

The Jobs Letter

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Essential Information on an Essential Issue

SPECIAL



Election 2005 The Jobs Policies

*WE INTERVIEW
THE MAJOR PARTIES*

The Jobs Letter asks the major political parties some key questions about the employment platform they are standing on as they go into the 17 September election. The questions:

- 1. What are your party's employment policies? What employment initiatives would your party take?*
- 2. What are the biggest employment issues New Zealand is facing and what will your party do about them?*
- 3. What are your policies and initiatives on education and training for the unemployed?*
- 4. Do you support the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, and its primary goal that no young person under 25 years will be out of work or training? If so, what would your government do to help achieve this?*
- 5. Do you support the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs' call for a Job Guarantee — that all adults who are long-term unemployed (registered for more than 12 months) have the opportunity and are encouraged to be in paid work, in training or education, or in useful activities in our communities? If yes, what will you do to make this happen?*
- 6. Do you support the Every Child Counts campaign? How would your party make every child count?*
- 7. Are there any Work & Income programmes you would change, add or delete?*
- 8. How will your party encourage community groups working in employment and social service fields?*

The Parties respond ...

THE LABOUR PARTY ...

1) Employment policies and initiatives ...

Labour's policy is more work, better work and more productive workplaces. We want New Zealanders to have decent jobs with decent wages and we want them to build the skills throughout their lives that enable them to add value in the workplace.

Employment has been a key focus for Labour over the last six years. There are more than 260,000 more people in jobs than in 1999, and unemployment is at a 22 year low.

Labour has been successful because we've provided practical solutions like training and intensive case management for people on benefits. The OECD recently confirmed our active employment policies led to New Zealand to achieving the lowest unemployment rate in the developed world.

This success brings its own challenges: we cannot continue to grow our wealth as a nation simply by increasing the number of jobs and the number of people in them.

We need now to place greater emphasis on the quality of our work, the value our work produces, and importantly the rewards from our work. Labour will support people through education and training, sector and regional development, and by providing tools that will assist workplaces to improve their performance.

2) The biggest employment issues ...

A big challenge is to tackle the skill shortages many of our industries are facing. We are continuing to re-build our skills base through major investment in industry training and modern apprenticeships, and by working with industries to identify and meet skill needs.

Labour has pledged to create an extra 5,000 Modern Apprenticeships, taking the total number to 14,000 in 2008. We will also continue working towards our goal of 250,000 people in industry training by 2009.

We also have to raise productivity levels to improve the rewards from work. This will enable us to lift profits and pay, and improve work-life balance. That's why we're working with the business community and the trade union movement to help

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workplaces figure out practical things they can do to raise productivity.

3) Education and training ...

Labour has refocused the benefit system over the past six years to provide better work opportunities for people across all benefit types.

Services we have introduced include work readiness training, matching of job seeker skills to employer needs, training subsidies for people to lift their skills, literacy and numeracy courses for people who lack these basic skills and partnerships with industries where we fund the cost of on-the-job training.

The change to a single benefit in 2007, with one set of criteria, will allow case managers to focus even more on ensuring people get access to the training and support they need to get back into work.



STEVE MAHAREY
**Labour Party, Minister of Social
Development and Employment**
www.labour.org.nz/

4) No young person under 25 years will be out of work or training ...

Yes, the Labour Party supports the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs. We have a joint commitment with the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs to have all 15-19 year olds in work, education or training by 2007. We've committed \$260 million to achieve this, and we will go further in the next term. We will expand the successful Youth Transition Services. We will also increase the number of modern apprentices to 14,000 by 2008, and expand the Gateway programme into every high school to give all young people an opportunity to experience workplaces first hand while engaging in structured workplace learning.

Once we have achieved our goal for 15-19 year olds, we will look at what else should be done for those aged between 20-24.

5) A Job Guarantee ...

Yes, the Labour Party supports the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs' call for a Job Guarantee. Our aim is full employment in New Zealand. We have already been hugely successful in slashing the numbers of long-term unemployed through policies such as work readiness training, removal of work test exemptions for clients aged 55-59 years and job partnerships with industry.

The numbers of long-term unemployed has fallen by over 60% over the last five years, and by 38% in the last year alone.

A \$21 million initiative in this year's Budget will enable us to build on this strong result. The funding will provide intensive case-management, wage subsidies and an Urban Employment Service for clients who have been unemployed for more than three years.



6) Every Child Counts...

Yes, we support *Every Child Counts'* four priorities for political action:

Commit to putting children and families at the centre of policy development and implementation. We have established the Families Commission as an advocate for the interests of families and set out, in New Zealand's first ever Agenda for Children, a focus on the whole child rather than isolated issues or problems.

Ensure every child gets a good start: Early intervention initiatives like Family Start and the new Parenting Support Service will continue to be a major focus. We will also implement 20 hours free early childhood education for 3 and 4 year olds, along with greatly broadened eligibility for childcare subsidies.

End child poverty: The *Working for Families* package is the biggest single redistribution of income to low and middle-income families in three decades, and will have a dramatic impact on child poverty.

Reduce child abuse and neglect: We have strengthened the social work profession, increased Child Youth and Family's baseline funding by more than 50% and put in place Te Rito, the New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy, to help create a society where families are living free from violence.

7) Work & Income programmes ...

Under Labour, New Zealand's employment policies have become an international success story and we intend to build on this success through our ongoing reform of the benefit system. Our goal from day one was to fully utilise the resources of Work and Income to help New Zealanders off benefits and into sustainable jobs.

Improving economic conditions led to steady declines in unemployment in our first years in office. But as the OECD recently pointed out, it was not until the implementation of policies like Jobs Jolt and Work for You that benefit numbers started to fall rapidly.

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Labour will continue to support policies like Jobs Jolt which provide a mix of incentives, sanctions and training to encourage sustainable employment.

The introduction of the Single Core Benefit in 2007 will allow us to extend policies and services that have helped the unemployed find jobs to the wider beneficiary population.

8) Encourage community groups working in employment ...

Labour has been hugely active in its involvement with the community and voluntary sector. We have worked in partnership with the sector and established a number of funds and activities to support our commitment to improving government's relationship with the sector. Over the next three years we will continue to improve the funding process and arrangements for community and voluntary groups, support the growth of volunteer centres and continue to ensure voluntary sector issues are well represented at a national level.

THE NATIONAL PARTY ...

Building incomes is the country's key challenge. It can only occur if workplace productivity is substantially improved. That will require changes in employment law to enable more flexible and productive working relationships.



WAYNE MAPP
**National Party, Spokesman for Labour
& Industrial Relations**
www.national.org.nz/

Reserve Bank Governor Alan Bollard has shown New Zealand's productivity growth is lagging behind other comparable countries. He said it needed to go from 1.5% to at least a 2% annual improvement, which is typical of Australia and the United States over the past decade.

The effect of more productive workplaces shows up in incomes. In the past five years, the gap in

average after tax incomes between Australia and New Zealand has increased from \$5,000 to \$9,000. This relative decline can only be reversed if labour productivity gains match those of Australia.

Employment law is acknowledged to be one of the key determinants in boosting workplace productivity. The law should facilitate the choices that employers and employees freely make, not put them into a straightjacket.

In the past five years, the Labour Government has re-regulated the workplace. The changes have occurred in two phases — first, the Employment Relations Act 2000; and second, major amendments to that Act in 2004. Numerous other changes include the Holidays Act 2003 and the onerous requirements of occupational safety and health legislation.

The cumulative effect has been more rigid workplace environments and much higher compliance costs. The 2004 amendments were particularly pernicious in the way they deeply entrenched union power. The intent is to force employers into collective agreements with unions. The wave of strikes over the past few months demonstrates how the unions will use their new-found powers.

Ironically, this re-regulation of the workplace has occurred when union membership is the lowest it has ever been; 20% for the whole workforce, but only 10% in the private sector. This means 80% of all employees have said 'no' to unionism.

National is clear on the excessive and punitive



measures of the 2004 amendments to the Employment Relations Act. We will repeal them in their entirety. So far as the 2000 legislation is concerned, National believes a blend of the best elements of the Employment Contracts Act 1991 and the Employment Relations Act 2000 is the best way forward.

The changes proposed by National are in two key areas: first, to enact more flexible employment law for growth and productivity; and second, to remove the preferential role of unions, especially around their monopoly over collective contracts.

National is proposing a 90-day trial period for new employees. Employers and employees will have the same rights to terminate employment within that period without personal grievance procedures applying. This is an area where New Zealand is out of step. Of all OECD member nations, the only other country that legally prohibits trial periods for new employees is Denmark. Trial periods permitted in other countries typically range from one month to 12 months, with three months being the most common. Australia is proposing a 180-day grievance free period.

A trial period will enable young people still building skills to enter the workforce more readily without the employer risking expensive personal grievance procedures.

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The problems around personal grievances are not restricted to probation periods. This is an area of law where process has taken precedence over substance. If a dismissal is properly justified, employers should not be unreasonably burdened with cumbersome and expensive procedural issues.

The second major change that National proposes is the removal of the preferential treatment of unions, especially collective contracts. People should be free to choose the right person to represent them; it could be a human resources specialist, an employment lawyer or a union. Therefore, provisions that provide monopoly rights to unions to negotiate collective agreements will be removed.

National will continue to recognise unions, given they can represent large numbers of workers in particular workplaces. But there needs to be clear rules on how unions operate.

The Employment Relations Act 2000 did have some useful innovations. There is widespread acceptance of the principle of mediation and adjudication. However, there are serious concerns about the competence and ability of some appointments. National will review them all and ensure they are made on the basis of merit, not political correctness. National thinks it is best to retain the Employment Court and its existing place in the hierarchy of the courts.

National's overall goal is to free up the workplace and bring New Zealand's employment law into line with best practice among OECD member countries.

Rigidity in workplace law is not confined just to the Employment Relations Act. The Holidays Act needs substantial review, especially around the rules for statutory holidays, sick leave and bereavement leave. There is now ample evidence that the new rules have added cost without benefit. The service industries have been particularly hard hit. The problem is time and a half plus a day in lieu for statutory holidays. Everyone would recognise that working on a statutory holiday ought to have some recompense, but the current 150% extra cost is unreasonable. National will review this rule with the intent of reducing the cost burden. Even the rules around sick leave have led to bad outcomes. The concept of "relevant daily pay" must be replaced with "ordinary daily pay". That means no one will be paid more to be sick than to work as is currently happening.

National will also reduce bureaucratic compliance costs of the OSH legislation, and in particular remove stress as grounds for OSH action.

National's goal is for New Zealand to have modern employment law suited to the flexible work environment of the 21st century. Increasingly our OECD competitors are reforming their workplace law. Unless New Zealand changes, we will be left behind.

THE GREEN PARTY

1) Employment policies and initiatives ...

- a full employment economy. We believe that both paid and unpaid work are critical ways of adding meaning to our lives, and everyone should have access to both, and to education and training. This should include as much balance between the various aspects of our working and families' lives as possible;
- a proactive Government commitment to employment creation, especially in environmentally and socially useful work across all sectors;
- employment creation needs to focus on those who miss out the most, including young people, mature age job seekers, refugees and migrants, and people with (or recovering from) physical, mental and/or intellectual disability;
- increased resourcing for community based economic development, for unemployed people entering small business, and for third sector/tangata whenua groups that support these goals;
- shifting tax from work and enterprise to pollution and wasted resources.



SUE BRADFORD
Green Party, Spokesperson for
Employment and Social Services
www.greens.org.nz/

2) The biggest employment issues ...

- labour shortages in certain regions and occupations. Overall the Green Party supports the direction Labour is taking on this. However, we believe that more effort should be made to create sustainable jobs for local unemployed people, for example in casual and seasonal work like horticulture and fishing — rather than letting so

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many of these jobs go to vulnerable and exploited foreign workers;

- unemployment continues, despite continuing low rates. There are still 83,000 officially unemployed and over 161,000 “jobless” as of the March 2005 Household Labour Force Survey. And there is a lot of hidden unemployment among people who are on benefits other than Unemployment Benefit, and among people who for various reasons don’t show up in Ministry of Social Development or other statistics. For the people affected, unemployment remains as huge and depressing a problem as it always has. Just because more people overall are in work doesn’t reduce the negative psychological and physical impacts on those who are out of work, and their families and communities;
- low wages. The minimum wage is still far too low in NZ, at \$9.50 an hour for adults. The Green Party supports raising the minimum wage to \$12.00 an hour immediately for all workers aged 16 and over.



3) Education and training ...

- ensuring that all people who are registered unemployed have access to careers advice and vocational guidance from the time they register with Work and Income;
- the continued expansion of the modern apprenticeship scheme and the encouragement of women into trades usually associated with men in the past;
- financial support for the appropriate retraining and other particular direct assistance to people who are long term unemployed, or who suffer from other barriers to getting work such as disability, age (too old or too young).

4) No young person under 25 years will be out of work or training ...

The Green Party supports the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and its goal of working towards ‘zero waste’ of young New Zealanders, as part of our commitment to full employment — and access to training and education — for all. We are pleased with the support that the Labour Government has given the Taskforce, and would like to see this relationship between Government and the Mayors continued and strengthened.

5) A Job Guarantee ...

The Green Party has no policy directly on the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs “Job Guarantee”, but as already

mentioned, we do have a commitment to working towards full employment and to working to ensure access to education and training for all who want and need it.

Our tertiary policy assists this as well, by calling for an end to the student loan scheme, a universal student allowance for all full time students at tech or university, a sinking lid on fees, and the ability for graduates to pay off their debt at the rate of one year’s debt for one year working in NZ in paid or unpaid work.

We oppose compulsory work for the dole schemes as a solution to unemployment, instead supporting the use of full wage job creation in the public and not-for-profit sectors for long term unemployed, with people carrying out socially and environmentally useful work. Such schemes should pay at least the full-time minimum wage, and be subject to all the normal conditions of employment, including the right to join a trade union.

6) Every Child Counts...

The Green Party supports the *Every Child Counts* campaign. Some key points:

- work towards eliminating child poverty by 2010, ideally through means of a cross party accord in Parliament;
- introduce a Universal Child Benefit (like the old Family Benefit) of at least \$15 a week for the first child and \$10 a week for subsequent children, payable to the primary caregiver regardless of source or type of parents’ income. This could also potentially be capitalised towards a deposit on a first home;
- work to end discrimination against the children of beneficiaries, including in the *Working for Families* package, as well as reform the benefit system on lines of simplicity and sufficiency. The Special Benefit should not be abolished (as planned) until main benefits are enough for people to live on;
- repeal Section 59 of the Crimes Act so that parents may no longer use the defence of “reasonable force” when they beat their children, for example with canes, horse whips or pieces of wood;
- improve resourcing and funding stability for church and community groups which work to support parents and children;
- encourage a far more child friendly workplace culture, including flexible working hours, breastfeeding facilities, access to childcare;
- encourage respect and support for parents who choose to stay at home with their babies and children rather than engage in the paid workforce;
- defend the Domestic Purposes Benefit;
- make the first \$5,000 of income tax free for everyone.

7) Work & Income programmes ...

The Green Party would removed from government policy ...

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- the limited employment ‘no go zone’ aspect of the “Jobs Jolt”;
- work testing of 55 – 59 year-olds who are on the Unemployment Benefit, while retaining their right to job placement and support;
- the use of drug testing as part of testing for the unemployment benefit in some cases;
- moves towards making the treatment of sickness and invalids beneficiaries similar to the ACC system.

The Green Party would add to Government policy the reinstatement of a community economic development function that was lost with the disbanding of the Community Employment Group. There is a lot more the Green Party would like to achieve in this area, including the wholesale reform of New Zealand’s social security system.

8) Encourage community groups working in employment ...

The Green Party would encourage community groups working in employment and social service fields by increasing Government respect, understanding and funding for community groups in these areas. Details of our community and voluntary sector policy are available on request.

New Zealand First ...

The failure to employ our potential workforce not only limits our labour market capacity, it imposes a huge fiscal cost to the nation, while indirectly contributing to the level of crime, and adding demands to our health system.

Addressing employment issues requires a collaborative effort between government, business and labour organisations. Essentially employment creation is dependent upon wealth creation and a system which efficiently distributes that wealth.

New Zealand is primarily a nation of small and medium size businesses and job and wealth creation is dependent upon these enterprises thriving.

As a relatively small market in global terms, business development and wealth creation must be exported and the government must play a facilitating role in this. Maximising the value-added content of our exports is a priority.

It is also the nation’s advantage to encourage commercially driven initiatives and regional development. New Zealand First is firmly committed to policies which will achieve these objectives.

Export and employment objectives will be added to Reserve Bank targets.

The industrial relations environment that facilitates economic and employment growth must be based on fairness, flexibility, and neutrality.

It is also important that people obtain and retain a sense of worth and self-esteem through making a contribution to their society. New Zealand First is committed to the concept of a community wage, and to ensuring that people move from dependence on the state, to a state of independence.

Our vision is of a nation made up of well educated, determined, healthy, and innovative people, and an expanding business programme geared around exports, regional development, job growth, and harnessing the natural attributes of the country.



BROANDONNELLY
New Zealand First, Education
Spokesperson
www.nzfirst.org.nz/

The following are excerpts from New Zealand First policies ...

Enhanced prosperity is dependent upon high, sustainable economic growth. New Zealand First is firmly committed to the pro-active support of business. Successful business means increased employment:

- apply incentives to business activities which add value, create employment, provide export growth (or import substitution), and/or contribute to regional development;
- in the medium term provide for the goal of increased competitiveness via reduced corporate taxation;
- support Skill New Zealand in enhancing the relationship between employers and Industry Training Organisations in the development of programmes which up-skill labour to meet employers needs;
- improve transportation infrastructure;
- further develop export guarantees to encourage export growth;
- facilitate technology transfer to ensure that developments can be readily transferred between sectors;
- expand venture capital funding to encourage innovation and export and/or employment growth;
- develop Business Angel Networks to improve co-ordination between entrepreneurial opportunities and investment preferences;
- ensure Trade and Enterprise New Zealand focuses increasingly on the development of emerging markets.

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New Zealand First is supportive of regional development where it creates real growth, not where it represents corporate welfare and greater dependency. Where real sustainable jobs have been created this should be lauded, but it is not the role of central government to try and pick winners when redistributing taxpayer funds.

Regional development requires a holistic approach, aimed at maximising the potential of the people and natural resources of a region to lift the overall well-being of those living in the region. New Zealand First will:



- empower regions to develop local initiatives, which meet local needs and utilise local talents;
- redirect regional development funding into projects linked to infrastructure, communications and transport;
- enhance the role of tourism within the purview of regional development, particularly within regions that already have a strong tourism base;
- facilitate industry clusters where feasible to maximise growth potential; and,
- encourage regions to focus on capitalising on their natural resources, and in industries where they have a natural competitive advantage.

New Zealand First would:

- raise the minimum and youth wage;
- amend industrial laws to ensure that casualisation employment practices are fair and just to all parties;
- review the practice of short term employment contracts;
- amend the Equal Employment Opportunities laws to — ensure that ending discrimination of those 50-years plus — is established as a fundamental plank of these laws rather than as a token gesture;
- review the Holidays Act to ensure fairness and flexibility and to ensure four weeks annual leave is locked in.

New Zealand First remains committed to industrial and vocational training. It will:

- continue to refine and develop industrial training with the ultimate aim of ensuring that all young people are either in work or participating in industry training;
- maintain and expand industrial and vocational training programmes;
- ensure that farmers and other rural workers are able to access industry training funds;
- develop a “community wage” scheme to allow businesses to offer apprenticeships and other training schemes through a “topped up” weekly wage system;

- review Industry Training Organisations, with a view to using successful organisations as a model to establish best practice across the sector;
- extend the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme to older trainees;
- recognise the particular difficulties of displaced workers in the 50-plus age bracket and develop programmes to meet their particular needs.

New Zealand First is firmly committed to the concept of mutual obligations. Where a person is unable to obtain paid employment, the state will pay that person on the understanding that that person makes a contribution back to the community. New Zealand First will:

- reintroduce the community wage policy requiring recipients to make a contribution to their communities;
- determine a range of activities deemed to be community work;
- empower Regional Commissioners to train and utilise community wage workers for the construction of homes for low-income people on multiple owned land;
- further empower Regional Commissioners to make individual decisions tailored for the needs of their region;
- encourage local government use of the community wage scheme for conservation and weed and pest control activities, and for beautification and maintenance of waterways, beaches, parks and roadsides;
- ensure that young people who are enrolled for the community wage are engaged in either a) seasonal employment, b) industry training, c) extended conservation or youth service corps, or for those at risk, d) military-type discipline training.

THE UNITED FUTURE PARTY ...

1) Employment policies and initiatives ...

United Future wants to make sure that New Zealand is the best place in the world to raise a family. This goal can only be achieved if parents have sustainable employment that provides them with adequate incomes and challenges their potential, while at the same time allowing them to balance work with family life.

The healthy state of the economy and labour market have been underpinned by an unprecedented period of political stability under MMP, for which United Future can rightly claim some credit. Having said this, the current favourable conditions have also exposed some fundamental issues relating to employment, such as the shortage of skills and unused capacity in the labour force. Addressing these problems now through pro-active employment strategies will reap dividends later should economic conditions deteriorate (see below for more detail).

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2) The biggest employment issues ...

The biggest employment issue facing New Zealand is a shortage of skills in an increasing number of fields. United Future will start by determining which skills are in severe shortage nationwide (or are projected to be in short supply in the near future), and then use this to shape training and recruitment policies for three potential sources of skilled labour:

- The long-term unemployed: those who have been unemployed for a year or more will be assessed for work-readiness. If they are not work-ready they will be referred to training and other services (e.g. health) that will help them to become so. If they are work-ready they will undertake part-time work on a community project, or for a voluntary agency of their own choosing. Participants will only work for as many hours a week as their benefit will cover, based on the rate of the minimum wage, to leave sufficient time for job search activity. Those who are still unemployed after two years will be placed in paid employment for six months, where they will receive in-work training and will have their wages subsidised for half of that time. Priority for wage-subsidised places will



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Industrial Relations Spokesperson
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be given to the older unemployed and those with disabilities.

- School leavers: United Future will increase workforce skills by lifting the number of modern apprenticeships to 10,000, and increasing places with other Industry Training Organisations. We will prioritise funding for those courses that develop skills and provide qualifications in fields facing shortages, which will result in much lower fees for trainees. We will also improve access to tertiary education by lowering the costs of study through changes to the student loan and allowances system.

- Skilled Migrants: United Future believes in an active immigration policy that prioritises the applications of those who actually have skills we want and a job offer that is relevant to those skills. Having said this, the global marketplace for skilled people is highly competitive, and we need to be doing much more to attract people to this country, including drawing ex-pats home. We would review the operations of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to ensure that the process of formally recognising migrants' skills is effective and efficient. United Future will ensure that advice and information is available to businesses to support them in hiring migrants, and we will support migrants with workshops about the Kiwi work environment. We will also establish a global online service that matches potential skilled migrants with job opportunities in New Zealand to help fill critical skill shortages, and provide more structured "working holidays".



3) Education and training ...

On initiatives on education and training for the unemployed, United Future will:

- identify the skills gaps of each person and enable them to access appropriate training courses (including work experience);
- increase funding for adult literacy programmes;
- fund training programmes that are specifically targeted at up-skilling older New Zealanders who find themselves out of work;
- support a public campaign aimed at employers to break-down any negative perceptions of older workers, migrants and those with disabilities;
- require all young people under 25 who are not at school to either be "earning or learning" (i.e. in some form of education/training or work).

4) No young person under 25 years will be out of work or training ...

United Future supports the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs. See the answers to the previous question.

5) A Job Guarantee ...

See the answers to the previous question.

6) Every Child Counts...

United Future support the *Every Child Counts* campaign. It is committed to:

- putting children and their families at the centre of policy development through the work of the Families Commission;
- ensuring that all families are able to access the range of services available (e.g. primary

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healthcare, early childhood education, parenting information, budget advice) by implementing a comprehensive family support model;

- lifting family incomes to take into account the costs of raising a family by making the first \$3,000 of earned income tax-free, increasing the other tax thresholds by \$5,000, and by introducing income splitting for couples raising children;
- reducing child abuse and neglect by restructuring the Child Youth & Families Service. The most serious cases would be referred to a child protection agency, while less serious cases would be referred to family support co-ordinators working with non-governmental family support organisations.

7) Work & Income programmes ...

Apart from the new training and work initiatives outlined above, United Future will also change the approach towards the burgeoning number sickness and invalids beneficiaries. They will be required to seek treatment for their incapacity where this is appropriate as a condition of their benefit, and we will make additional funding available to provide treatment where it is likely to hasten their return to work. We will also ensure that those suffering from psychological conditions (particularly the increasing number of stress and depression cases) are assessed by a designated specialist in that field.

8) Encourage community groups working in employment ...

United Future will recognise the special role played by non-governmental organisations in assisting people into work (and the potential for more agencies to become involved) by paying premiums when they place people into sustained employment. Higher rates would be available for organisations that provide training and placements for clients who face greater barriers to employment.

As outlined above, we also believe that the voluntary sector is in a good position to help the unemployed to gain skills and develop a work ethos through community work schemes. To support them in this role, we will introduce a community volunteer tax rebate of up to \$500 per annum (based on 100 hours work per year) for those who give up their time to work for recognised community agencies and charities.

THE MAORIPARTY

1) Employment policies and initiatives ...

The Maori Party advocates for better employment conditions, and as such, supports the Employment Relations Act. However, given the Maori Party's central focus on people, further amendments are required for it to become properly worker-friendly.

The Maori Party advocates for income policies that recognise and address the actual health, education and housing needs of whanau and communities. For the Maori Party, income policies should express the values upon which they're developed: enabling whanau to both participate in (whanaungatanga) and contribute to (manaakitanga) the communities in which they live and belong.

The Maori Party advocates for equity in incomes across all population groups. The median weekly income for all Maori is lower than that received by non-Maori (\$621 per week of \$32, 292 per year compared with \$762, or \$39,624)¹. Women, Pacific peoples and many Ethnic populations also experience wage discrimination.

The Maori Party advocates for the creation of meaningful employment. Of particular importance is reducing Maori unemployment which is more than twice the national rate and more than three times that of Pakeha rate. Again, Pacific peoples and many Ethnic populations are also significantly more likely to be unemployed.



TARIANA TURIA
The Maori Party, Co-leader
www.maoriparty.com/

Employment creation initiatives of the Maori Party centre around giving expression to the value of kotahitanga, bringing groups together in pursuit of sustainable economic growth, and of clarifying the role of mana whenua — local whanau, hapu and iwi — in economic partnerships. As a consequence, the Maori Party promotes:

- policies to increase the accessibility of the nation's economy for Maori-driven enterprise;
- developing incentives, programmes and initiatives to facilitate business/industry partnerships with whanau, hapu and iwi Maori;
- developing collective business development strategies that increase economic participation and encourage local and regional self-reliance.

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2) The biggest employment issues ...

Of particular importance to the Maori Party is raising the minimum adult wage so that it is a living wage. Another critical aspect of providing and creating meaningful and quality employment is the provision of a positive work environment where there can be mutual regard and respect between employers and employees.

3) Education and training ...

Increasing participation and success/completion rates in industry and trade training is a priority of the Maori Party. This is particularly so for unemployed Maori as current policies have been largely unsuccessful in achieving this. Improvements to training environments, given their relevance to achievement, is a key focus of the



Maori Party. The policy focus of the Maori Party in this area is, as with employment, the development of strategic relationships and partnerships through which training can be successfully offered and undertaken, for example:

- to support more training and apprenticeships in all fields through partnerships with strategic industries and institutions;
- to ensure that all educational programmes recognise the potential of marae to be institutions of learning where their authority is recognised;
- to ensure trade training/apprenticeships are developed and delivered by Maori with key industry sectors where there are recognised skill shortages.

4) No young person under 25 years will be out of work or training ...

The Maori Party is very concerned to increase youth participation in paid employment and training. Outlined above are a number of policies to help achieve this. Further to this, the Maori Party advocates for the establishment and training of youth councils to contribute to and influence the decision-making of local and regional authorities.

It is important, however, for policy frameworks to recognise the contribution of young people to their whanau and communities, and the role of parenting, and that they be properly counted as work. The Maori Party contends that young people are best supported and motivated when their contributions are acknowledged and given value.

5) A Job Guarantee ...

The Maori Party is very concerned to increase participation in the paid work force and in training and education. To reiterate from above, however, it is important that policy frameworks also recognise the value of the enormous amount of unpaid and

volunteer work that is vital for the smooth functioning of whanau and communities, including the care of whanau members.

Recent cuts to tertiary education funding for institutions to offer courses, and for academic support to Maori students, are predicted to have a considerable impact on both education/training participation and unemployment levels — particularly for Maori. The Maori Party promotes adequate funding for training and education so that all are able to participate and that all are sufficiently supported to succeed/complete.

6) Every Child Counts...

The Maori Party supports the *Every Child Counts* campaign and is committed to making real improvements in children's lives. A central feature of the Maori Party's kaupapa or values-based policy framework is whanau self-determination: assisting and resourcing whanau to take care of, and responsibility for, their members. This includes an emphasis on strengthening relationships within whanau, and between whanau and communities. It includes a particular focus on the eradication of child poverty.

More than half of Maori, Pacific, sole parent and benefit dependent families live in poverty in Aotearoa. The *Working for Families* package contributed to this by depriving 175,000 children of the core-related component of core benefits, and cutting the special benefit by an average of \$13.50 per week.

Increasing the incomes of all low-income families (through raising the minimum wage for workers, increasing family support payments and child-related benefits, and through increasing the level of income at which tax is taken) is critical to reducing child poverty, and to addressing the health, education, housing, relationship and behavioural issues that result.

7) Work & Income programmes ...

The Maori Party promotes that audits be undertaken for all service delivery agencies in relation to their compliance with a kaupapa Maori value-base. It is the belief of the Party that such values as manaakitanga (respect, regard, hospitality and affection for others) and whanaungatanga (building and enhancing reciprocal relationships), have meaning and relevance for all people of Aotearoa.

8) Encourage community groups working in employment ...

The Maori Party promotes greater government investment into the community and voluntary sector in order to better support existing programmes, initiative development, and for training and up-skilling workers, including volunteers.

The Maori Party promotes utilising the skills and expertise of the voluntary social services sector to provide paid policy advice to government.

The Maori Party promotes compacts between the voluntary social services sector and government agencies based on achieved outcomes as opposed to prescribed contracts.

The Jobs Letter

THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY ...

1) Employment policies and initiatives ...

The Progressive Party is the party of full employment. We believe that a large part of New Zealand's past record as an egalitarian and fair go society has been built on the pursuit and achievement of full employment. This has, therefore, been a central element in the role of the Progressive leader Jim Anderton as Minister for Economic, Industry and Regional Development. It is only by encouraging long-term sustainable economic growth across all regions that we can hope to ensure that New Zealanders are in long-term permanent work at good wages, enjoy decent housing, there is access for all to good quality publicly funded health and education, and an assurance of universal provision of an adequate pension in retirement. The Progressives encourage collective bargaining through independent worker organisations as an integral element in pursuing that policy. We believe that with every region in consistent growth mode for the last six years, the lowest unemployment rate for two decades, and one of the highest labour force participation rates in the OECD we are making considerable progress.



MATT ROBSON
The Progressive Party, Deputy-Leader
www.progressive.org.nz/

2) The biggest employment issues ...

The biggest issue for employment in New Zealand is not just full employment but making sure, as far as possible, workers are in jobs which draw on their abilities and skills to the maximum and which contribute at optimum levels to the sustainable growth in our levels of high value added, quality, exports for as many international niche markets as possible. This has always been and will continue to be, the only real basis upon which New Zealand can achieve its longstanding social objectives.

3) Education and training ...

A key element in achieving our policies is greatly enhanced opportunities for as many people as possible to undertake education and training. This includes opportunities for retraining throughout working life. We fully support the modern apprenticeships scheme and would like to see the number of places available double to 14,000 by 2007. By the same year our target is to have all school leavers in jobs, education or training. We support the development and promotion of more industry training, and the enhancement and exploration of all mechanisms the government might use to assist industry to develop effective skills training programmes.

We need to work progressively to re-establish a free tertiary education system and have a priority policy of ensuring that for every year a graduate works in New Zealand, the government will meet their minimum student loan repayments as a first step towards restoring free tertiary education.



4) No young person under 25 years will be out of work or training ...

The Progressive Party, through its leader Jim Anderton, was one of the senior Ministers instrumental in introducing the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs. We support it fully and wish to see it enjoy continuing support as a framework within which local communities can make their contribution to the development of genuine long-term opportunities for employment. Much of the work being done to achieve this objective has been achieved through co-operative endeavour and the development of regional development plans and agencies, and we see this work continuing under a returned Labour/Progressive government.

5) A Job Guarantee ...

The Progressives recognise that those who are long-term unemployed require particular and focussed assistance in achieving the move from their current status to long-term sustainable employment. We endorse the current programmes in place to achieve this objective, and would like to see this assistance continue and enhanced as the most effective means of bridging the "long-term unemployment gap" become apparent through experience. In the middle- to longer-term, however, the best way of ensuring this transition from long-term unemployment to work is achieved for as many people as possible is by working to ensure that economic growth brings us as close as possible to full employment.

6) Every Child Counts...

The Progressive Party supports the *Every Child Counts* policy as a key component in our underlying philosophy of no one being left behind in our society.

The Jobs Letter

A wide range of policies implemented by the Labour/Progressive government in the fields of housing, education, health and family support are contributing materially to that objective. In particular the *Working for Families* package will mean a 30% reduction in the number of children living in poverty, an additional \$100 a week increase in income on average for low income families, and 88,000 families receiving increased accommodation and child support. We have doubled the number of accommodation supplements granted in 2004, and trebled the number of childcare subsidies granted. All of this will be placed in jeopardy by a change of government.

7) Work & Income programmes ...

The Progressive Party takes a pragmatic view of the programmes operated by Work & Income. If they are effective in getting people into genuine long-term jobs then they should be retained and enhanced. If on the other hand, they are ineffective or have outlived their usefulness (as in the case of the Community Employment Group) then they should be either terminated or reviewed and revised so that they serve a useful employment purpose.

8) Encourage community groups working in employment ...

We believe that non-government organisations and other community groups have a key role to play in developing and administering programmes and initiatives which contribute to the key objective of assisting the unemployed to find genuine, long-term, properly paid work. Current programmes which contribute to support of this role should be continued and enhanced.

ACT NEW ZEALAND

ACT's vision is full employment, high wages and high labour productivity growth.

ACT would pass a Freedom to Contract Act, freeing employers and employees to contract between themselves. Laws and regulations which are anti-employment would be scrapped or modified. Employment laws will aid rather than hamper economic growth and higher standards of living.

ACT's goals:

- restore freedom of association in the private sector. The public sector should be forbidden to discriminate, except on merit;
- restore freedom of contract in both public and private sectors;



- lower taxes and reform welfare to help people to shift from welfare to work;
- help employers create more jobs by reducing tax and regulatory barriers.



MURIEL NEWMAN
ACT New Zealand, Deputy-Leader and
Social Welfare Spokesperson
www.act.org.nz/index.aspx

ACT's policies ...

- foster prosperity generally by reducing taxes, crippling regulations and welfare dependency;
- repeal the Employment Relations Act 2001;
- abolish all specialist employment authorities, tribunals and courts;
- restore the common law freedom of contract between employers and employees;
- restore common law freedoms of association and of speech in hiring labour and in communicating with staff;
- review other regulations affecting employment with a view to replacing regulation by common law remedies;
- impose a real work test, and a 40-hour work or training week on eligibility for the unemployment benefit and those on the DPB with children aged six or over.

Policy outcomes ...

- higher rates of employment growth, growth in labour productivity and resultant wage growth;
- higher economic growth and standards of living.

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To develop and distribute information that will help our communities create more jobs and reduce unemployment and poverty in New Zealand.

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