



Patrons: Sir Alan Mark, KNZM, FRSNZ.
Sir Geoffrey Palmer, KCMG, AC, QC, PC.

6 December 2020

Dear Prime Minister

The Climate Emergency

Wise Response supports Labour's Risk Assessment policies

First, many congratulations from the members of Wise Response on your majority election victory. This is unique in our MMP history and has also been achieved only once in German MMP history.

This presents a new set of challenges but also a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Labour to achieve its admirable policy goals aimed at addressing the consequences of 'this generation's nuclear-free' crisis - climate change. This includes the environmental, sustainability and economic challenges we face to achieve a high degree of national security for a society predicated on fairness and 'wellbeing': to meet the goal of 'building back better' from the global pandemic.

As your own policy documents show, this requires wide-ranging risk assessment methodology across all government portfolios. Wise Response, with its aim to encourage urgency in a national risk assessment approach from government - especially taking into account climate change and limits to growth - strongly supports all 19 clauses of Labour's Policy Platform 'Chapter 4: A healthy environment'. (**Refer** - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ah2xIM0-qzemx76LP-dtmzQulahnU7UO/view>).

Labour understands clearly the threat in its Clause 4.4 statement that ‘New Zealand is part of the extreme ecological crisis facing the world. Pollution of land, water and air; biodiversity loss and extinction; increasing incidence of extreme climate events; and resource depletion: together, these add up to an unprecedented existential threat to human civilisation and to ecosystems across the planet’. Wise Response fully endorses this view.

We support all 19 clauses of Labour’s Chapter 4 Policy Platform but, in particular, we strongly endorse your Clause 4.8: ‘The ongoing development of a comprehensive risk assessment framework’ . This is essential in order to address the biophysical drivers of change, particularly net energy decline and security and the need to work within safe national and planetary boundaries. In this respect, your Clause 4.6 clearly refers to ‘Economic activity being conducted within environmental limits’. Wise Response’s 2015 petition to government on these issues was strongly supported by the Labour Party at the time (Refer - <https://bit.ly/36yiqBC>).

In your response to that petition you thanked Wise Response for its ‘timely and well-argued case for a national risk assessment for New Zealand. Identifying, planning for, and addressing the risk presented by serious economic, environmental, and social issues is an essential part of good and responsible government’. You urged ‘Wise Response to continue to advocate for a national risk assessment and the sustainability principles that underlie such a project’. We have continued to do so over the past five years and appreciate your policy Clause 4.16 where ‘Labour recognises the crucial role of non-government organisations in promoting sustainable environmental outcomes and bringing about positive change’.

We also strongly support your Clause 4.9: that ‘Labour believes in putting people’s wellbeing and the environment at the heart of its policies ... in replacing narrow focus on economic growth and GDP measurement, the wellbeing approach reflects a fundamental shift in our understanding of progress’.

Wise Response agrees there must be a ‘just transition’ and a ‘Team of Five Million’ agreement to what must be undertaken to safeguard Aotearoa/New Zealand’s future

and wellbeing. An all-of-government risk assessment programme would best align all policies and action and build political licence for the required depth of the transition.

We believe that the courageous way you have led the nation through the Covid19 crisis shows that can be achieved. A risk assessment programme across government would provide the ideal transition to a national planning framework. Clause 4.12 of your Policy Platform speaks of the need to 'work constructively with all political parties willing to ensure coherent, long-term action'. The success of your consensus approach to the Zero Carbon Act shows what can be achieved in ensuring a consistency of policy across successive governments.

What is your timetable for risk assessment action? We believe that action on Chapter 4 policies should occur at pace. We can certainly get through this as a nation and are also confident that you appreciate that time is running short.

Every best wish.

Yours sincerely –



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