his high work programme. He said his first priority for this role was to reduce consent times for Renewable Energy to just 12 months. He said we don't have half a decade to consent these projects if we are to meet our Zero Emissions obligations.

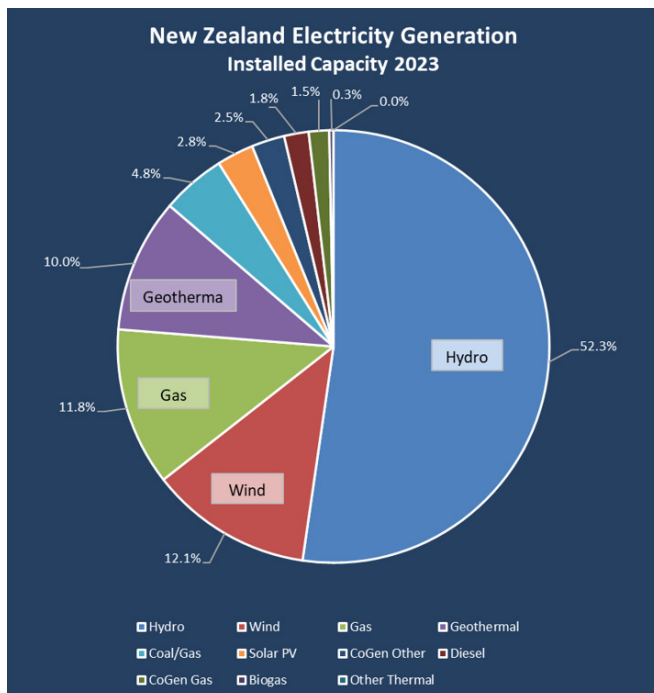


- New Zealand is the most Renewable Energy country in the world – but to get that last 10%+ we have to be able to go faster.
- We need everyone engaged for fast tracking so that we can meet our Paris goals (and reforms).
- EV Charging – key issue is the low number of EV chargers. We plan 10,000 EV charging stations in

the next ten years (currently we only have 1,000 across New Zealand), We will be doing a benefit to cost analysis to ensure an efficient and effective roll out.

- Simeon said that this is very exciting, because there are plenty of private investment that will invest if we have the setting right.

Key Note – Electrifying New Zealand



Dr Mike Allen – VP, NZ Geothermal Assn

Mike opened by noting that New Zealand is a world leader in geothermal energy.

- We are now injecting unused gases back into the ground.
- Geothermal currently provides about 10% of NZ's energy needs.
- Geothermal generates 100% of the time. This makes it a very good resource and now supplies approximately 18% of processed and industrial heat.
- Geothermal energy has been in use at Kawerau for more than 60 years.
- Silica and lithium is extracted from the fluids.
- Hydrogen production is undertaken at the Mokai geothermal facility (Taupo).

Chris Jewell – CFO, Lodestone Energy

Chris noted that his company now operates the first solar farm in New Zealand. He said that their first solar farm projects will generate enough energy to power 50,000 homes.

- Lodestone is 100% New Zealand owned and operated, backed by some of Aotearoa's most prominent investors. They are doing this by Kiwis, for Kiwis, to get Aotearoa moving towards its renewable energy goals.
- Kaitaia Project – Located in the Far North, their Kaitaia project is Aotearoa's first utility-scale solar farm to supply the national grid. Constructed in 2023, the Lodestone Kaitaia farm is now operational. There are more than 60,000 solar panels and 6,000 sheep graze under and around the panels. There is a 20-year contract with the Warehouse to supply their outlets across New Zealand,
- Waiotaha Project – this site at Edgecumbe in the Bay of Plenty will be their second site. It is due to start construction within the next 2 weeks.
- These projects are being delivered with no subsidies or handouts.
- There is no shortage of both local and international investment.
- Chris noted that New Zealand is a little slow globally on embracing grid solar.
- He said 6,000 hectares of solar would get New Zealand to 100% renewable for NZ – at a cost of around \$6bn.
- Chris said we need business to demand renewable solar (new builds only) on 20-year contracts.
- Solar farms should be "a permitted activity."
- Transmission requires long lead times – and should be no difference whether it is in Northland or the South Island.
- Much of solar technology is currently built in China.
- Barriers to entry are not technical.

Kevin Hart - CEU, NZ Wind Energy Assn

Kevin opened by declaring that wind energy is one of New Zealand's largest sources of renewable energy.

- It is a very mature and robust sector, servicing 480,000 households.
- In 2022 we were 87% renewable, and in 2023 passed 90% - third highest in the globe.
- Wind is 12.1% of NZ's generation (Hydro is 57.2%).
- He said it currently takes about 7 years to consent and another 2 - 2.5 years to build.
- Currently there are 6 international investors

evaluating offshore wind farms.

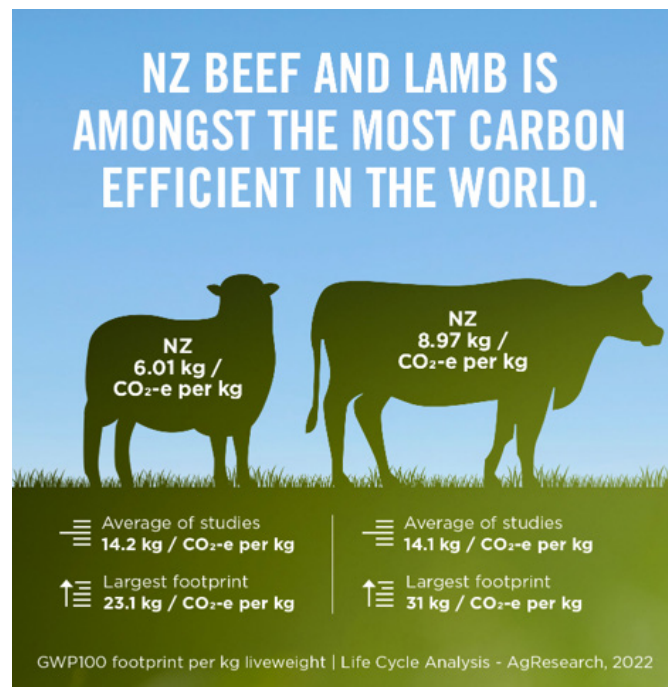
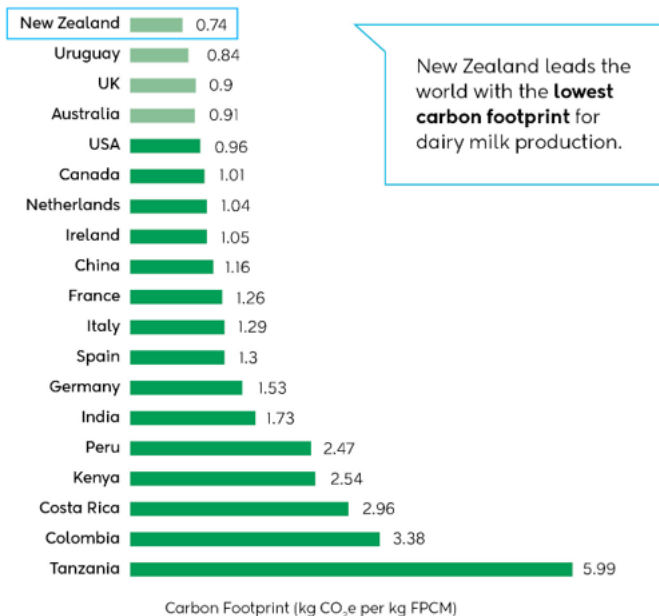
- He estimates a requirement of about \$500m annually to invest in wind energy - increasing to \$1.5bn to \$2bn needed going forward.
- There are currently 22 consents in the pipeline, but a lot won't proceed to be built, because of the negative investment criteria at present.

Kevin closed by noting that currently transmission is a huge constraint.

He asks this new National led Government to make it "a one stop shop."

Key Note - Agricultural Emissions

The challenges and the solutions



Wayne Langford - President, NZ Federated Farmers

Opening, Wayne gave a quote "Build a community, and your community will build you."

- He stated that Farmer confidence levels are abysmal; stating that the industry is really battling
- He expressed huge concerns with the cost of living in general - and farmers rapid increase in recent years facing on-farm costs in particular.
- Wayne also pleaded for regulatory certainty.



- Wayne highlighted 12 Federated Farmer policy requests from the election. These included (first six):
 1. Support better use of technology.
 2. Unlock potential through water storage.
 3. Allowing young farmers to access Kiwi-Saver.
 4. Urgently review our methane targets.
 5. Rethink our ETS Forestry rules and net-zero targets.
 6. Scrap the Ute tax and fix our infrastructure.
- Wayne highlighted that "Climate Change is a global challenge that requires a global solution."

NZ can't solve this challenge alone, but we must play a role.

- The Paris Agreement doesn't set an emissions reduction target. It sets a temperature target.
- He noted that Kiwi farmers are already world leading with their Carbon footprint.
- Methane Targets :
 - * Federated Farmers want targets that are science-based, not political – and is looking for a 15% reduction target.
 - * Going further and faster than is required is causing farmers to disengage.

Andy Reisinger – Climate Change Commissioner/Scientist

Andy opened by saying that in the last 150 years virtually all climate warming has been human induced.

- He stated that methane (CH₄) has a lifeline of 12 years.
- Right now methane accounts for the majority of climate warming but it will dissipate over time if we can reduce it.



Charlotte Rutherford – Fonterra

Charlotte opened by saying: **"Sometimes you just have to make the next step."**

She said it is the "Why" that matters because Fonterra recognises this is what matters to its customers.

- She stated that Nestle (a large Fonterra customer) has set a 40% emission reduction target by 2030.
- She said that access to capital today is very focused on sustainability in order to acquire funding.
- Charlotte stated that Fonterra is now reporting on emissions annually.
- She recognised the fear of just "green washing" – sometimes called "green hushing."
- She noted that Fonterra as set an intensity target of 30% reduction of the 2018 base, by 2030.



- She said Fonterra's targets comprised:
 - * 7% on farm adaption (nutrient & farm genomics).
 - * 87% Carbon removals from vegetation.
 - * 8% Land use change – dairy farm conversions.

Keynote – Tomorrow’s Economy

Sir Ian Taylor

Ian opened, saying “Bugger the boxing, pour the concrete.” He noted that in 1882 New Zealand led the world with technology innovation – HMS Dunedin sailed as the first refrigerated ship to take meat to the United Kingdom.

- He asked “What can technology do to lower cow emissions that we can export to the likes of India?” Ian stated that we have the potential to export software at a rate of around \$400 for every person in New Zealand.
- His vision includes:
 - * Bio transformation.
 - * Keeping nitrogen from our waterways.
 - * Clean renewable energy (100%).
- He then asked **Mike Casey** (Southern Cherry farmer) to explain how he has electrified everything (profitably) on his farm, and his ambition to “Rewire Aotearoa.” Mike said that he had 10,000 visitors a year visiting his Cherry farm last year.
- **“You do not build motorways for midnight drivers.”**
- He asked “What do we need?” and answered “We need to fix the finances.”
 - * We have to allow customer participation.
 - * We have to value customer generation.
- **“Make your next purchasing decision – electric.”**



Sir Ian stated **“New Zealand need to be the biofuel Saudi Arabia of the world.”**

Sir Ian then invited Wayne Mulligan to talk about the future of Forestry Biomass. Wayne is the Chief Executive of NZ Bio Forestry, a company transforming tree plantation biomass into biofuels, biochemicals, bioplastics and other innovative materials that can dramatically reduce the need for fossil fuels and lower carbon emissions. Wayne has partnered with Taiwanese and Singaporean Chemical refiners to develop his product which he hopes to ultimately commercialise using New Zealand biomass.

Sir Ian then touched on New Zealand’s innovation by companies such as CarbonScape, who are developing bio-graphite for car batteries.

Sir Ian then finished with a presentation about how our young people and next generation have an increasing role to play in our carbon future, and how they will bring new perspectives, increased innovation and new technology that will help New Zealand achieve our climate goals.

Pitch a Policy

Gary Taylor – Environmental Defence Society

Gary gave a critical pitch, saying both ACT and NZ First threaten sensible environmentalism. He then went to the media saying that the Coalition’s policies will damage New Zealand’s international reputation.

Kate Acland – Beef + Lamb New Zealand

Kate noted that farmers act as conservation caretakers.

- She supports the concept of localism – manging at a catchment level.
- She urged us to concentrate on outcomes and she commended taking an alternative stance on Climate Change.

- She stated that farms are biological systems and need flexibility to meet change. She said, “Farmers need certainty and change takes time.”
- She stated that we need cross-Party consensus politics.
- Climate Change – targets need to be reassessed. Good leadership needs to have people following. Labour never understood this. If farmers achieve their targets, they should not then be taxed for doing so.
- She asked that we look to the US, Canada and the EU because they have incentivized strategies for managing a zero-carbon future.
- Biodiversity – The NPS on Biodiversity penalises those farmers who have already ensured sustained biodiversity. She asked for a pause in the NPS to ensure that we have the settings right.

- She said that the previous government fell into the trap of single-issue environmental outcomes.
- We need to change the narrative to empower farmers positively.

Richard Capie – Forest & Bird

Richard opened by stating that the National Party has a fine track record and have left a strong legacy.

- He is however concerned about the Coalition agreements.
- He advocated for a review of the ETS and was concerned about the reopening of offshore oil & gas mining.
- He commended Penny Simmonds' comment that "Local people know local issues and can define solutions."
- He commended aligning economic outcome with environmental outcomes, noting a clean, green environment underpins agriculture.
- He said we need to be defining sustainable development.
- We all need certainty and fast tracking does give confidence and certainty. We do need stability. The risk is a lack of consensus.
- A positive area is natural infrastructure. Major storms are adding cost to coastal structures.

Richard closed by reiterating that we have both a climate and a biodiversity crisis.

Finn Ross – Future Farmers NZ

Finn stated that he is a Climate Scientist, noting the huge reduction on the West Antarctic ice mass will result in a 40 oceans warming and massive sea level rise. He said he doesn't have a political agenda but wants the science recognised.

- He said "Capitalism has not failed us, but we have failed capitalism."
- He also stated that currently we tax externalities but not productivity.
- Finn advocated for Blue Carbon as a Climate Change mitigation.
- On the ETS, he said that Australia has multiple methodologies to affect the ETS. NZ has not, and the ETS needs a rethink.

- He said that while export earnings continue to rise, we fail on just about every environmental measurement.

He concluded by saying that reducing less than 8% of our emissions will be disastrous for Climate Change.



OUR BLUEGREEN PRINCIPLES

The Bluegreens are a group of passionate members and supporters who care deeply about our natural environment and we're guided by the following principles:

- Sustainability must be at the heart of everything we do.
- We're practical environmentalists, putting results before ideology.
- Our economy depends on our environment, and our ability to care for our environment depends on the success of our economy.
- A scientific and evidence-based approach is essential to quality environmental decision-making.
- People respond best to change when engaged and given incentives. We work with communities and businesses, not against them.
- New Zealanders have a unique birthright to access and enjoy our natural environment.

Our Bluegreen approach takes a long-term view that by making smart, strategic decisions today we can leave our environment in a healthier state for future generations.

Rob Langford – The Packaging Forum

He discussed why a container return scheme will or won't work for New Zealand.

- He said there are 2 Government accredited voluntary stewardship schemes 100% funded by industry (glass & soft plastics).
- The problem with turning plastics into a circular economy is that a lot of it isn't financially viable.
- Furthermore, the container Return Scheme is very contentious within the industry.
- The big question is – Will it lower emissions? The answer is NO. However, it will make a difference regarding litter. Rob strongly recommends that whatever we do, we must be aligned with Australia.
- Industry is seeking an "all in" mandatory system, saying we are already 30 years behind Europe.
- Regarding CRS – he just wants a definitive answer.

Dinner Speaker

Simon Millar – Pure Advantage "Recloaking Papatūānuku"

Simon gave both an entertaining and informative presentation on Pure Advantages plan to recloak 8% of New Zealand – this is the size of the Waikato.

Simon said that if we start now, recloaking will produce 20 years of emissions savings, at a cost of \$12.1bn.

Sunday – Field trip to Top Energy's Ngawha Geothermal Power Station



60+ attendees found this trip both excellent and highly informative. Ngawha Geothermal Power Station and the recently opened solar energy farm nearby reinforces this Governments commitment to further development of renewable energy projects to electrify New Zealand.

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