

Rt Hon Winston Peters

St Andrews Presbyterian Church
11 Vincent St
Howick

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'The Real State of the Nation'

Good afternoon.

Thank you for the invitation to speak with you today and in your busy lives turning up to this meeting.

Forty five years ago, in Howick, often described as racist, and where few Maori lived because it had been a 'Fencible' settlement at the time of the Anglo-Maori wars, this town chose someone with a Maori background to be their MP.

That was all the evidence that one needs to know that Howick was not racist then, nor now.

So its great to be back in Howick where this town gave a chance for a New Zealander to start an early political career and legal practice.

It is fashionable for political parties to deliver a new year "state of the nation address".

Other parties have already done so, which is surprising because analysis of any value of the true state of the economy wasn't known until the 15th of March, when the latest measurement of our economy was announced.

The alarming news is that New Zealand's GDP in the last measured quarter declined by 0.6 percent.

That means our economy is not growing, but shrinking.

That stark fact sits alongside the worst balance of payment figures since 1989. It means we are spending far more than we are earning. In short, the most dangerous outcome for our economy and country in 34 years. We are living beyond our means while going backwards.

Time for contemplation

Never can one remember a time when things are failing everywhere, all at once. And people know things aren't working.

So it's time to contemplate how exactly we got into this predicament and what we all need to do about it.

New Zealand's perilous economic state just didn't happen over night.

And we have reached an inflection point.

What we decide to do together now, will determine whether we go on declining, or put things right again, with policies of commonsense and certainty, to take us back to the top of the first world where we once were – in the lifetime of so many people in this room.

There was a time in politics when politicians took the view, that “my party when its right should be kept right, but when its wrong should be put right”.

Today there’s an awful tribalism in New Zealand politics, ignoring realities, replacing them with politically extremist ideologies, where political party comes first, and our country, second.

In the living memory of people here, there have been successful Labour and National governments, re-elected, election after election, because those leaders put the people first and not their obsession with political power. And that is something we must do again.

Today, sadly, too much that is Labour and National is the same.

Remember, there was a housing crisis under the last National government – it’s worse today.

There was an educational crisis under the last National government – it’s worse today.

There was a law-and-order crisis under the last National government – it’s worse today.

There was a cost-of-living crisis under the last National government – it’s worse today.

There are people campaigning for this election with only one naked policy – “it’s our turn now”.

Surely you are asking the question “your turn - to do exactly what?”

This election must be about the New Zealand people, whatever our backgrounds, whatever our race, religion, or creed – for if we do not work together, if we continue these numerous divisions, then we will be doomed to repeat the failures of the last few years.

Conservatism with a Human Face

The mass majority of New Zealanders are conservatives with a sense of humanity.

We believe in giving our neighbour a helping hand when that neighbour is in trouble.

We want our hard-earned taxes spent on those issues which, as a mass majority, we believe in.

During Cyclone Gabrielle, despite bureaucratic failure everywhere, we saw so many people working together to address the crisis. They put aside their differences and

focused instead on their shared humanity and shared goal – with many putting their own lives at risk in doing so.

And today's politicians must learn from this example.

Get out and talk to New Zealanders all over the country and hear their concerns. Listen to ordinary Kiwis alarmed at what is happening to New Zealand – our country.

We're proud of our distinctive identity and culture and the cities, towns and villages we live in, and we know that with the right management, and working together, we can do the impossible.

That was best imaged recently in the Women's Rugby World Cup. When by good management they put together a team of women players, Pacific, Maori, and European, with male and female coaches, and achieved the impossible.

That only happened after they realized how serious their cause looked. But it was not hopeless. They imaged cooperation, conciliation, inclusivity, and teamwork - and over 90 minutes at Eden Park in November last year, they shocked the cynics and moved their sport ahead decades.

And that is what our country needs now. A proper analysis of how serious our cause looks.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, have a look at the daily headlines.

And whilst you're doing that, remember that politicians are not your masters but your servants.

Scanning the headlines we are bedeviled by a number of truths.

Cost of living

Our country is facing the highest cost of living increases in the last 34 years.

Inflation is continuing to climb, and we are facing a recession – and many countries are doing far better than New Zealand.

All costs are going skyward. Food, rates, power, petrol, rents, mortgages, school fees, insurance, university fees, health care, all basic living costs going skyward. And what's the response from Wellington? No inquiry into banking charges, benefiting foreign banks. No inquiry into supermarket costs, or energy costs. No action, just more promises, and more 'borrow and spend'.

And the real crunch is coming for you the workers, middle income earners, and the seniors who now have so little disposable income.

Governments have a record of particularly going after seniors and that's exactly what every political party in parliament is planning to do – Labour, Greens, National, and Act, all have stated they want to increase the retirement age.

There is only one party that has always defended and fought for seniors. We have never supported a change to the retirement age, or attacking your incomes, or your super, and that commitment has not changed.

Under New Zealand First the superannuation age will not change.

As the good book says – by their deeds you will know them.

Education

And on education, our country once a leader in the world, now sees literacy and numeracy rates continue to decline in core subjects, and a continued fall in student achievement over the past two decades.

We stopped focusing on reading, writing and arithmetic, and now teach a range of sociological values to the alarm of so many parents. Parents who know that achievement at the start of a child's life in reading and maths is essential for fulfillment in their later life – academic success, upward mobility, economic success, and participation in society.

And the failure in the past twenty years is not just in the lowest decile schools but now also in the highest.

And what does that mean? Our education system has been the victim of numerous virtue signaling tinkerers.

They would now rather teach a young child 'virtuous self-identity theory' than basic Maths and English.

Our education system should be fundamentally focused on education – not using our children in some sort of woke social re-engineering programme for vulnerable undeveloped minds.

And when were they allowed to decide that parents' views don't matter? When did they ever ask you?

With truancy levels running at over 60% in many schools, it's clear there is no plan to fully train our young human capital.

Attending school has been compulsory in New Zealand since 1877.

146 years later what does this government think taxpayer funded education is for? A child not at school is not learning.

Preschools, primary, intermediate, secondary, tech institutions, and universities are all in serious trouble.

Employment

All of us have had to seek work, yet New Zealand's labour market is a mess.

In just a few years this Labour government has allowed 50,000 more New Zealanders to depend on the job seeker benefit.

This at a time when employers are crying out for workers.

The government has just linked benefit increases to inflation – a virtual pay rise every year – when was the last time you got a yearly inflation-based pay rise?

The problem isn't the level of the benefit, it is the length of time spent on it - and the lack of incentive to get off it. Yes, we need to give a 'hand up' in people's time of need - but not create a 'hand out' that some choose as an easy long term lifestyle.

The fact is, the job seeker benefit list is now loaded with school leavers with low levels of education and no work experience.

Which means like Germany and Taiwan, we need to seriously help the young seeking apprenticeships, and the businesses who provide them. Thereby providing more work opportunities in training – backed up by sanctions on those who can train and work but choose not to.

Our country was once in the first three in the world.

Whether you trust daily headlines or not, the picture in so many areas of our society is a bleak one.

Health

Take our health system - we were once a proud world leader.

But cracks are now emerging everywhere.

Almost 70,000 New Zealanders have been waiting over 4 months for treatment, or worse still, for a first specialist appointment to examine their condition.

And every day the waiting lists are expanding with fewer elective surgeries than before the arrival of COVID in 2020.

People seeking orthopedic care, for example, hip and knee replacements, or shoulder surgery, amount to over one in four patients waiting more than 4 months.

Emergency Departments are under siege with big gaps in critical staff and for many patients the choice is dismal.

As one specialist said, the choice is between 'who has the worst cancer and who won't survive until next week without intervention.'

Plainly, people are dying because they can't get timely treatment, but would survive if they did.

And just yesterday we learnt that our immigration bureaucracy, despite spending millions, has only secured nineteen visas for overseas nurses. All the while hundreds of kiwi nurses, doctors, and midwives have been unjustifiably and unconstitutionally mandated out of a job.

We can have fifty thousand people shoulder to shoulder in a stadium – but we still have desperately needed workers mandated out of their jobs.

Ladies and gentlemen, how mindlessly arrogant are these people in Wellington destroying workers' lives in this way?

Under New Zealand First these mandates will end.

And to deceive the public, the politicians have set the thresholds for treatment too high.

So demand, already at crisis point, is by these high thresholds seriously understated. And it's all been done on purpose – that is, “if we haven't analyzed their problem we won't have to treat them”.

Now does that sound like a public health system to you?

Ladies and gentlemen, this is not a criticism of the hard-working doctors and nurses and medical staff. On the contrary, they deserve our gratitude.

As we look at all the issues facing our country, right here right now, the crisis in health is our biggest one.

This crisis in health must be addressed in budget 2023 - starting with a name for the health service that 95% of New Zealanders can understand - not “Te Whatu Ora”.

Under New Zealand First, we will change all of the woke virtue signaling names of every government department back to English - back to what they were before the academics from university sociology departments started this madness a few years ago.

This is not an attack on the Maori language – it is an attack on the elite virtue signalers who have hijacked the language for their own socialist means. This conceited, conniving, cultural cabal doesn't represent hard working ordinary Maori - they only seek to use Maori to further their own agenda.

And some Maori secretly driving this agenda, “are of the people but they're not for the people”.

In addition, under New Zealand First, we will meet St John funding demands, we will ensure Plunket is funded to do their job properly, we will fund Mike King's Gumboot Friday charity. We will ensure Rescue Helicopters and Surf Lifesaving NZ are properly funded. We will ensure Pharmac has more funds to get the medication to the people that need it most – but the first thing we are going to do is sort Pharmac out – they will concentrate on performance not puffery.

That's what we should be investing in as a country, not Auckland Bridge cycleways, Auckland Light Rail, and countless other ‘cultural virtue signaling’ madness.

Law and Order

We say the first responsibility of any New Zealand politician is the safety and security of New Zealanders in their homes and on the streets.

In the last week the Labour Party appointed its 5th Minister of Police in the last three years.

She began by saying ‘Government must do better on retail crime and repeat offending’. Talking to the media in front of former Police Minister Chris Hipkins.

In a moment of honesty she admitted what we all know. Labour is soft on crime. That might sound dated but the present crime stats are undeniable:

- Total crime is up 33%,
- Violent offending is up 42%,
- Sexual offending is up 16%,
- Theft offences are up 49%,
- Ram Raids, mostly committed by youth, were up 465% last year.

What has Labour done to law and order?

New Zealand First didn't secure 2238 extra trained frontline police between 2017-2020 for this outcome.

Under New Zealand First, if you commit a crime and part of a gang it will be law that it is an automatic aggravating factor in your sentencing. In addition, if you assault a First Responder - police officer, paramedic, firefighter or corrections officer in the course of their duty, there will be an automatic six-month minimum mandatory prison sentence.

We will no longer allow gangs to run amok on our streets like they are doing, and have been allowed to do, these past few years.

Climate Change and Energy

Cyclone Gabrielle showed just how dependent we are on electricity.

Today our electricity is 55% hydro, 18% geothermal, and 10% natural gas. Wind power provides 6% and solar power is at 1%, and Labour and the Greens have been using inferior imported coal from Indonesia to generate electricity as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, some policies about our energy future, set against the facts of the supply chain above, are simply alarming.

You're hearing all sorts of rhetoric from politicians about their plans for future energy when we already have, if managed properly, the chance to create energy that is affordable, reliable and sustainable and at a lower cost to our households, businesses and our economy.

In New Zealand it doesn't always rain, the sun doesn't always shine and often there is no wind.

Some suggestions from some politicians have no connection with the facts, past, present or future.

They rule out natural gas when it's so important when water, sun and wind are not present. And if inferior coal, with higher carbon emissions than from natural gas, is the Labour-Green answer, then they are in lala land.

New Zealand will need more energy to rebuild our economy and our lifestyles. That will require common sense, planning, and policies proven to have worked alongside necessary new investment. The last thing we will need is politicians waving their hands claiming the sky has fallen in whilst arguing for grandiose plans that will see us all go broke.

Ladies and gentlemen, do you want the Green Party to spend sixteen billion dollars, that's sixteen thousand million, on carbon credits overseas? Or rather spend it on your children, your hospitals, your schools, your infrastructure?

That's a brief snapshot of where sadly New Zealand is at in 2023.

It means we have some real problems to address right here, right now.

Problems so fundamental to our future that they cannot be ignored beyond this year and a 'lolly scramble budget' that ignores these critical issues will be disastrous.

One Country, One People

However, something more serious has emerged in political and public life that the mass majority of New Zealanders never asked for, don't want and don't need.

What happened to "one country, one people?"

A new blight on our society is a serious diversion from what New Zealanders of all backgrounds, races and beliefs really need - an obsession of an elite few seeking to tear down the very fabric of our society.

- Western Values

It concerns the insidious attempt to change this country's culture and institutions. In short, to remove from us the inheritance that our parents, and parents before them, left for us. It concerns political engineers who, without any authority, have nevertheless been given license to use taxpayers' money to indoctrinate the mass majority towards their perverse thinking – and their way of thinking is an all-out assault on western values and on the very essence of our democracy – one person, one vote, with each vote being of equal value.

There is a full-scale attack being waged on New Zealanders' culture, identity and sense of belonging. And the only way they can achieve this is by attacking the bonds that used to hold our society together and to misrepresent the facts behind our shared history.

This elite, self-appointed, self-opinionated, have as their purpose the destruction of our cultural inheritance.

They want to totally overhaul our system of government and values by a political 'fait accompli'. That is, by releasing an army of pandoras from their box on the simple basis that 'it's out now and you can't change it back'.

Their paradigm claim is that New Zealand is institutionally racist and therefore a retarded society.

This is peak madness. Today all they speak about is Rights. They never speak about personal responsibility, never.

They're all into minority rights, teaching children gender identity theory and they're not interested in debate. Anyone who questions them is gaslit, or culturally cancelled, or shouted down.

This gaslighting group is a small minority while the mass majority is meant to kowtow to them, and too many political representatives are not prepared to stand up to them.

There is a paradox in that one of their 'claimed concerns' are Maori when one of the essentials of being Maori is Conservatism with a capital C.

It is extreme inverse racism because what they prospect for those of us who have Maori in our background is the belief that we can't be equal without first getting a hand up from them.

And its also the emergence of a new class of society which shuns the company of working men and women for their self-conceived solutions for working peoples lives.

Most of these people have spent their lives skulking around the fringes of academia and now wish to impose their ideologies on the hard pressed men and women of our country.

Notice how the rights of family, or children, or women, have become their obsession and the last people they want to consult - are families, women, or you.

- *Co-Governance and Separatism*

Labour may now be furiously trying to put co-governance on the backburner, but they, and sadly too many even in National, still believe in it.

The tenets of co-governance are based on a lie. They're saying that on the 5th of February 1840 when no one in the British Empire or indeed Britain was in partnership with the Queen, two days later, on the 7th of February, Maori were.

The simple fact is, Maori ceded sovereignty to the Crown, because for years before 1840 they wanted law and order in their country – no matter how much the cultural Marxists want to try and re-write history.

And in arguing partnership they mean 50/50 - even though the mass majority who claim to be Maori, and who claim to be speaking on behalf of all Maori, are not even half Maori themselves.

By the 1975 Electoral Act definition of a "Maori", that's half Maori or more, they don't even amount to six percent of New Zealand's population. So, who are they really representing?

And which part of their mixed DNA is going to compensate the other part?

Why cant they answer that question?

Conclusion

New Zealand is the beneficiary of Western values, democracy, and the rule of law. And the advancement and enhancement of those principles have only occurred in those societies that have united together as one people - and who celebrate their nationhood instead of perpetuating division.

With cooperation, conciliation, inclusivity and teamwork, our country can make it out of this crisis to a better future for every New Zealander.

We can become again the envy of the world.

This is the first of many meetings we will be holding in campaign 2023.

Remember, politicians are not meant to be your masters, they are meant to be your servants.

Too much of our country is in a right mess. That's because the people who are suffering are not the ones who caused the mess. Our once great society was built on hard work and a fair go for everyone. Bold steps are needed to lift our country back where it belongs. Countries that do well, work well as a team, and everyone has a part to play.

Send out a message from Howick today, unmistakable, uncompromising.

That we are aware of the plans and purposes of others.

That we know of their secret agenda.

We together can and will stop them.

We will rebuild our country for the many not the few.

We will reconstruct our economy for every New Zealander, not just a few over-mighty subjects.

That is our vision, that is our commitment, that is our commission.

To protect and save New Zealand.

To "take our country back".

Please join us.