

THE DUNNE REPORT

Families in times of stress

It is often said we live in a land of great opportunity.

Indeed, over the last three years, we have made progress in many areas: unemployment has fallen sharply; new roads are being built and public transport improved; Kiwisaver means that many of us are able to save for our futures for perhaps the first time; and tax cuts are at last on the horizon.

However, many challenges remain. Families and communities seem under more stress than ever. It is becoming harder and harder to maintain a sense of safety and security. Our huge investment in health still sees too much money invested in bureaucracy, rather than treating people. Households are struggling to make ends meet. Petrol, food and mortgage bills are all on the up, while house values seem to be heading in the other direction. And while we are all concerned with climate change, no-one is saying what additional costs families will have to face once the Emissions Trading Scheme starts.

Now is the time for vision

We urgently need new and bolder strategies to address these concerns. We know our families deserve a decent standard of living, and that every child should get the best start in life. We all agree that people should have access to the health services they need, and be able to enjoy the freedom of our great outdoors.

We all want to have our say on the issues that affect us. No one government or party has all the best ideas by itself. We work best as a country when we work together, tackling each issue as it arises, and working out what is best for our families. But far too often, we are simply told what to do, and how to live our lives, as though we were all the same. It is not working, and New Zealanders are simply switching off. ***It's time to change this!***



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Who stands up for you?

Do you get the feeling that no-one seems to care about what typical New Zealanders think any more. Even though we are in the majority we have become a silent majority.

Sneered at by the Left for aspiring to be middle class, ignored by the Right, as able to look after ourselves, no one speaks out for this silent majority. Yet we are the backbone of our country.

Meanwhile, the Political Parties are extremely keen to grab and spend our tax dollars - invariably to benefit someone other than us.

It is no wonder the silent majority has become disillusioned. For we are the people who just happen to pay most of the taxes; who keep our service and secondary industries running; who make up our school boards of trustees, our neighbourhood support groups, our sports and service clubs.

We seek the best for your children and our children and ourselves; we who are justifiably proud of our values and aspirations.

We strongly favour traditional family values, not because we are intolerant of others, but because we want stability and security for our children. We favour hard work and self-reliance, not because we are indifferent to poverty, but because it has been those values that have enabled us to succeed. We worry about the excesses of welfare, not because we are uncaring, but because we see that it has become too much of an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff - rather than helping to ensure people do not fall over the cliff in the first place. We favour excellence in education and elsewhere, because we think life is

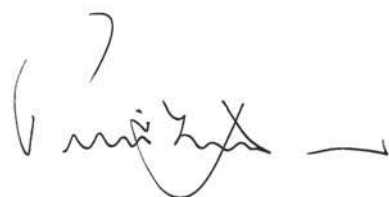
about seeking success rather than accepting failure.

We all want a New Zealand that allows families to seek a quality of life that excludes nothing as "impossible", which promotes a vibrant culture, personal safety, caring, and tolerance. We all want to see New Zealand committed to promoting a sustainable environment that is a model for the rest of the world, and a full choice of employment, education and leisure opportunities.

Now is the time for politicians who understand these values to represent us.

It demands a different type of politics, where ideas, not ideology matter; where families and communities come first; where respect for each other's dignity and freedom is sacred, and is our common responsibility. And above all, where we listen, we discuss, and only then, we act.

For my part, I want the silent majority of New Zealanders, of every background and creed to feel once again that you are represented, appreciated and valued in our country. We need to be working today to build the country we want for our children tomorrow. That is what our future leadership and direction must focus on.



"We are the people who just happen to pay most of the taxes; keep our service and secondary industries running; and make up our school boards of trustees, our neighbourhood support groups, and our sports and service clubs. And yet we have no voice."

These are the steps we need to take to get there:

FAMILIES DESERVE A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING.

In today's tough climate we alone can get this through:

Bold tax reform policy

1 - cutting taxes to 10% on income up to \$12,000;

2 - 20% to income between \$12,000 and \$38,000;

3 - 30% on income above \$38,000)

The option of income splitting for parents with dependent children.

EVERY CHILD DESERVES THE BEST START IN LIFE

Promoting shared parenting;

Extending paid parental leave to 12 months;

Establishing one stop shop family service centres;

Ensuring playcentres and other parent-led groups get the same support that teacher-led organisations currently get from 20 hours free early childhood education.

THE HEALTH SERVICE MUST MEET PEOPLE'S NEEDS

A free "warrant of fitness" health check each year;

Making better use of public and private hospital capacity;

Guaranteeing everyone over 65 access to elective surgery within 6 months

A national health insurance scheme to give everyone access to the high cost medicines and hospital services they need.

EVERY NEW ZEALANDER CAN SHAPE OUR COUNTRY'S FUTURE

It shouldn't be just for the select few to decide. We should:

Hold referenda in the next three years on the future of MMP, the Maori seats, and the Head of State

Boost people's access to the great outdoors.

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So, what has UnitedFuture achieved so far?

Whilst we may not constantly occupy the news headlines, UnitedFuture has made a significant impact:

We ensure a stable government. It is possibly an underrated virtue – but it is an important one. The people of New Zealand deserve the certainty of knowing the government they elect will last the three years until the next election, and that is why we stick to the agreements we make.

We have lowered taxes for the first time in years, with business taxes reduced for the first time in 20 years, and with personal tax cuts to follow.

We think volunteers and charities are of huge importance, which is why we have encouraged the work they do by **removing the limits on tax rebates for donations**, and introducing other ways to support those who support others.

We have encouraged New Zealanders to enjoy our great environment, **extending daylight saving** to give us three extra weeks of summer sunshine; **securing walking access**, and **improving the water quality** in our lakes and rivers; while **sensibly managing both pests and game**.

We have worked hard to help support and strengthen New Zealand families, **establishing the Families Commission** to promote family policy and parenting skills; ensuring cannabis remains illegal; and working to raise the minimum driving age.

We are fortunate to live in a great country. We all add something to our national character. Whatever our background, wherever we live. That is what makes us special as New Zealanders. We are a unique combination of all our experiences.

I believe we can become the world's greatest multicultural nation, where our values and experiences combine to make us a truly great people – the best in the world. I want that all of us, whatever our background, race, or creed - that we all have the chance to enjoy everything that is good in our country.

To find out more about what we at UnitedFuture think about the issues of the day, come to our website, www.unitedfuture.org.nz

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Authorised by Phil Johnson
Financial Agent
United Future New Zealand
57 Para Street
Miramar
WELLINGTON.