



### **New Zealand Green party rates other parties on climate change policies** **January 14, 2007**

The Green party of Aotearoa New Zealand has ranked other political parties in New Zealand based on their policies and action taken on climate change. The results were announced at a Greens picnic today by co-leader, Doctor Russel Norman at his State of the Planet speech.

The top party was themselves, Labour (Government) in second with Dr Norman saying they are "too frightened to do what needs to be done," the Māori party in third, then National, United Future, New Zealand First and lastly, ACT, leaving out Jim Anderton's Progressive Coalition party from being ranked. According to the Greens, ACT is denying how important climate change really is.

However not even Dr Norman is satisfied being at the top of the list, stating that more can be improved on. "We have been leading the debate but we don't have all the answers." Dr Norman does say that if the Greens were not in Parliament then all the other parties would be "floundering" because they would not know what to do.

Dr Norman says that New Zealand needs to do our part in helping Earth face its biggest challenge.

In Dr Norman's speech he also encouraged the other parties to take

more action regarding climate change. "The results show that while the parties are more than happy to jump aboard the climate change band wagon, when it comes down to it, there is still a lack of political will to take firm action."

Dr Norman said: "Most parties had yet to tackle the tough issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the agricultural sector - this sector accounts for about 50 percent of New Zealand's total emissions. They fared only slightly better in increasing forested area and reducing emissions from the electricity sector."

Dr Norman said that we are heading towards a "global catastrophe."



Green party poster ranking the other political parties.

### **New Zealand Commerce Commission investigating Australian company** **January 15, 2007**

The New Zealand Commerce Commission is investigating Australian-based lottery competition company, TMG Asia Pacific Pty Limited, under alleged breaches of the

Fair Trading Act after quite a few text-based lottery competitions have been running on New Zealand television.

To enter the competitions, the entrants must answer a simple question and then text the answer to a special text number, 8555. The competitions are shown during advertisements on New Zealand television stations, and include possible prizes of televisions, game consoles, exercise equipment, and more.

The Commerce Commission said that they have received around 180 complaints regarding the text competitions and the charges they incur on their mobile phones. The charges are when a person texts the correct answer to 8555 they are agreeing to sign up to their subscription based services which charges them NZ\$3 for each text message received. A maximum of \$15 is charged a month unless the special keyword to stop receiving text messages: STOP is texted. The Commerce Commission said that the complaints reflect that the entrants do not know about the subscription, even though the advertisements briefly state in fine print that the competition is a subscription competition, how much a received text costs, etc at the bottom of the ad.

An employee of TMG Asia Pacific Pty Limited questioned about the subscription charges claimed that the majority of the charge for each text message sent to competition entrants

goes to Telecom New Zealand, and a fraction is paid to them.

The director of Fair Trading for the Commerce Commission, Deborah Battell, said: "[180 complaints] is an exceptionally high number of complaints for a single issue."

"The Commerce Commission is investigating whether the disclosure of the terms and conditions of these promotions was adequate," Ms Battell said.

In November of 2006 the Commerce Commission had contacted TMG Asia Pacific to discuss their concerns over their promotions. Ms Battell said: "The company has been made well aware of our concerns. The Commission has now asked the company to respond by 4pm, Thursday, 18 January 2007."

### **New Zealand's threatened species list updated January 16, 2007**

The publication titled New Zealand Threat Classification System list was updated today and replaces the first edition done in October, 2002.

In the new publication the New Zealand Department of Conservation updates the classification of 5819 plants and animals native to New Zealand. Around half of those 5,819 plants and animals are listed as threatened and the rest require more data to determine if they are threatened. 44 of those have had a significant change in their status, this is mainly thought to be because of more data available on their species.

The new list will be used to help the threatened plants and animals in the future and prioritise which are the most in danger.

Honourable Chris Carter, minister of conservation, said: "While New

Zealand has shown the world that we are world leaders in habitat restoration and pest eradication, we must not become complacent. Human-induced threats and the introduction of predators and pests continue to plague our native species."

The list is used by many people who want to help conserve New Zealand's wildlife, and help reduce the risk of extinction to any of New Zealand's native species of animals and plants.

Hon Carter said: "This list is an important tool used to guide the Department of Conservation and other organisations which focus on species conservation."

### **New Zealand's NCEA results due today onwards January 17, 2007**

New Zealand's NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) results for each student will start arriving today onwards. The results will be posted online today and have been sent out sooner than in previous years.

Around 136,000 students took part in the 2006 external exams and NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority) say 85% of them will receive their results in today's, Wednesday, mail. Student's living in rural areas will receive their results on Friday. Scholarship results will be sent out sometime mid February.

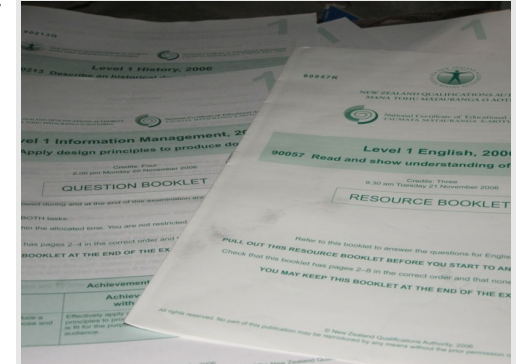
Bali Haque said that it was a huge logistical operation to get all the results out but said that it went smoothly.

Each student already knows their results for their internal results but are awaiting their grades (not achieved, achieved, merit or, excellence) of their external end-of-year exams.

NZQA said that the marking of over a

million NCEA papers and scholarship papers went smoothly despite having a mistake in a level two mathematics paper. However NZQA says no students will be affected by the mistake.

After results have been received, students will then receive their answer booklets.



A collection of NCEA resource booklets. Photograph by Gabriel Pollard.

### **New Zealanders being urged to become condom testers January 17, 2007**

Condom manufacturer Durex is urging New Zealanders to sign up online to become one of 100 condom testers. Already 3,000 New Zealanders, both men and women, have applied to become condom testers, according to Durex.

Durex is recruiting the New Zealanders to test a new line of latex-free condoms.

Durex claims it is using New Zealanders to test the new condoms because, according to the company's surveys, New Zealanders are adventurous in the bedroom. Victoria Potter, spokeswoman for Durex, said: "The overwhelming response to date from Kiwis has certainly proven this."

The 100 needed people for their tests will be selected in two weeks time randomly, the final date for sending in

applications is January 31, 2007.

The condom being tested is called "Durex Avanti Ultima" and is free of latex. Instead of latex, it is made of polyisoprene, the first condom to use it. Ms Potter said the new condom is "exceptionally" soft and will provide maximum comfort. The new condom will appeal to those who are allergic to latex.

Ms Potter said: "By becoming a Durex Condom Tester, Kiwis have the opportunity to get steamy in the bedroom and try out another world-leading Durex condom, all in the aid of research."

### **Intoxicated New Zealand policeman keeps job January 19, 2007**

Mokau, Taranaki, New Zealand policeman, Constable Jonathon "Jono" Erwood has been discharged without conviction by a judge at the New Plymouth District Court and has been allowed to keep his job after he arrived intoxicated at a car crash scene. He was tested for drink driving and found to be over the legal limit.

Constable Erwood, however, has been reprimanded following an official police enquiry. The reprimand notice will stay on his personal file for seven years if he receives further disciplinary charges then the reprimand will be taken into account. Nine previous complaints were investigated but disciplinary action was not taken. However there was considerable local support for him as well.

When Constable Erwood arrived at the double fatality July 9, 2006 crash scene on his day off he was taken aside by another police officer and breathalysed and then charged with drink driving.

The judge who discharged him, Louis Erwood, said that Constable Erwood

risked his life by responding to the accident. "There was nothing personal in this for you and it reflects a commitment to your job which you should be proud of."

Constable Erwood has admitted that he was over the legal limit to drive a car.

The Police Association is applauding the decision to discharge constable Erwood without a conviction. Richard Middleton, vice president of the Police Association, said that common sense has prevailed.

Superintendent Mark Lammas, area commander and Constable Erwood's boss, has said that Mr Erwood did not make the correct decision to drive drunk.

Constable Erwood will return to his job on Monday but has been given the job in North Taranaki as rural liaison officer. He will start on February 5. Mr Lammas said: "Rural police officers in small and somewhat isolated communities in particular, have a fine and sometimes difficult balance to achieve – in being active members of their community but also being seen to be impartial in the discharge of their duties as a police officer."

### **Flaming possum blamed for New Zealand fire January 20, 2007**

The New Zealand Department of Conservation (DoC) has blamed a flaming possum for causing a big fire yesterday at the skifield in The Remarkables, Queenstown, New Zealand.

The possum attempted to run across two power lines and caught alight and then fell into some dry tussock.

Nick Edwards, spokesman for Wakatipu DoC, said that it was not the

first time a possum on fire has started a fire, even though it does sound unusual. Mr Edwards said that the possum never stood a chance of surviving.

The fire burnt 50-hectares in the Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve. It took crews of firefighters and three helicopters twelve hours to bring the fire under control.

A crew of firefighters and one helicopter will stay to prevent any flare-ups.

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