

*“Fronting Up to our Deteriorating World” Seminar, Dunedin, October 13, 2011*

## **To all 2011 Election Candidates**

This is a request for your personal public commitment to promoting the attached Appeal for a Rational Political Response to our Deteriorating World.

At a public seminar on the 13 October entitled "Fronting up to our deteriorating world" approximately 150 people endorsed the principles in the attached Appeal.

The statement recognizes the rapidly changing environmental, social and economic circumstances occurring both globally and in NZ and requests a robust and realistic response, commensurate with the seriousness of the situation.

Indeed, recent events in NZ have shown that our current capacity to respond to any sudden or emerging crisis is limited.

Our dependence on, use, management and the unreliability of fossil fuel is central to both our predicament and any possible solutions. A dispassionate assessment of the science implies a fundamental reorientation in government policy response.

Accordingly, we believe quick action is required and, in the first instance, best undertaken developing four national plans. These will address:

- i) Financial emergency response
- ii) Energy security
- iii) Business continuity
- iv) Genuine wellbeing

Moreover, given the grave nature and level of risk to all of us, this is also a fervent appeal for political parties to put aside political differences and work together on these plans with a view to

achieving agreed strategies.

So that it is of assistance to voters, we ask that you indicate your position on the proposal by Friday 11 November after which we will advise the press of each candidate's response. We look forward to your reply and hope you can see your way to support this important initiative.

Yours sincerely

Professor Sir Alan Mark  
Dr Brian Turner

### ***Declaration***

*The bed of the river's  
like a ransacked room  
and the banks are cloaked  
with lime-green willows  
that toss and flail  
in a summer gale*

*and you're convinced  
that only what's sacred  
and isn't wounded  
stands between us  
and oblivion, and  
without reverence*

*for the world we inhabit  
we will never come  
to cherish the planet  
we depend on  
and have yet to learn  
how to love and protect*

*for as long  
as we all shall live.*

*Brian Turner  
October 2011*

*- Mo tatou, a mo ka uri a muri ake nei –  
“For us and our children after us”*

**Appeal for a Rational Political response to our Deteriorating World**

**RATIONALE:**

A. Globally and in New Zealand there are clear signs our natural world is rapidly deteriorating and that we are approaching limits to a number of essential resources for which there is no ready substitute.

B. We are remorselessly exploiting the earth’s natural capital, including its seas, soils, forests, freshwater, minerals and wildlife with little consideration for other life and the future. We are simultaneously exceeding its capacity to absorb pollution, causing acidification of our oceans and destabilizing climate with carbon dioxide emissions by the burning of fossil fuels.

C. In concert with this onslaught has been an explosion in debt under the fractional reserve banking system, the marginalization of many of our youth, the degradation of our culture and neglect of community relations and functionality, largely in the interests of short-term monetary gain.

D. Considering our scientific knowledge, it is now self-evident to any reasonable person that we are at a point in the earth’s evolution when mankind can no longer continue to place all faith in an economic construct founded on the irrational assumption that endless pursuit of economic growth is either ethical or realistic. To continue to do so will, in all probability, lead to irreversible global ecosystem collapse, economic chaos and extreme hardship for many peoples on earth.

E. By any measure of human value, and if necessary accepting material sacrifice, we consider that it is our responsibility to conduct our affairs in a manner that preserves the basic right for each human to life, safety, justice and the pursuit of happiness in a healthy, natural environment.

F. In order to give us a chance of successfully addressing a threat of this nature, scale and urgency to our common future, we assert the need to develop together, as expeditiously as possible, much less destructive organizational relationships with each other and with the environment. We consider that this is now an issue of national security, and as such, transcends self-interest and political persuasion.

**APPEAL:**

ACCORDINGLY, and prior to this upcoming election, we seek formal commitment from all political candidates, as a matter of priority, to work collaboratively on these critical aspects of our inhabitation of the planet with a view to reaching agreement on a common long-term strategy. As a first step, and primarily to reduce exposure to economic instability and energy limitation, we seek support for the development of the following national plans:

1. Financial emergency response: A contingency plan for a deepening, prolonged or sudden financial crisis to preserve people’s capacity to provide for their essential needs, including local resource access, reliable supply chains and critical infrastructure.
2. Energy security: A plan to progressively restrict the extraction and use of fossil fuels, to promote a switch to genuine renewables, smarter use of existing energy systems and much reduced levels of energy dependence and GHG emissions both here and abroad.
3. Business continuity: A plan to encourage each New Zealand business to actively explore economic and job opportunity in anticipation of the lower carbon, lower energy economy.
4. Genuine wellbeing: A feasibility plan on transition from a debt-based economy preoccupied with economic turnover and GDP, to one founded in community wellbeing, less inequality, monetary security and environmental resilience.