



THE MANIFESTO

Authorised by Hon. Peter Dunne MP, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

Foreword

This on-line manifesto for the 2014 General Election sets out in detail **UnitedFuture's** full policies to build a better New Zealand, based on fairness and choice.

Our manifesto is comprehensive and covers all the major policy areas. Consistent with our liberal democratic principles and commitment to our outdoors heritage, it sets out a balanced and achievable approach to many of the issues New Zealand is facing today.

These policies will make a difference.



Hon Peter Dunne
MP for Ōhāriu
Leader



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ECONOMY & INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY

ACC

New Zealanders value the reliability and universality of the ACC system and UnitedFuture is committed to the maintenance of this system.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Support the continuation of the 'no-fault' regime and mandatory workplace accident insurance, but support competition in the provision of accident compensation services;
- Continue ACC's focus on injury prevention as the best long term solution to reducing levies and claims;
- Introduce more significant discounts on employer levies for those who undertake workplace safety regimes, and give more responsibility to industry sector groups to ensure safe practices (such as the independent forestry safety review panel);
- Prioritise measures to improve worker safety in those industries with the highest rates of serious harm, such as forestry and mining, through pro-active enforcement by Worksafe NZ;
- Ensure that ACC genuinely attempts to rehabilitate long-term claimants before they exit the scheme;
- Establish a truly independent process to review appeals against ACC decisions. This process would also have the power to make recommendations to the government on potential changes to ACC legislation should it find flaws that regularly lead to unfair decisions;
- Make it easier for businesses to assess their levies once they have been set for the coming year, increasing certainty as to what their obligations will be;
- Support the statutory requirement of achieving full funding for all residual (pre-1999) claims by 2019, or earlier if possible.

BROADCASTING, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Broadcasting

UnitedFuture is committed to a broadcasting system that is inclusive, responsive and broad-based for all New Zealanders. Broadcasting is a comprehensive medium for promoting democracy and an essential social and cultural tool to transmit New Zealand's cultural and national identity.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure a particular focus on improving quality, accountability and transparency within all publicly funded broadcasting services;
- Support NZ On Air as a mechanism for encouraging local content on television and radio, since it is available to all networks and it encourages creativity and diversity by allowing independent producers to flourish;
- Reform the Broadcasting Standards Authority to enable it to fulfil its ombudsman role, including: streamlining procedures and providing extra resources to ensure complaints are dealt with expeditiously, broadening its scope so that it can be proactive in raising issues, and empowering the BSA to defend its rulings from network challenges;
- Reduce the compliance costs of regulations for bands on airwaves for regional broadcasters, to allow new players to enter the market and ensure that local voices have access to the airwaves;
- Maintain Radio New Zealand in public ownership;
- Support Radio New Zealand's transmission to the greater Pacific region;
- Ensure the New Zealand sound and film archives are protected and digitally recorded;
- Ensure the Broadcasting Act recognises the importance of Community Access Radio and ensures their continued access to FM and AM frequencies;
- Undertake a review of options for the future of public service broadcasting in NZ including consideration of sustainable funding for Radio NZ, whether TVNZ should be sold and its public functions transferred to a new public television service, and/or potentially merged with RNZ;
- Increase Radio NZ funding at the rate of inflation until the findings of this review are implemented, rather than continuing the current freeze on funding.

Communications and Information Technology

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Support the national partnership involving telecommunications companies and the government for the extension of broadband services into rural areas and hard to service urban areas;
- Create a national "Do Not Call" register, allowing people to list their home phone numbers so they are legally protected from receiving calls from telemarketers;
- Ban telemarketers from calling anyone between the hours of 6pm and 8am, in any 24 hour period;
- Lower the cost of cell phone usage by ensuring New Zealand has an open competitive modern telecommunications infrastructure, backed by a sound regulatory framework to protect the public interest;
- Take further steps to safeguard children from harmful internet material, working with organisations such as NetSafe and the ICT industry to ensure that filtering software and other appropriate safety measures, including effective Codes of Practice, are effective.

THE ECONOMY

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Support a broad-based low rate tax system;
- Support the retention of the Reserve Bank Act, the Fiscal Responsibility Act, the Public Finance Act in their current form;
- Support recurring regulatory responsibility reviews;
- Improve transport infrastructure, giving priority to areas where ports, roading and rail investment constraints are holding back economic growth and development;
- Ensure that the opportunities presented by the Canterbury Rebuild, both for the economy and for the true revitalisation of a city, are not lost;
- Strongly support the Better Public Services targets as a way to ensure that government spending is efficiently targeted towards measurably improving outcomes;
- Support free and fair trade and embrace free trade agreements and pacts where there is a reasonable opportunity for New Zealand to benefit, and where New Zealand's unique comparative advantages are preserved.

Tax

UnitedFuture believes the tax system should work in the interests of those raising families and it should empower family and community self-sufficiency rather than creating dependency.

Under the present tax system people who have no dependents pay exactly the same amount of tax as people with dependents. Couples who are self-employed in farming or business and retired couples are already able to split their income for tax purposes but this is not available for those on PAYE incomes.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Oppose the introduction of a capital gains tax;
- Introduce Income Sharing for couples with dependent children, to reflect the fact that the family is generally the economic unit and not an individual earner in a family. Income Sharing means that, for tax purposes, the income of both parents is combined and then divided equally. Under our progressive taxation system this would result in a reduction in combined income tax paid where there is a significant difference in income between partners. It attributes equal value to the different roles each parent plays, whereas our current tax system

does not recognise the contribution of parents who spend all or part of their time at home with children.

Income Sharing will give couples with children the option of having a parent work fewer or more flexible hours, be at home raising their children, and able to retain more of their combined after-tax income. Since the government subsidises childcare for those returning to paid work, it should also acknowledge the contribution of those who have decided to forego their income, in whole or in part, to stay at home with their children.

Legislation to put Income Sharing into effect has already been introduced into Parliament by UnitedFuture.

Savings

UnitedFuture believes that savings are an integral part of wealth and asset creation that helps strengthen families in the long term.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Introduce compulsory Kiwisaver, which will increase the saving rate of New Zealanders, deepen the investment pool and provide financial security and certainty in retirement;
- Seek to have a portion of KiwiSaver funds re-invested in NZ innovation and infrastructure assets;
- Re-introduce savings schemes to children at school, in partnership with the banking industry, and promote the purpose of savings as a core feature of the 'life skills' curriculum.

Small Business

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Further simplify the tax system to relieve the compliance burden on SMEs;
- Encourage entrepreneurial activity, especially export orientation, assistance in export introductions, pooling of expertise through business incubators and mentoring schemes, and introduction to investors all through a regionally-available MBIE co-ordinated service that has minimal bureaucracy attached to it;
- Move towards a single point of contact for SMEs seeking advice on a range of government policies, including the development of a single business identification number for ease of reference.

Employment Relations

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Improve workplace literacy through shared funding of providers by business and government;
- Review employment law to ensure that it reflects the reality of workplace relations in small businesses and gives greater flexibility to small employers (under 20 staff);
- Ensure that advice and information is available to businesses to support them in hiring migrants to fill skill shortages;
- Support the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme;
- Support continuation of the 90 day probationary period, as it gives the opportunity for people, particularly youth and new migrants, to enter the workforce.

ENERGY AND RESOURCES

Security of supply and competitive pricing are UnitedFuture's key policy goals. We support the current regulatory structure. Line companies should have the ability and incentive to build new generation capacity. In the interests of security of supply, we support the maintenance of reserve electricity generation capacity. The best generation is that which is the most reliable and can be consistently delivered at the lowest cost within full compliance with New Zealand's high environmental standards.

Electricity

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Develop a National Energy Strategy;
- Invest in significant NZ inventions of new sustainable energy forms to ensure the innovation is not lost to NZ and is implemented as soon as practicable;
- Invest in small-scale localised electricity generation projects, reducing reliance on the national transmission grid;
- Adopt a national strategy, including private sector funding, to insulate all NZ homes, prioritising the homes of those on low and fixed incomes;
- Support the construction of more sustainable generation capacity as the way to reduce domestic electricity prices;
- Continue to upgrade the national grid to ensure security of supply;
- Convert Transpower NZ Ltd to a public utility, rather than a profit-driven SOE, with the sole objective of transporting power through the National Grid at the lowest possible long-term cost to the consumer;
- Make it easier and cheaper for micro-generators to connect directly to local electricity networks (including a requirement for lines companies and electricity retailers to trade with micro-generators at 'fair' market rates);
- Encourage the development of NZ owned and operated alternative energy schemes;
- Resist new big-scale hydro-electricity schemes that require the damming of untouched 'wild rivers' as almost occurred with the Mokihinui (and continues to threaten other rivers such as the Waitaha).

Oil and Gas

UnitedFuture believes every effort should be made to encourage rapid exploration and development of New Zealand's potential oil and gas reserves (within current environmental standards).

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Oppose a standard royalty rate on new offshore oil discoveries being fixed in advance. We believe that the general policy should be a zero royalty rate with the government reserving the right to apply a royalty, on a case-by-case basis, for any medium to large oil field discovered;
- Ensure there are more stringent environmental protections for all offshore drilling. This should include building the capability of Maritime NZ, greater resourcing for inspections (health & safety and environmental) to ensure regulations are strictly adhered to and the appropriate strengthening of legislation;
- Continue to allow "fracking" and offshore oil exploration as long as the environmental risks associated with these activities can be managed effectively, by ensuring that operational best practices are implemented and enforced through regulation.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

UnitedFuture New Zealand recognises the importance of primary industries to the security and prosperity of New Zealand. At a time when there are strong opportunities in the international marketplace, the importance of innovative, resilient and responsive primary industries is paramount. They must be supported so the opportunity for diversification and added value is identified and encouraged.

Our policy is more than just an economic prescription for our primary industries. It is about ensuring that often-neglected rural communities receive fair and reasonable access to educational and health services.

Agriculture, Aquaculture, Forestry

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Promote a strong and viable economic policy framework to underpin the role of primary industries as our major export earners;
- Undertake an immediate review of all legislation and regulations that impose coercive powers and administrative burdens on farmers to ensure their impact is minimised, consistent with the overall public interest;
- Oppose any changes to the principles of the Resource Management Act, but support changes to improve the processes within the Act;
- Continue to ensure that the Resource Management Act is a balanced piece of enabling legislation by requiring a biennial review of its operation with regard to the costs, delays and uncertainty faced by users;
- Support free and fair trade and embrace free trade agreements;
- Continue to increase agricultural workforce skills by encouraging more people into industry training, e.g. through modern apprenticeships in the agriculture and horticulture sectors;
- Establish a global online service that matches potential skilled migrants with job opportunities in New Zealand to help fill critical skill shortages;
- Ensure that advice and information is available to businesses to support them in hiring migrants to fill skill shortages;
- Continue the 'no-fault' regime and mandatory workplace accident insurance, but support competition in the provision of accident compensation services;
- Actively support the role of research and development into the sustainability of primary industries and the ongoing development of new niche industries, with a particular emphasis on adding value;

- Ensure that biosecurity remains a top Government priority;
- Promote the planting of native trees and bush along or close by all inland waterways where practical in order to limit soil erosion and reduce agricultural runoff (via Government subsidy);
- Encourage landowners to return non-viable farming land to native regenerating forest, possibly with assistance from the QEII National Trust and carbon credits allocated through New Zealand's Kyoto obligations;
- Boost funding for Crown Research Institutes to conduct research into the health, wellbeing and productivity of New Zealand soils, to develop new techniques for remedying any deterioration that has occurred over time, and establish targets for the quality of soil in which crops are grown;
- Support the current policy of allowing the application of GE and GM technology to proceed – but with caution;
- Support, through Government subsidy, voluntary environmental codes of conduct such as the Clean Streams Accord;
- Accelerate the position of declaring Aquaculture Management Areas around NZ so that aquaculture investment can take place in a climate of certainty;
- Assist the forest sector to move up the value-added chain through research and development and industry partnerships, so that value-added products derived from our forests, rather than unprocessed chips or logs, are exported to the greatest extent possible;
- Balance the need for viable primary industries with environmental sustainability;
- Work closely with the forestry industry and other interested parties, such as recreational users, to maintain a strategic overview of issues affecting or impacting on outdoor recreation, such as sambar deer and public access;
- Ensure that NZ producers of sustainably-harvested timber products are not undercut via the “dumping” of imported timber and products that have been harvested without regard to sustainability criteria;
- Introduce more significant discounts on employer levies for those who undertake workplace safety regimes, and give more responsibility to industry sector groups to ensure safe practices (such as the Independent Forestry Safety Review Panel);
- Prioritise measures to improve worker safety in those industries with the highest rates of serious harm, such as agriculture, forestry and mining, through pro-active enforcement by WorkSafe NZ;

- Establish legal guidelines for drug-testing in the workplace, to ensure there are no barriers to implementing testing.

see also UnitedFuture Policy on Climate Change: [Forestry and Agriculture](#)

Rural Services

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Support the family farm concept;
- Emphasise community-based social programmes, together with contestable regional development funding, to assist the revitalisation of rural communities;
- Increase the Financial Assistance Rate (FAR) that is paid by central government to local authorities for the construction and maintenance of local roads to up to 80% of their total costs as a first step to reducing the rates burden faced by many rural communities;
- Support Rural GP services by:
 - encouraging medical students to consider rural general practice,
 - supporting the professional development of rural GPs,
 - providing sufficient funding for locum cover,
 - increasing financial incentives for rural GPs,
 - supporting Rural Nurse Practitioners as a new field of practice for senior nurses, and by
 - establishing appropriate practitioner to patient ratios that will ensure quality of care and reduce the risk of burnout;
- Ensure that ambulance and air rescue services are maintained at a level that does not compromise public safety;
- Extend Mobile Surgical Services and support the extension of Mobile Dental Clinics;
- Recognise the importance of schools in rural communities, beyond their educational function, and ensure that their operations grants are sufficient to meet the costs to schools of providing the learning opportunities that government expects, including sustainable, high-speed broadband;
- Allow rural schools that are difficult to staff to pay more to attract quality teachers;

- Establish 'families' of schools to improve coordination between pre-school, primary and secondary schools in a given area, with a view to sharing resources such as computers and sporting equipment, and holding quarterly meetings of representatives from boards of trustees;
- Ensure that school bus services are sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of rural communities;
- Establish a network of 'rural education posts' to serve as adult and community education information centres and meeting places, utilising existing educational facilities;
- Ensure that the Tertiary Education Commission recognises the importance of education for the development of the agricultural workforce, and funds vocational courses that meet the needs of the sector;
- Ensure adequate police coverage of rural areas;
- Establish community safety plans with police, local bodies and communities, building on local knowledge and community relationships, and ensure that all households can receive information about local policing issues.

RESEARCH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

It is important that New Zealand maintains a strong Research, Science and Technology (RST) sector, now more than ever. With significant issues such as climate change facing our energy, primary and export sectors, it is imperative that scientific research is given the long-term certainty of funding to successfully meet those challenges. New Zealand also has an opportunity to help lead the revolution in technological innovation which enables the smartest, and not necessarily the most wealthy, countries to prosper. UnitedFuture believes that one of the key elements to New Zealand's ongoing economic and environmental sustainability will be our ability to maintain a skilled and experienced RST workforce.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Develop a National Science Strategy that identifies New Zealand's resource and capability needs, international trends, and the medium and long term direction;
- Increase government funding of Research, Science & Technology (RST) as a proportion of GDP to at least the OECD average;
- Investigate ways to increase the amount of privately-funded RST. Current government policy is to reduce public funding of research that benefits industry, assuming that producers will contribute directly, but it can be difficult to attract industry funding for projects with a longer-term horizon from private enterprise, as they often seek more immediate benefits in productivity;
- Simplify the different funding mechanisms for research. These have been allowed to develop in an ad hoc manner over a period of time to fill perceived gaps, but the result is a system that has become inefficient and difficult to navigate;
- Ensure the scope and operation of the current range of Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) maintain a balance between public good activity and commercial applications;
- Increase the attractiveness of research and science as a career option by reducing the costs of study through our zero tuition fees policy, expanding current bonding schemes for teachers and medical professionals to scientists in return for a continuous period of work in New Zealand, and by establishing a system of research scholarships between tertiary providers and the private sector;
- Encourage national research specialisation, bearing in mind New Zealand's size, as well as specialisation by institution, including a focus on:
 - agriculture and horticultural efficiency
 - biotechnology

- nanotechnology
 - energy efficiency and substitution
 - aquaculture
 - bio-security and environmental degradation
- Support a national expo and awards event for science and technology, to celebrate achievement, attract investment in innovation, and raise the profile of science and technology in New Zealand.

TOURISM

Tourism is a major contributor to the New Zealand Economy. Tourism not only offers obvious economic benefits to New Zealand but it also has the potential to make a sustainable contribution to our quality of life and our economic, social and cultural development. Consequentially, tourism benefits and strengthens our communities and families.

New Zealand's image as a scenic, environmentally-conscious nation provides us with an important marketing edge for promoting tourism in overseas markets. Therefore, tourism should be based on sustainable, eco-friendly industries and infrastructural development should be encouraged to support primary tourism ventures. Flexible economic policies and business-friendly cost structures are also essential to ensure that tourism can prosper and benefit New Zealanders in the greatest possible way.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure tourism is a strategic economic priority for government;
- Develop effective training programs that ensures higher levels of service standards and take into account the job-rich potential of the industry;
- Review all legislation and regulations that impose coercive powers (e.g. Resource Management Act, Health and Safety in Employment Act) to ensure that the impact on business is minimised yet is consistent with the overall public interest;
- Review the vast array of regulations specifically impacting on the tourism sector;
- Promote self-regulation in the industry, where appropriate;
- Incorporate cultural and community values into industry initiatives, ensuring that cultural protocols are respected;
- Encourage private and public sector tourism bodies to work closely together to produce more coordination across the industry;
- Ensure that labour legislation is not a disincentive to business development and job creation;
- Support working holiday programmes for young tourists;
- Support initiatives to improve the returns from tourism down the value chain, including opening up regional tourism opportunities;

- Investigate the current backpacker tourism market to ensure that it is not devaluing the New Zealand tourism brand and revenue potential through 'free-riding' behaviour;
- Support the establishment of the "Great Harbour Way" around Wellington Harbour.

TRANSPORT

UnitedFuture recognises that an efficient transport sector is an essential component of national infrastructure and economic and community wellbeing. We will work towards an integrated national transport system that meets the needs of industry, commerce and the wider community at a reasonable cost.

Cycling, Walking, & Public Transport

- Encourage greater use of cycling and walking as alternative transport methods, through better cycle lanes and walking paths in urban/suburban areas and in the countryside, to discourage the use of cars for shorter trips;
- Encourage Councils to increase off street parking spaces and remove on street parking to make room for better cycling infrastructure;
- Encourage cities and towns to introduce bike share schemes in order to increase use of cycling in inner cities;
- Encourage car parks to be developed on the edge of CBDs, where land is cheaper, accompanied by more cycle lanes, walking paths, low cost buses or trams, and bike share schemes to take people the last mile or two into CBDs;
- Initiate a full review of the effects (negative and positive) and the overall benefit of the compulsory helmet law;
- Support the continued use and upgrading of commuter buses and rail;
- Improve the school bus system to assist de-congesting roads at peak times in the major cities;
- Encourage Walking Buses within a two km radius of every urban school.

Roading & Freight

- Support public private partnerships (PPPs) and other investment options for urgently-needed, high cost highways for which there is significant community support, but continue to treat the National Land Transport Fund as the primary source of funding;
- Increase the Financial Assistance Rate (FAR) that is paid by central government to local authorities for the construction and maintenance of local roads up to 80% of their total costs;
- Complete the Roads of National Significance programme, across New Zealand (including the construction of the Transmission Gully highway);
- Improve traffic flow and road safety by road straightening along State Highway 1;

- Encourage the use of electric and hybrid motor vehicles;
- Implement policies to reduce the average age of New Zealand's vehicle fleet, thereby reducing average fuel consumption and vehicle emissions;
- Promote research into alternative energy sources for transport, such as fuel cells;
- Promote barging and coastal shipping services where economically viable as an alternative to land-based freight movement;
- Support fair and free competition between air travel providers.

Road Safety

UnitedFuture believes that a number of simple measures can make a big impact on the unacceptably high road toll in New Zealand. We aim to institute a licensing regime that will help young drivers gain more experience, while also making sure that dangerous drivers face tougher penalties in line with the irresponsibility of their actions.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Legislate for compulsory third party insurance;
- Maintain the age by which someone may obtain a learner drivers licence at 16;
- Implement driver education in schools;
- Institute elements of compulsory practical defensive driving course into the driver licensing system;
- Toughen penalties for driving while disqualified or without a licence, alcohol or drug-impaired driving, and driving at excessive speeds;
- Promote the use of technology to generate a rapid response to accident investigations and to help minimise congestion;
- Support the labelling of cars for sale to denote their safety ratings.

OUTDOORS & ENVIRONMENT POLICY

CLIMATE CHANGE

UnitedFuture does not pretend to be able to predict precisely all the consequences or outcomes of climate change, but through the growing scientific and economic evidence we understand the risks and the need for a timely response.

Climate change is a global challenge that through international and domestic cooperation can be managed to mitigate the risks whilst, in a New Zealand context, presenting a range of opportunities for environmental sustainability and social and economic development.

It is UnitedFuture's opinion that the benefits of responsible and practical action now will be realised in the long-term health and prosperity of New Zealand's environment and its people.

The environment is our basic life support system and must remain in good health. If people want to use the environment for outdoor recreation, economic development, or to simply admire and appreciate it, then it must be used in ways that do not cause permanent widespread damage or compromise the needs of future generations to meet their own needs – i.e. in ways that are sustainable.

See also UnitedFuture Policy on [Housing](#)

Forestry and Agriculture

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Support the Permanent Forest Sinks Initiative. While creating an opportunity for further carbon sinks, the trees will also prevent soil erosion, the leaching of nitrates and the intrusion of stock into rural waterways;
- Continue to encourage more riparian planting, moving towards a requirement to have river and stream banks planted, in order to act as carbon sinks, limit soil erosion and reduce agricultural runoff;
- Encourage landowners to return non-viable farming land to native forest in order to create carbon sinks;
- Require the purchase of ETS credits when forested areas are converted to other use. For example, where forested land is converted to dairy farming the landowner would be required to buy ETS credits to account for the loss of the carbon sink, rather than leave those costs to the taxpayer;

- Ensure that New Zealand producers of sustainably-harvested timber products are not undercut via the “dumping” of imported timber and products that have been harvested without regard to sustainability criteria;
- Support the investment which is being made in scientific research by both the Government and the agricultural sector, in respect of methane emissions from ruminant animals;
- Ensure that farmers bear the cost of other (non-ruminant animal) greenhouse gas emissions arising from their activities, but allow these to be offset by planting trees, on their own property or elsewhere (thus gaining offsetting carbon credits).

Industry

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Remove regulatory barriers, including legislation, to encourage new sustainable electricity generation using hydro, geothermal, wind and tide, where it is also economically sustainable;
- Make EECA the central funding agency for contestable funding programmes aimed at reducing long term energy consumption in small and medium enterprises (SMEs);
- Boost research and development funding through GNS Science for carbon sequestration from thermal electricity generating plants.

International

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Consider joining other multilateral international efforts to reduce greenhouse gases;
- In addition to attempts to limit greenhouse gases, investigate a humanitarian resettlement plan for the thousands who will be physically displaced by rising sea levels in the Pacific region, such as the Tokelaus, Tuvalu and Kiribati.

Emissions Trading

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Support the current CO2 emissions trading mechanisms to provide economic incentives to reduce greenhouse gases and boost carbon capture;
- Oppose the introduction of a carbon tax;

- Ensure the pricing of carbon on the ETS remains at a level high enough to reduce emissions, and consider minimum pricing if necessary;
- Work to reduce particulates from car exhaust emissions.

see also UnitedFuture [Transport Policy](#)

ENVIRONMENT

Our Environmental Values:

Sustainable use

We understand that if people want to use the environment for outdoor recreation, economic development, or to simply admire and appreciate it, then it must be used in ways that do not cause permanent widespread damage or compromise the needs of future generations to meet their own needs – i.e. in ways that are sustainable.

Sharing the environment

The interests of a huge variety of outdoor user groups, including conservationists, recreational groups, and tourists, must be recognised, fostered and respected. The law must explicitly acknowledge that all outdoor user organisations have equal rights to practice their individual pursuits and promote their own interests. It is important to ensure that the imposition of laws and regulations do not favour one type of group over another – all are to be regarded as equal stakeholders.

Decisions to be based on empirical evidence

We believe that when environmental decisions are made, they should be based on robust scientific data – both in terms of identifying a “problem”, and in terms of projecting what the actual outcome of a particular policy or remedy might be. We are concerned at the ideological, knee-jerk claims that appear to dominate current environmental debate, often with little evidence to support them. UnitedFuture believes that if this trend continues New Zealanders may be shut out from interacting with and enjoying the environmental diversity and recreational opportunities that this country has to offer.

Education is the best tool for protecting the environment

UnitedFuture believes that balanced environmental education programmes in schools, as well as programmes targeting the general public, are a good method for ensuring quality environmental outcomes. If people act in an environmentally-responsible manner of their own accord, there will be less need for cumbersome red tape and more emphasis on personal responsibility. Shutting people off from the environment through over-protection will lead to long-term apathy and a greater disregard for the environment.

Regulatory framework

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Seek greater use of multi-stakeholder decision-making processes and voluntary agreements over all aspects of environmental management (including on the Conservation estate);
- Support the 'Friends of the Court' (Amicus Curiae) system for Environment Court hearings. A 'friend of the court' provides independent and objective advice to assist the court in making a decision. This makes it easier for community groups and NGOs, relieving them of some of the cost of court proceedings and having to employ expert consultants;
- Continue to push for the establishment of National Environmental Standards on key environmental factors such as water quality that will protect the environment as well as giving local councils, businesses and individuals certainty as to what is required on a consistent nationwide basis.

Land Management

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Promote the planting of native trees and bush along or close by all inland waterways where practical, in order to limit soil erosion, reduce agricultural runoff and generally improve rural water quality;
- Encourage landowners to return non-viable farming land to native regenerating forest, possibly with assistance from the QEII National Trust;
- Conduct an assessment as to the environmental impact of particular activities on specific land and soil types, and use the RMA to zone and manage activity accordingly (e.g. certain pumice soils in the central North Island and certain alluvial flood plains in the South Island are not suitable for dairying);
- Boost funding for Crown Research Institutes to conduct research into the health, wellbeing and productivity of New Zealand soils, and to develop new techniques for remedying any deterioration that has occurred over time.

Pollution Reduction

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Provide additional funding to Regional Councils for a programme to clean up all of New Zealand's lakes and rivers that are suffering from accumulated pollution such as agricultural runoff;
- Promote initiatives to reduce the use of dependent pesticides;

- Speed up the clean-up of contaminated sites around New Zealand;
- Assist poorer communities and local authorities with the improvement (or provision) of wastewater and sewerage treatment scheme facilities.

Resource Management Act

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Oppose any changes to the principles of the Resource Management Act, but support changes to improve the processes within the Act;
- Continue to ensure that the Resource Management Act is a balanced piece of enabling legislation by requiring a biennial review of its operation with regard to the costs, delays and uncertainty faced by users;
- Require the Ministry for the Environment to monitor and benchmark regional authorities' administration of the Resource Management Act.

Genetic Modification

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Proceed with caution on all aspects of genetic modification technology using the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) robust case-by-case assessment regime.

see also UnitedFuture Policy on [Freshwater](#)

OUTDOORS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

What we've achieved: the Game Animal Council

The establishment of a sensible management regime recognising the historical, cultural, nutritional and recreational value of big game animals (deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs), while not neglecting the environmental responsibilities that come with managing such a resource, has been achieved with the enactment of the Game Animal Council legislation in 2014. This statute was achieved by United Future under Confidence and Supply Agreements with successive Labour and National-led governments.

Under the legislation the basic permit to hunt on public conservation land will remain free of charge. A new classification of animals has also been introduced under the Act allowing the Minister of Conservation to designate herds of special interest to hunters and in specific locations.

The broad functions of the Council are to:

- Advise and make recommendations to the Minister of Conservation;
- Undertake management functions to improve the hunting experience for herds of special interest to hunters and in specific locations designated by the Minister;
- Undertake hunting research;
- Provide information to hunters;
- Promote safety initiatives for the sector;
- Represent the views and interests of the sector;
- Liaise between hunters, sector groups, local authorities and private landowners, the New Zealand Conservation Authority, conservation boards and government to improve hunting opportunities;
- Provide other services to hunters by agreement, where it is compatible with the Council's other functions.

Department of Conservation Reform

UnitedFuture believes that the Department of Conservation should be responsive to the interests of all stakeholders when administering the conservation estate – including outdoor recreation groups, environmental organisations, the business sector, and New Zealanders in general.

We are particularly concerned at the apparent attitude of the Department towards recreational users such as large game hunters and fishers. As a consequence, UnitedFuture wants to ensure that the Department of Conservation is required to consult with, and genuinely take into account the views of, all relevant stakeholder groups in a fair, balanced and transparent way. Such a process may not significantly change land management outcomes on the conservation estate, but it will at least mean that everyone is able to receive a fair hearing and have their views taken properly into consideration.

With regard to pest control, UnitedFuture believes that more time and money should be allocated for this important task. The exponential increase in exotic pest populations, such as rats and mustelids in the southern beech forests, or other pests such as the Australian Brush Tailed opossum and German wasps, need to be properly and scientifically managed. These pests, among others, are rapidly destroying large populations of New Zealand's native fauna and flora.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Keep a watching brief on the new structure for the Department of Conservation to ensure that recreation doesn't fall between the cracks of the two new divisions;
- Ensure that the interests of all conservation estate stakeholders are taken properly into account when decisions are made (including the "national interest");
- Review the Department of Conservation's advocacy responsibilities to ensure that they do not waste taxpayer's money to waste ratepayer's money in unnecessary appeals against local authorities in the Environment Court;
- Establish transparent public application and decision-making procedures for decisions regarding use of the conservation estate;
- Provide additional funding for 1080-free pest control measures that target the most noxious and destructive pests (e.g. possums, rats, and mustelids), once thorough consultation has taken place with relevant local community and recreational groups;
- Introduce elected members on to Conservation Boards in addition to Government appointees;
- Provide capital and other resources for use by community groups (e.g. recreational clubs) who have entered into partnerships with DoC to maintain backcountry huts, and actively encourage more of these partnerships for the approximately 1,000 huts on the conservation estate;
- Prioritise the assessment and classification of stewardship land, which comprises 30% of the conservation estate, to provide more protection for areas of high conservation and recreation value and potentially transfer areas of low conservation value out of DoC management;

- Continue to engage in partnerships with private enterprise to achieve conservation goals such as preserving native species and maintaining recreational facilities (e.g. Dulux sponsorship of hut painting).

Pest Control

New Zealand has been attempting to eradicate selected mammals by poisoning with 1080 for over sixty years. Vast amounts of research have been undertaken to measure its effectiveness but the target species (rats, stoats and possums) are still here, perhaps in greater numbers than ever. The inevitable by-kill of non-target species by spreading such an extremely hazardous toxin as 1080 continues.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's Report on 1080 (June 2011) concluded that in order for 1080 to be effective it must be used in large amounts and in perpetuity. However, increasing the frequency of deployment has been shown to reduce its effectiveness, possibly due to bait-shyness. To all intents, therefore, 1080 has become the "opium of conservation".

The prioritisation of eradicating rats and mustelids using 1080 has also diverted focus away from other threats to our native fauna: Magpies, myna birds, weasels, ferrets, hedgehogs and feral cats for instance displace or kill birds, insects and amphibia.

UnitedFuture therefore believe the wholesale aerial dispersal of 1080 is a failed pest-management strategy and must be reconsidered.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Impose a five year moratorium on the aerial dispersal of 1080, and redirect funds towards:
 - establishment of a commission or collaborative group, akin to the Land and Water Forum, to establish a consensus on long-term alternative pest control strategies;
 - community-based initiatives, such as bounty payments, to increase ground-based trapping of rats and mustelids;
 - initiatives to maximise possum trapping and exploit the fur and meat export markets;
 - planning and executing an extensive monitoring and reporting programme of our threatened species and their predators during the period of the moratorium.

United Future's intent is to create the opportunity and environment for individuals, communities of interest and businesses to establish viable alternatives to aerial 1080 dispersal and measure and monitor the effectiveness of this approach during the period of the moratorium.

Practical Access to Public Land

UnitedFuture believes that all New Zealanders have a birthright to enjoy our unique, diverse landscape. Our strong outdoor heritage is central to what it means to be a Kiwi.

By working with successive governments we have advocated strongly for an access policy that protects and enhances access to public land without unduly impinging on the property rights of landowners. UnitedFuture, while welcoming the establishment of the Walking Access Commission, does not consider the Commission has sufficient legislative authority to protect the right of access to public land.

Our interest lies in maintaining and, where possible, enhancing public access to public land.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Extend the powers of the Walking Access Commission so that it can:
 - secure appropriate public access to, public resources like rivers;
 - advocate for public access rather than purely act as a mediator in relation to access negotiations;
 - negotiate specific access corridors across private land with landowners on a case-by-case basis (these corridors could in many instances be based on the 'paper roads' and easements that already exist on many legal property titles but are not always acknowledged by landowners);
 - enforce the terms of access corridors on landowners once they have been established;
- Maintain and strengthen the New Zealand Outdoor Access Code (via the Walking Access Commission) that protects property rights and the rights of landowners from people trespassing beyond a legally established corridor, littering, leaving gates open or other nuisances;
- Make further enhancements to the Walking Access mapping system so that members of the public can contact landowners to obtain access permission;
- Close the loopholes within our public access law that allow situations of 'exclusive capture' to arise, and actively prosecute landowners who continue to sell exclusive access rights to our public resources. For example, we do not oppose commercial access to fisheries (in the form of guiding, etc) but will only allow it if the same access is available to others who want to access fisheries (in the same way that a concession for private guides operating on tramping tracks does not prevent 'freedom walkers');
- Ensure that the Queen's Chain is formally enshrined in statute;

- Ensure the access regime applies to all private land (including Maori land) for the purposes of ensuring access to public land for all legal pursuits;
- Replace the existing and arbitrary four-hectare rule in relation to subdivision-derived esplanade reserves with a less arbitrary trigger for creating new access;
- Require recreational clubs to adopt the New Zealand Outdoor Access Code and deal with any complaints directed at their members;
- Establish a clear set of guidelines for applying to set up new access corridors;
- Ensure adequate funding is available to cover any costs (such as track maintenance) that the establishment or maintenance of an access corridor may entail – under no circumstances should the landowner incur any costs associated with public access corridors on their land;
- Establish a fund to compensate landowners up front for any damage that members of the public cause to their property (the land access agency can pursue offenders to recover the cost of fund payouts separately).

Freshwater Policy

United Future recognises the social, cultural, recreational and economic benefits of keeping our rivers, streams and lakes full of clean water for current and future generations. UnitedFuture believes that the environmental value of our freshwater must be considered paramount. This is the only way to assure both the future health and wealth of our nation.

United Future considers the amenity value of freshwater is fundamental to the Kiwi way of life. Our rights to swim, fish, gather food and enjoy all of our rivers and lakes in their natural state are essential. These waters belong to the people of New Zealand. However, if left unchecked, increasing agriculture intensification, private ownership schemes, insensitive land practices, and increasing urbanization will pollute and dewater our rivers, streams and lakes to a point whereby they will degrade to being no more than toxic drains.

Our Policy is therefore to Keep Freshwater Fresh by:

- Vesting the ownership of all freshwater, its beds and margins to the Crown and placing its management in public hands for its protection and perpetual benefit, interest and enjoyment of the New Zealand public. The Crown will lease water takes while prohibiting the private ownership, sale or trading of freshwater such as tradable water rights;
- Continue to oppose proposed changes to the Resource Management Act (1991) to ensure that the ecological, environmental, scenic, wilderness and recreational values of freshwater systems have primacy when assessing

proposals to dam, divert, abstract, append, change or in any way modify the flow, quality or characteristics of that waterway;

- Completely revise the National Policy Statement (NPS) on Freshwater Management and National Objectives Framework, to ensure more rapid resolution of over-allocation, and to set more stringent quality levels to reduce pollution and improve the ecological health of freshwater ecosystems. In addition, append and strengthen the NPS with a National Environmental Standard for Freshwater to set flow and quality criteria;
- Create a National Environmental Standard for Land Use, which sets out rules to determine the ecological sustainability of that land use and to ensure it has no adverse effect on any water bodies;
- Re-allocate the Irrigation Acceleration Fund towards contestable grants which promote sustainable and environmentally positive on-farm operations, such as water use reduction, pasture improvement, soil and effluent management;
- Encourage environmental innovation and sensibility by introducing user pays for all water-takes and polluter pays for any individual or entity who introduces point or non-point polluting discharges into rivers or lakes;
- Amend the Environmental Reporting Bill to recognise the sensitivity of salmonids (trout and salmon) to degraded freshwater systems (pollution, low flows and elevated water temperatures), by including the reporting of their quantity and condition within the freshwater domain;
- Move the prohibition of the sale of trout flesh into legislation and make all species of trout "recreational fish only" and not to be farmed other than to stock recreational fisheries;
- Retain the Fish and Game management model and extend its powers to allow full (non-Ministerial) control over differential licence categories (such as overseas and guides' licences), and by mandating that all Councils seek the approval of Fish and Game on all decisions which affect the habitat of freshwater fish;
- Close legal loopholes which allow the "exclusive capture" of access to, and participation in, any freshwater fisheries by commercial interests, by amending relevant legislation and extending the powers of the Walking Access Commission so they can advocate for and, if necessary, secure appropriate public access to, public resources such as rivers;
- Create "helicopter -free" zones on selected wilderness rivers to protect the quality of fishing and access by Kiwis, to be administered by Fish and Game NZ;
- Create a new role within the Ministry for the Environment to hold local authorities accountable where they have not adequately or promptly

addressed any adverse impact on freshwater, such as illegal gates or polluters;

- Impose a moratorium on new hydro and irrigation schemes for rivers without existing dams and still regarded as 'wild';
- Make it easier for recreational fishers to access information pertaining to their daily catch limit and the penalties for non-compliance through more numerous and comprehensive information boards at boat ramps and popular on-shore fishing spots;
- Provide targeted funding for research into didymo with the intention of exterminating it from our rivers;
- Develop a rapid response unit within Biosecurity New Zealand to respond to future reported potential threats similar to didymo with the mandate to immediately 'close' a waterway from public use.

Marine Recreational Fishing

UnitedFuture believes recreational fishing must come before commercial profits because it is the birth right of every New Zealander to head to the beach to catch kahawai or snapper to feed their family. Kiwis' birthright to catch and eat fish should not be compromised by companies that catch and sell too many of our recreational species of fish to foreign countries. Under our policy minimum fish stocks will be enforced ensuring our children and children's children can go fishing, just like we have for generations, and catch fish for their dinner.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Amend the Fisheries Act to create "Recreational Only Species", giving recreational fishers priority over commercial fishers for specific species of fish. The Ministry of Primary Industries will establish a biomass bottom line for these species, setting a permanent minimum tonnage of fish. Recreational bag limits will be set within the minimum biomass tonnage of fish ensuring that overfishing by commercial operators won't affect recreational limits. If commercial operators overfish and cause the biomass to fall below the minimum permanent tonnage they will be required to cease fishing that species until the fish returns above the minimum tonnage. Initially we will include species such as Kahawai, Snapper, Kingfish, and Blue Cod as "Recreational Only Species" while reserving the right to adjust that list as circumstances require;
- Introduce a type of new marine reserve named "recreational reserves". These reserves will be for recreational fishers and iwi to fish in; commercial fishing in these reserves will be banned. This gives the dual benefit of increasing the available fish for the recreational fisher and providing a greater area of net free zones for the fish to live;

- Substantially increase the level of funding available for robust scientific monitoring of the impact that specific catch limits and fishing methods are having on fish populations and the marine environment, in order to ensure sustainability of the resource. This funding will be made available to universities, Crown Research Institutes, and other relevant institutions;
- Work with the recreational fishing sector to establish a public consultation process regarding the future of inshore fisheries management. Our intention is to preserve the ability for future generations of New Zealanders to have access to the recreational fishing opportunities that we, and previous generations, have enjoyed.

Marine Reserves

UnitedFuture believes that no-take marine reserves should only comprise one component of a graduated and comprehensive plan to protect and ensure the sustainability of the entire marine environment. In addition, the process for deciding where to establish no-take marine reserves should be more transparent and should ensure that the views of all relevant stakeholders – including recreational fishers – are taken into account (i.e. so they cannot simply be ‘listened to’ on a pro forma basis and then ignored).

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Establish a graduated and comprehensive system of marine protection for the entire marine environment whereby no-take marine reserves are one of several available categories of protection (the category that affords the maximum level of restrictions);
- Establish a marine protection category below no-take marine reserves where commercial fishing is prohibited but responsible recreational fishing is allowed (similar to the taiapure and mataitai concepts);
- Ensure that in order for a new marine reserve to receive approval it must have a clearly-established and achievable purpose that will be of benefit to all New Zealanders (such as preserving a particularly unique and vulnerable species or ecosystem) and, in addition, require that it must be demonstrated that a no-take marine reserve is the only practicable way of achieving that purpose;
- Ensure that statutory Treaty of Waitangi fisheries management requirements, such as those within the framework of the Fisheries Act, will continue to be met (e.g. via the implementation of Taiapure and Mataitai type reserves) as part of any new marine protection arrangements;
- Seek to abandon the percentage approach to marine reserves and other protected areas as it is too arbitrary and is not necessary or useful as a marine management tool;

- Ensure that marine reserves are not used as a fisheries management tool for harvestable species – the existing QMS (in conjunction with more scientific research) is the best means for achieving this;
- Ensure that recreational interests are properly consulted regarding any regulatory changes to allowable marine activities;
- Provide additional scientific funding so that small ecologically-sensitive areas that require the protection of a no-take marine reserve can be objectively identified and prioritised.

Commercial Fishing

The focus of UnitedFuture's commercial fishing policy is the "New Zealandisation" of our fisheries. We want to level the playing field so that New Zealand vessels with New Zealand crews are competitive when it comes to harvesting this resource.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Require two compulsory fisheries inspectors to be present on foreign charter vessels, at the expense of the New Zealand company contracting the charter, to ensure QMS compliance;
- Require at least one compulsory labour inspector to be present on foreign charter vessels, at the expense of the New Zealand company contracting the charter, to ensure compliance with New Zealand minimum wage laws and labour conditions;
- Require that all foreign charter vessels are to remain outside a 25-mile limit;
- Require that a certain percentage of all fishing quota that is leased out by "paper" fishermen must go to New Zealanders;
- Ensure that New Zealand fishing operators can purchase fuel at the same price that international vessels can;
- Fund a comprehensive scientific study to ascertain how much damage is being caused by bottom trawling in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and what are the best ways to mitigate or prevent future damage;
- Review procedures for charging "deemed values" on fish caught without a corresponding allocation of "by catch" quota, to ensure that charges are set at levels that achieve a balance between discouraging illegal fishing without being overly burdensome on legitimate fishing operations.

Recreational Risk Management

At present many outdoor events are being put under pressure or cancelled by the increasing application of health and safety regulations that were originally designed, quite appropriately, for commercial and industrial environments.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure that health and safety and related regulations recognise the inherent risk in outdoor activities, which forms part of their very appeal;
- Clarify the law relating to the liability of event organisers;
- Legislate to enable outdoor recreation event participants to sign a binding organiser's liability waiver to take effect in the event that something not easily foreseeable goes wrong;
- Generally work to ensure that schools, sporting organisations and individuals are free to organise and participate in outdoor events without fear of legal reprisal if something not easily foreseen goes wrong;
- Ensure that access rules are clarified (see Practical Access to Public Land policy) in conjunction with health and safety related regulations to ensure that liability concerns cannot be used as an excuse for landowners to refuse access to their land for outdoor recreation events and activities;
- Enable industries and NGOs to work more closely with schools to develop educational programmes. For example, the fisheries industry and organisations such as Fish and Game could trial the development and delivery of programmes to teach children about fishing, sustainability and water safety;
- Enable all schools to have a regular outdoors education programme, where outdoor recreational experts and clubs can support teachers in educating students.

Heli-hunting

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Prohibit heli-hunting, herding or hazing from helicopters except for legitimate animal management operations when numbers warrant it.

FAMILY & SOCIAL POLICY

DISABILITY

UnitedFuture supports the intentions and direction of the current NZ Disability Strategy, but believes that there is an unacceptable gap between policy and practice in many service areas.

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Establish community-based advocacy services to ensure that every disabled person and their family have a case manager who ensures that clients have access to every support to which they are entitled;
- Support the development of “family governance groups” to oversee life-long care arrangements for individuals with disabilities;
- Commission an independent review of current audit and monitoring provisions for disability care providers;
- Promote a client-driven, rather than provider-driven, disability support sector. Better collaboration between what clients want and what services are available may require changes to funding and contracting arrangements, with the client having a stronger voice in decision-making;
- Develop standards for group housing that provide residents with a greater voice;
- Support home ownership for people with disabilities through rent-to-buy and shared equity mechanisms and the use of State Housing stock for this purpose;
- Ensure wage rates are transparent in all government contracts with providers, and that there is provision for ongoing training of the workforce;
- Ensure that appropriate respite care is available in every region.

see also UnitedFuture Policy on [Special Education](#)

DRUGS

UnitedFuture's approach to drug policy is to concentrate on the drugs that cause most harm to New Zealand communities. We believe that drug policy should be based on expert medical evidence and social sector advice rather than knee-jerk media hysteria. It is often overlooked, but it must be remembered that the two most harmful substances in New Zealand are alcohol and tobacco.

Drugs and Health

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Maintain the current legal status of cannabis (including medicinal cannabis) until there is robust evidence to show that any benefits obtained through cannabis use outweigh the harm to an individual's health (noting that it is up to the applicants - i.e. drug companies - rather than the government to initiate testing of cannabis for medicinal purposes);
- Continue to support the full implementation of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2013, which regulates the sale, manufacture, and importation of New Psychoactive Substances or drugs commonly referred to as 'legal highs';
- Maintain funding for drug treatment programmes, and ensure that residential treatment centres are available and properly funded in each region;
- Review the use and availability of methadone with the intention of reducing methadone reliance;
- Place greater emphasis on increased funding and co-ordination between alcohol and drug services and mental health services to ensure appropriate, accurate assessment with correctly directed treatment.

Drugs and Education

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Support public education campaigns that highlight the negative health effects of smoking, alcohol and substance abuse;
- Work with schools to ensure they remain drug-free by promoting treatment options in conjunction with punishment for drug offences;
- Encourage schools to implement anti-drug policy programmes in consultation with the police and other agencies such as DARE and Life Education Trust.

Drugs and the Law

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Focus resources to deal with the most socially harmful drugs as identified through scientific research and the assessments of justice, education and health experts;
- Regularly review the classification of drugs to ensure they accurately reflect their health, behavioural and social effects;
- Provide drug offenders with treatment options, through initiatives such as the trial Drug and Alcohol Courts;
- Raise penalties for drug dealers who supply to people under the age of 18;
- Raise penalties for receiving income from the proceeds of drugs;
- Require prisoners to undergo full toxicology testing on admission to prison to establish the level of drug use and provide them with a clean start through targeted detection, deterrence, treatment and education programmes;
- Focus on the elimination of drug use within all prisons and youth correction facilities, and ensure treatment options are available;
- Ensure that re-integration and parole services for inmates who have previously tested positive for the use of drugs include mandatory drug-testing and drug treatment options;
- Ensure that Customs are sufficiently funded to stop the importation of drugs;
- Increase police resources to prevent underage alcohol sales and introduce stronger penalties for supply alcohol to minors.

EDUCATION

Early Childhood

Parents are the drivers of their children's education, implicitly and explicitly, and we want to support them in this role, by giving them the skills to be their child's first teacher. It means we will allow parents, and not the government, to choose the most appropriate provider of pre-school education for their child.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Encourage more men to join the teaching profession at all levels, including ECE;
- Support the concept of parents as first teachers and expand access to programmes like PAFT and HIPPY to families other than those deemed to be at-risk;
- Endorse the role of parent-led early childhood education centres, such as Playcentre, to empower parents to lead their children's education and encourage the parent-child bond;
- Promote an increase of funding for early identification of children with special needs and disabilities with targeted systematic, intensive and high quality interventions;
- Ensure that government funding of early childhood centres is reflected in the fees passed on to parents by requiring them to disclose what proportion of fees are taxpayer-funded;
- Pilot the use of early childhood education centres as contact points for family support services, such as parenting courses, budget advice, health and counselling services;
- Simplify, with a view to reducing, the quantity and complexity of compliance requirements that early childhood education and care providers must fulfil.

National Standards

UnitedFuture is broadly supportive of a system of National Standards as long as outcomes for children are the top priority. UnitedFuture wants to keep teachers, parents, schools and the Ministry of Education on task to ensure that the overall objective of improved primary education is kept at the forefront.

In keeping with this, UnitedFuture is particularly keen to improve the clarity of standards information provided to parents about their child's performance.

Primary Schooling

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Increase funding for, and access to, Reading Recovery;
- Set a minimum number of hours for the core teaching of literacy and numeracy;
- Work towards reducing the teacher/pupil ratio, with a particular focus on reducing class sizes for Years 4-8;
- Work on introducing at least one teacher aide per primary school classroom to help with behavioural and developmental issues (beginning in low decile schools).

Secondary Schooling

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Introduce a minimum number of standards for each subject that must be externally assessed;
- Investigate initiatives to address the problem of boys continuing to fall behind girls in achievement and completion rates for NCEA;
- Establish nationally consistent policies on internal and external reassessment opportunities;
- Ensure that the time allotted to complete externally assessed exams is appropriate to the number of standards that students are sitting;
- Support the raising of the school leaving age from 16 provided:
 - it is accompanied by a range of options for students to use their years 12 and 13 for more career-focused learning options like trade training; and
 - universities are prepared to allow students to attain first year university credits in year 13;
- Ensure that senior students have sufficient access to advice and information about career choices and opportunities for further education and training.

Effective Teaching

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Encourage more men to join the teaching profession;
- Ensure that entry requirements to teacher education are rigorous;
- Ensure that student teachers possess both the competencies and the disposition to work with children and young people before they can graduate;
- Clarify the processes available to Principals and Boards of Trustees for dismissing an incompetent teacher;
- Support changes to the Teachers' Council (or the proposed 'Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand') to give it greater powers to discipline and de-register those who are unfit to teach;
- Increase the amount of time student teachers spend in school-based placements;
- Expand Teach First NZ, a programme that takes top university graduates, puts them through short but intensive teacher training, and places them in challenging schools.

Engaging Parents and the Community

Research shows that families and whānau who monitor their children's progress at school are more likely to have children who are successful learners.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure that information about the characteristics, facilities and performance of all New Zealand schools is available to parents on the internet;
- Pilot programmes aimed at increasing parent involvement in schools literacy programmes;
- Target Maori and Pacific Communities for closer involvement in school life and student learning to improve achievement rates;
- Provide additional support to schools catering for extremely diverse communities to engage better with parents. Often schools positioned in the middle of the decile rankings are the most in need of this support.

Effective School Leadership & Governance

School leadership is a critical factor in determining the tone and effectiveness of schools. Principals and their senior staff oversee curriculum delivery, assessment, the professional development of staff, timetabling, reporting to parents and the wider community, the pastoral care of students and much more.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Assess whether the same governance structure for schools as small as 9 students in remote rural locations as for large schools of over 2000 students, despite widely varying needs and pools of potential trustees, is appropriate;
- Review the role and effectiveness of the Board of Trustees model, specifically succession planning, training, financial management, recruitment and retention, professional appointments, the development of special school characteristics and issues identified by managers during a statutory intervention;
- Offer more management training to primary teachers, to reflect the additional responsibilities beyond the walls of their classroom that many teachers carry out;
- Improve the provision of professional development for school leaders.

Curriculum

Success in the future will require people to be more adaptable to change both personally and collectively. Accordingly, United Future would like schools to have greater 'all round' education focus.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure that years 7 – 13 at school take an integrated approach to life skills by establishing it as a separate subject, including segments on career planning, budgeting advice, and parenting skills;
- Enable industries and NGOs to work more closely with schools to develop educational programmes. For example, the fisheries industry and organisations such as Fish and Game could trial the development and delivery of programmes to teach children about fishing, sustainability and water safety;
- Enable all schools to have a regular outdoors education programme, where outdoor recreational experts and clubs can support teachers in educating students;
- Ensure that character education programmes, also known as values education and life-skills education, are established in full consultation with parents and staff and operate in all of New Zealand's schools. Character education is about incorporating universal values such as honesty, respect for others and the law, tolerance, fairness, caring and social responsibility into a school's culture;
- Ensure that assessment tools be developed that would provide teachers with greater clarity in observing oral skill development – not just students'

confidence levels when talking, but also their ability to negotiate, articulate and participate in conversations through effective listening;

- Encourage the use and teaching of Te Reo in all schools;
- Expand the range of languages available for study at secondary levels, drawing on the resources of Correspondence School where necessary.

See also UnitedFuture Policy on [Civics and Citizenship](#)

Funding and Achievement

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Fund a base level of Support Staff salaries separately from schools' general Operations Grant;
- Review funding available for ICT initiatives;
- Improve security options for school campuses;
- Prepare for the impact of changing modes of learning on school facilities (e.g. the use of flexible spaces for team teaching);
- Increase resources for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programmes, to ensure that our newest residents can participate fully in education and integrate into our society as soon as possible after their arrival.

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Support restorative justice disciplinary programmes in schools to combat bullying and other misbehaviour, requiring the student to understand the implications of his/her actions, involving the parents, and arriving at a punishment (e.g. community service) that is an alternative to suspension or expulsion;
- Include parents where possible in developing and enforcing agreements between students with disruptive behaviour and the school prior to resorting to exclusions and/or stand-downs;
- Develop alternative education provision for suspensions longer than five days;
- Make discipline a key factor in evaluating school performance;
- Resource alternative education providers to work with at-risk youth who have dropped out of mainstream schooling;

- Work with schools to ensure that they remain drug-free by promoting treatment options in conjunction with punishment for drug offences;
- Undertake a campaign to promote academic role models amongst youth, but particularly targeted at boys;
- Expand the Social Workers in Schools programme beyond decile 1-3 schools.

Boys Education

Boys make up close to three-quarters of referrals for literacy help, speech/language therapy and behavioural difficulties. At the other end, women make up nearly 60% of our university graduates and this percentage appears to be growing.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Address the growing achievement gap between male and female students;
- Encourage more men to join the teaching profession at all levels;
- Investigate the use of single-sex classrooms within coeducational schools;
- Find other ways to adapt teaching methods and educational environments for boys without discriminating against female students.

Special Education

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Increase funding to the Ongoing Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS). Currently 1% of students receive some ORRS funding even though we know that one in five New Zealanders have some sort of disability;
- Review the guidelines used to determine if a student still qualifies for ORRS funding to ensure that future progress isn't hampered by a reduction in allocation because the student has made progress;
- Allow schools to transfer unused ORRS funding in a particular year to other students in need within the school;
- Develop compulsory content for all teacher trainees regarding teaching students with disabilities;
- Increase funding for Resource Teachers of Vision and Resource Teachers of the Deaf to improve teacher-student ratios;
- Ensure that the professional development of teachers and staff working with special needs students is funded separately, rather than having to come out

of the Special Needs Grant to schools as this reduces the amount available for direct support for students;

- Review the workload of Special Education staff within the Ministry of Education and out-of school offices to ensure teachers and students are being appropriately supported;
- Promote an increase of funding for early identification of children with special needs and disabilities with targeted systematic, intensive and high quality interventions;
- Fund support staff such as teacher aides centrally rather than from operational grants.

Gifted Students

UnitedFuture acknowledges that gifted children may not be nurtured in the school environment due to the perception that they will succeed regardless.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Better educate student teachers and current classroom teachers on how to identify and respond to the needs of gifted children;
- Ensure that funding and resources for gifted children are regionally managed in collaboration with other schools, in recognition of the small number of affected children;
- Fund specialist education programmes for children assessed as requiring such provision, such as "One Day School";
- Provide regional resource teachers to support the learning of gifted students and their classroom teachers.

The Correspondence School

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Enable all New Zealand students to access and benefit from dual enrolment, so that those who are primarily Correspondence School students can take classes at local schools as well as the reverse scenario (e.g. where a school does not teach a particular subject);
- Offer Correspondence School students the chance to have face-to-face interactions and participate in school camps, school days and/or workshops in order to develop co-operation, competition, physical & social skills;
- Fund the Parents Association annually through the Ministry of Education;

- Ensure that Distance & Itinerant students' needs are ring-fenced and protected and open up funding streams such as ORRS for students with disabilities and special needs;
- Develop an NZQA qualification for teaching by correspondence;
- Review supervisor payment rates.

Tertiary Education

UnitedFuture proposes a bold new approach to tertiary education policy, which would see New Zealand finally offer free education to its citizens from the age of 3 years old, right through to university and beyond.

We propose a zero-fees policy for tertiary education in New Zealand in place of Student Allowances, accompanied by a push to increase the quality of tertiary education and protect the value of New Zealand degrees.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure that entrance standards remain high for universities to ensure they are internationally competitive. Australia has six universities ranked in the top 50 in the world, but we only have one in the top 100, and this needs to change;
- Promote greater awareness amongst young people of the opportunities afforded by vocational training, such as apprenticeships;
- Encourage 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) and support initiatives such as the Mayoral Taskforce for Jobs.
- Encourage networks and co-operation between tertiary providers and industry to ensure that skills taught are relevant and required in the future labour market;
- Ensure that tertiary education instructors undergo a minimum amount of training in teaching, and require teaching performance to be monitored and included as a factor in promotion decisions;
- Ensure that degree courses are taught by staff actively engaged in relevant research;
- Ensure that the intent of the University Act is not diluted by external audit of compliance areas, especially in non-relevant research.

Student Support

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Remove tuition fees for tertiary education in New Zealand, accompanied by a push to increase the quality of tertiary education and protect the value of New Zealand degrees.

The zero fees policy would mean that students would only borrow living costs, rather than the crippling loans which are currently being incurred to cover fees as well. A zero fees policy also addresses one of the illusions of the current policy, where it is assumed that tuition fees cover all or most of the costs of study, when in fact the taxpayer already covers the majority of tuition costs;

- Abolish the Student Allowance, as a way to help fund the zero fees policy. The student allowance system has become patently unfair, relying on means testing of parental income until a student turns 24, and enabling the wealthy to receive allowances where their parents are able to reduce their taxable income;
- Support the NZ Union of Students' Association's proposal for a "First in Family" scholarship, which covers living and course related costs for first year university students who are the first in their immediate family to undertake tertiary study. Additionally, the programme requires participating universities to extend support to secondary schools to select and encourage prospective First in Family applicants and support them to succeed once they are at the tertiary institution;
- Increase the focus on repayment compliance and monitoring of overseas-based student loan holders;
- Ensure all tertiary students unable to find work over the summer period have access to the Emergency Unemployment Benefit.

Adult Continuing & Community Education

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Develop a strategy for adult and community education that determines the most appropriate provision of learning opportunities in both urban and rural settings;
- Establish a network of 'rural education posts' to serve as adult and community education information centres and meeting places, utilising existing educational facilities;
- Increase funding for adult literacy programmes, including those in workplaces, and ensure that every community education centre runs such programmes;

- Increase funding for budget advice programmes, and ensure that every community education centre runs such programmes.

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

UnitedFuture has always believed that the family is the core unit of our society, from which all values and skills for living harmoniously in a modern society emanate. Our family-specific policy specifically relates to families with dependent children and, far from being exhaustive, simply addresses issues that are not covered in other policies.

Issues:

- Children are more likely these days to experience a number of different family arrangements than in the past;
- Fatherlessness is regarded as the biggest predicator of delinquency in youth;
- Parents are older;
- An increasing number of children are being raised by family members other than their parents;
- There is more pressure on both parents to work full time;
- There is a lack of core parenting skills.

Policy Principles:

- We need relevant measures across all government sectors to monitor family success in quality of life indicators;
- Family resilience is reliant on both the internal skill set and strengths of the parents and the health of the local community in which they are based. Therefore policy needs to be focused on both the individual family and their communities;
- Policy should be based on credible research, robust consultation, and the use of trials/pilots.

What we have done so far:

- Established the Families Commission to research issues relating to families and provide evidence-based advice to government and the NGO sector on policy development;
- Pushed to establish family tax credits as part of Working for Families;
- Ensured KiwiSaver schemes will be able to be used as a deposit subsidy for a house, subject to criteria;

- Increased the Unsupported Child Benefit to match the Foster Care Allowance, so that grandparents raising grandchildren get the same as foster carer rates;
- Developed the 2010 Budget tax package, which saw the biggest reductions in income taxes across the board for families since the 1980s.

Supporting parents supporting children

UnitedFuture not only places children and parents firmly at the centre of all our policies – we exist as a party to keep Government focused on the family in all its shapes and sizes. Our main principle is that we believe that investing in those on whom children rely for their wellbeing – namely parents – is key. Although this is the thread running through our entire platform, the policies listed below specifically target the well-being of the relational family unit and the choices parents can make regarding the care of their children and their work/life balance options.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Introduce Income Sharing for couples with dependent children, to reflect the fact that the family is generally the economic unit and not an individual earner in a family. Income Sharing means that, for tax purposes, the income of both parents is combined and then divided equally. Under our progressive taxation system this would result in a reduction in combined income tax paid where there is a significant difference in income between partners. It attributes equal value to the different roles each parent plays, whereas our current tax system does not recognise the contribution of parents who spend all or part of their time at home with children.

Income Sharing will give couples with children the option of having a parent work fewer or more flexible hours, be at home raising their children, and able to retain more of their combined after-tax income. Since the government subsidises childcare for those returning to paid work, it should also acknowledge the contribution of those who have decided to forego their income, in whole or in part, to stay at home with their children.

Legislation to put Income Sharing into effect has already been introduced into Parliament by UnitedFuture;

- Extend paid Parental leave to 13 months, as originally recommended by the Families Commission. In addition to the current 14 weeks' leave for mothers (which is able to be transferred to her partner upon application), a father or other partner would be able to take up to four weeks' paid leave in their own right, either at the same time as the mother or on their own. An additional 38 weeks' 'family leave' would be available to either parent, adding up to 56 weeks in total. The full package would be phased in over time with the aim of providing the full entitlement within 5 years;
- Support flexible working hours;

- Create one-stop shop Family Service Centres, building on the current 'Heartland Services Centres' model used in rural areas, to meet community needs in a coherent and family-friendly way. These centres would offer parents information on opportunities that exist for them and their children, and would be a point of contact for government and NGO-provided services demanded by the community, such as:
 - health checks
 - early childhood education and care options
 - relationship counselling
 - working for Families entitlements, other benefit information and budget advice
 - parent education opportunities and support;
- Fund a public education campaign to provide couples with the tools to improve their relationships, followed up by access to resources and counselling services;
- Improve access to effective parenting programmes for a wider range of parents and parenting stages;
- Improve access to relationship counsellors and courses for families;
- Ensure that schools years 7–13 at school take an integrated approach to life skills by establishing it as a separate subject, including segments on career planning, budgeting advice, civic education, relationship and parenting skills;
- Target infant health by concentrating on the appropriate support for parents before and after birth and ensuring high-quality extended care and support, including home visits, by lead maternity carers and Plunket;
- Treat child obesity as a parenting issue and use parent education as the first line of attack to reduce obesity rates;
- Take further steps to safeguard children from harmful internet material, working with organisations such as NetSafe and the ICT industry to ensure that filtering software and other appropriate safety measures, including effective Codes of Practice, are effective;
- Make the Children's Commissioner part of the refocused Families Commission;
- Support the ongoing funding and development of the longitudinal programme, "Growing Up in New Zealand" and the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study and the Christchurch Health and Development Study.

See also UnitedFuture policies on [Education](#) and [Health](#)

Separated Families and the Care of Children

Close to one in three children in New Zealand are growing up in a house without both their biological parents. Some children have never lived under one roof with both their parents. Many other children and parents have had to adjust to family life after separation and divorce. A significant number of grandparents have also found themselves raising children that, for various reasons, their own children have been unable to parent themselves.

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Amend the Care of Children Act to make explicit the presumption of shared care when determining the care arrangements for children when parents separate, as long as both parents are competent, and it is in the child's best interest to continue to have regular contact with both parents after divorce or separation;
- Support all moves to introduce mediation services into the Family Court system to reduce the need for lawyers and judges when settling disputes;
- Introduce compulsory DNA paternity testing to determine parentage in cases of disputed fatherhood.

UnitedFuture knows that many grandparents who have been left to look after their grandchildren provide a selfless service that is of great benefit to society and the children themselves. Although these New Zealanders are fiercely independent and loathe asking for help, UnitedFuture thinks it is only fair that this contribution is acknowledged by the state.

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Raise carer rates for grandparents to the same as that enjoyed by foster parents, including additional assistance and support in the form of respite care, grants for sports gear, legal aid and other such expenses or other help in areas to be determined by grandparents themselves.

Child Support

Over the past two parliamentary terms UnitedFuture has led a review of the child support scheme to make it more responsive to factors such as shared care, the income levels of both parents and the costs of raising children.

UnitedFuture wants to continue to improve the child support system, to look at ways in which the system can be made fairer and enable and encourage both parents to stay involved in the lives of their children.

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Allow payments to separating parents on a benefit to be split at the ratio the parents decide is best for the child, and to reflect the contribution that both parents are making to that child's upbringing;
- Require one nominated parent, in the situation where both parents are on a benefit, to continue to seek work once the child reaches 3 months of age, in the same way they would as if they had no child. Once that parent has found work the then the child support payment should go to the other parent in full or a split amount decided by the family.

HEALTH

Principles:

- UnitedFuture believes that maintaining wellness is fundamental to the quality of life of all individuals and families;
- Health policy should be as focused on prevention as much as cure – UnitedFuture therefore encourages healthy lifestyle choices;
- Access to treatment should happen in a timely manner and include access to all health facilities and services across New Zealand.

Key issues

- The current public health system struggles to keep up with the demands being placed on it and will continue to do so, particularly with the increase in New Zealand's aging population. At the same time there is underutilised capacity in the private surgical sector;
- The cost of health care continues to rise at a rate of about twice that of inflation. The aging population increases the demands on the health system and the decreases the proportion of tax payers;
- Particular ethnic groups have major health issues affecting their quality of life and lifespans;
- Planning for our medical workforce is not undertaken in a sustainable manner;
- New Zealand has increasing rates of obesity and its related problems such as diabetes, the full force of which is yet to hit home;
- Alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse are significant contributors to poor health outcomes in NZ and we have a high incidence of sexually transmitted infections;
- There are part charges for primary health care but not for secondary care;
- The high cost of illness is felt at every level, personally, in families, in lost productivity, in communities and in government expenditure.

The Health System

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Retain the current basic structure of the health system, rather than restructuring it, to provide stability for health professionals and consumers and to give it an opportunity to deliver;

- Commit to the public health model so that it continues to assume the key role in the provision of vital health services;
- Ensure that the health system is characterised by a climate of certainty by clearly defining core services, so that New Zealanders know where the public system covers them and where there is limited cover;
- Continue to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery for those who are likely to wait longer than 6 months by requiring DHBs to contract out work to Private Hospitals;
- Investigate the feasibility of a national health insurance scheme, as an extension of the existing ACC scheme, for non-trauma based disability such as elective surgery for the elderly;
- Extend Mobile Surgical Services;
- Continue the rollout of mobile dental clinics;
- Review the administrative and policy compliance burden facing hospitals and GPs, to free up resources currently dedicated to management which should instead be directed towards actually making people better;
- Require greater collaboration between DHBs to reduce management and operational costs particularly in the supply of goods and services, with the view to amalgamating some boards in the future if efficiency gains are not achieved;
- Ensure that ambulance and air rescue services are set and maintained at a level that does not compromise public and crew safety;
- Increase funding for health research to bring New Zealand's funding up to at least the OECD average as a proportion of GDP;
- Encourage the development of integrated electronic medical records and prescription systems to reduce medical errors, remind patients and physicians about preventative and follow-up care, and facilitate the sharing of integrated records and information across sites of care;
- Expand the role of PHARMAC in the prioritisation and procurement of hospital medicines and vaccines as part of the National Medicines Strategy;
- Ensure that every community has good after-hours medical services separate from Emergency Departments in hospitals.

Enhanced Preventative Services

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Reassess the efficacy of the national vision and hearing screening programme in schools, and expand access to optometrist tests for children with learning difficulties during primary school years;
- Target infant health by concentrating on the appropriate support for parents before and after birth and ensuring high-quality extended care and support, including home visits, by lead maternity carers and Plunket;
- Support effectively targeted cervical, breast, and skin cancer screening programmes, and establish a new prostate cancer screening programme for men. When fiscal conditions allow develop a national bowel cancer screening programme;
- Increase funding for sexual health/contraceptive programmes;
- Treat child obesity as a parenting issue and use parent education as the first line of attack to reduce obesity rates;
- Develop and fund programmes focussing on better nutrition, particularly for children and youth;
- Expand the prevention work of the Public Health Office;
- Establish a national register for Type 1 Diabetes, a diabetes research fund, and increase funding for Type 2 Diabetes testing;
- Expand the development of strategies to reduce non communicable diseases;
- Support the use of "green prescriptions" through the development of safe and convenient venues for physical activity, such as walking paths and bicycle lanes;
- Establish minimum standards of cleanliness for waterways;
- Establish targets for the quality of soil in which crops are grown. Our health depends on the quality of the food we ingest which in turn depends on the quality of the soils in which it was grown. If the soils lack essential nutrients then so do we;
- Boost funding for Crown Research Institutes to conduct research into the health, wellbeing and productivity of New Zealand soils, and to develop new techniques for remediation of any deterioration that has occurred over time;
- Continue the national strategy, including private sector funding, to insulate all New Zealand homes to at least 1977 standards. This also has benefits for climate change and family finances;

- Work to reduce particulates from car exhaust emissions;
- Make no change to the legal status of cannabis for medicinal use until a robust regulatory testing regime is developed that proves cannabis use causes minimal harm to an individual's health.

Public education and personal responsibility

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Improve public education regarding the safe and effective use of quality prescription medicines, as part of Medicines New Zealand - national Medicines Strategy;
- Support public education campaigns that emphasise the importance of nutrition and exercise and the consequences of poor nutrition such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer, and premature aging;
- Support public education campaigns that highlight the risks of smoking, alcohol and substance abuse;
- Support community-based education campaigns that empower parents and extended families to take responsibility for healthy eating and lifestyles;
- Encourage employers to offer healthy lifestyle incentives (such as a gym membership) as a supplement to sick day provisions in an employment contract negotiations;
- Investigate the feasibility of a national health insurance scheme, as an extension of the existing ACC scheme, for non-trauma based disability such as elective surgery for the elderly;
- Introduce a free annual health check-up to all over 65s;
- Set aside funding for a public health campaign to promote organ donation and to encourage family discussion about what it means to be an organ donor.

Health workforce

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Zero tuition fees for those studying medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and nursing;
- Provide first class working conditions for health professionals as the key to recruitment and development, through the accreditation of workplaces such as the American "magnet" hospital status;

- Develop apprenticeship-style training for caregivers, allowing them to acquire qualifications while working in residential or home care environments, to ensure that they can develop a career path in this field;
- Localise the review of GP co-payments rather than the current expensive centralised review process;
- Support the ongoing development of Nurse Practitioners with scopes of practice for senior nurses;
- Introduce a sabbatical scheme that would allow health professionals to take a year out of work every five years to update their skills and knowledge;
- Embark on a pro-active overseas recruitment campaign, and develop the concept of bonded “working holidays” for health professionals;
- Ensure that funding for the aged care sector covers staffing costs in both residential services and in-home care, and strive for better pay and conditions;
- Support pay parity between nursing staff across all nursing sectors.

Improve Child and Youth Health

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure that evidence-based information about immunisation is widely circulated, including the latest international developments, to promote informed decisions by parents;
- Supplement the work of Social Workers in Schools with health clinics where appropriate;
- Develop and fund programmes focussing on better nutrition, particularly for children and youth;
- Improve dental services for primary and secondary school aged children by:
 - increasing the number of dental therapists trained;
 - ensuring DHBs secure sufficient contracts with local dentists for the provision of services to secondary students and additional services to primary age students;
 - continuing the roll-out of Mobile Dental Clinics;
- Improve workforce development and funding available for youth-focused counselling services as the first line of defence, rather than over-prescribing pharmaceuticals for mental health problems;

- Ensure DHBs plan for secure facilities for treatment of young people with mental health problems;
- Promote more research to address youth related health problems such as suicide, alcoholism, and bulimia.

Seniors Health and Aged Care

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Investigate the feasibility of a national health insurance scheme, as an extension of the existing ACC scheme, for non-trauma based disability such as elective surgery for the elderly;
- Introduce a free annual health check-up to all over 65s;
- Ensure that older people are fully consulted about their health care and are empowered to make informed choices;
- Ensure that resources focused on the acute health needs of the elderly are balanced by attention to those ailments that impact on their quality of life;
- Ensure there are sufficient community nurses and other welfare agencies so that people can be treated at home where possible;
- Ensure that funding for the aged care sector covers staffing costs in both residential services and in-home care, to improve certainty and transparency, and quality of care;
- Provide better incentives for the nursing, rehabilitation and treatment of the elderly in non-medical institutions, such as rest homes, at home and in retirement villages;
- Support pay parity between nursing staff across all nursing sectors;
- Re-assess the way in which the government funds aged care services, as part of a broader inquiry into future health care costs;
- Ensure that hospices are properly funded so that high quality compassionate palliative care is available;
- Develop apprenticeship-style training for caregivers, allowing them to acquire qualifications while working in residential or home care environments, to ensure that they can develop a career path in this field;
- Investigate the introduction of a carer's allowance for those who stay at home to look after elderly relatives, from the starting point of providing a limited period of paid leave for those who take time off work to care for their parents in the final stages of their life.

Mental Health

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Encourage government agencies to work together on early intervention, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation in mental health;
- Ensure that the right balance is struck between inpatient and community care to prevent people becoming a danger to themselves and society, but with recovery within the community remaining the goal;
- Increase resources for mental health professionals to ensure that those patients who may pose a risk to others or themselves are adequately assessed and treated;
- Increase the number of community-based mental health workers to ease high caseloads;
- Fund child and youth mental health inpatient beds at a level sufficient to achieve the objectives set out in *Rising to the Challenge – the Mental Health and Addiction Service Development Plan 2012-2017* and the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project;
- Tackle the issue of the lack of accommodation and employment support options for people recovering from mental health problems in the community;
- Increase drug, alcohol and mental health treatment programmes for prison inmates.

HOUSING

UnitedFuture shares the kiwi dream of home ownership. We will work to achieve affordable, secure, warm, dry housing. We are acutely aware of the difficulties that first-time buyers face in purchasing their first home, and are committed to pursuing policies to help people into their own homes.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Encourage home ownership by allowing families to capitalise their Working For Families entitlements for a year as a lump sum to help purchase their first home, extend existing homes, or increase equity in a home;
- Investigate alternative local body funding arrangements with the aim of abolishing rates on domestic and commercial properties;
- Continue to sell state houses with very high valuations (some are over \$1 million), or those properties that are not configured for those who need them (e.g. too few or too many bedrooms), and use the proceeds to purchase other properties for use as state houses;
- Focus on increasing affordable housing for families with children as a priority;
- Extend the provision of community housing;
- Work in partnership with iwi to develop former Crown land, including land returned through Treaty settlements, for housing;
- Review Housing NZ tenancies on an annual basis to ensure that the occupants still meet the criteria and to ensure that housing stock is fairly allocated, and encourage long-term tenants into home ownership (either on the private market or rent-to-buy their state house);
- Strengthen legislation to allow Housing NZ to evict problematic tenants more easily;
- Extend the existing scheme in which Work and Income NZ deducts Housing NZ rentals directly from benefits to include private sector rentals;
- Promote co-housing as an option for older people to join together to create and manage their own accommodation;
- Continue to promote energy efficient homes and technology via the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA);
- Continue to fund EECA for a comprehensive nationwide programme of retrofitting existing homes with energy saving improvements (including better insulation, low-flow shower heads, solar water heating etc);

- Require all existing dwellings sold or advertised to rent to be assessed for energy efficiency (e.g. insulation, double glazing, heating methods, and use of solar energy) and given a standardised energy efficiency rating;
- Require all new homes to be given a standardised energy efficiency rating based on insulation, double-glazing, heating methods, use of solar energy, etc. These ratings can be similar to the ratings seen on cars or household appliances.

SENIOR CITIZENS

The aim of UnitedFuture's seniors policy is to continue the full involvement of people 65+ in society: at work (should they choose it), with good health, secure income and strong involvement in the community.

Superannuation

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Introduce *FlexiSuper*, which gives people the option of choosing to receive New Zealand Superannuation at reduced rates from age 60-64 or at increasingly enhanced rates if they hold off until ages 66-70;
- Introduce compulsory Kiwisaver, which will increase the saving rate of New Zealanders, deepen the investment pool and provide financial security and certainty in retirement;
- Change the formulation of NZ Super, by calculating it based upon the anticipated forecasted changes to the consumer price index and increases in the average wage for the following 12 months. The current formulation creates a lag that cheats our over 65s of their full entitlement. Any unforeseen changes to inflation or wages will be adjusted at each April, in favour of superannuitants.

Social Security Act 1964 Section 70

Section 70 of the Social Security Act 1964 requires the rate of any New Zealand benefit or pension to be reduced by the amount of any overseas benefit or pension that:

- are administered by or on behalf of an overseas government; and
- form part of a programme providing benefits, pensions and periodical allowances for the same circumstances for which New Zealand benefits and pensions would be paid (for example old age/retirement, invalidity and survivors pensions)

In UnitedFuture's view, the provisions of Section 70 should only apply where the overseas pension in question has been fully funded from general tax revenues. Overseas pensions that are based on either a compulsory individual contribution, or are in the form of a national insurance scheme, or which may be a combination of both and are deemed to be equivalent to a national pension, should be exempted from the requirements of Section 70 and therefore should be paid in full to the recipient without impacting on the entitlement to New Zealand Superannuation.

This would mean that the only pension arrangements to be captured by the provision of Section 70 would be national tax-payer funded pension schemes in other

countries. Contributory pensions, regardless of whether they are on a compulsory national basis or not, and private pensions, should, in our view, be exempted from the provisions of Section 70.

The Cost of Living

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Subsidise the power bills of over-65s by \$50 per month for the three coldest months of the year - June, July and August - so seniors can afford to keep warm;
- Adopt a national strategy, including private sector funding, to insulate all NZ homes, prioritising the homes of those on low and fixed incomes, including superannuitants;
- Promote co-housing as an option for older people to join together to create and manage their own shared accommodation.

Involvement in the Community

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure that our seniors continue to be actively engaged in the community by promoting business mentoring by retired & semi-retired professionals;
- Increase the assistance available to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, and ensure that Work and Income caseworkers are aware of these entitlements;
- Undertake a campaign to raise expectations of older workers and break-down any negative attitudes of employers and the broader community towards them. The government can lead by taking steps as an employer to retain older public servants and to give them flexibility in their working lives;
- Fund training programmes that are specifically targeted at up-skilling older New Zealanders who find themselves out of work due to the use of new technologies.

see also UnitedFuture Policy on [Seniors Health and Aged Care](#)

SOCIAL SERVICES & EMPLOYMENT

UnitedFuture believes that work is a good, both for society and for individuals. Having a job boosts self-esteem and a sense of personal dignity, and provides a role model for children in the family.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Encourage 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);
- Ensure that sickness and invalids beneficiaries seek treatment for their incapacity where this is appropriate as a condition of their benefit, and make funding available to provide treatment where it is likely to hasten their return to work;
- Closely monitor the effectiveness of current initiatives for moving domestic purposes recipients into appropriate employment as their children get older;
- Establish regional employment initiatives that arrive at local solutions to the specific causes of unemployment in communities, with a clear focus on getting people into jobs;
- Ensure that jobseekers have access to vacancies in other regions, and increase relocation grants for those who have to move to take up employment;
- Increase funding for adult literacy programmes, and ensure that every community education centre runs such programmes;
- Fund training programmes that are specifically targeted at up-skilling older New Zealanders who find themselves out of work;
- Support a campaign aimed at employers to break-down any negative perceptions of older workers, migrants and those with disabilities;.
- Prioritise funding for those vocational courses that develop skills and provide qualifications in fields facing shortages;
- Establish a specific employment placement service for refugees;
- Ensure that advice and information is available to businesses to support them in hiring migrants to fill skill shortages, and support migrants with workshops and training to learn about the Kiwi work environment;
- Develop a global online service that matches potential skilled migrants with job opportunities in New Zealand to help fill critical skill shortages, and develop regional immigration programmes allowing regions to meet skill needs where positions cannot be filled within New Zealand;

- Apply intensive case management to those beneficiaries who struggle to budget and pay for the basics, to ensure that their basic needs are being met, especially for households with children;
- Ensure that people receive their appropriate entitlements, by funding the Citizens Advice Bureau and other similar legal and community assistance services to give independent advice and advocacy on such issues.

see also UnitedFuture Policy on [Families and Children](#)

GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY POLICY

ANIMAL WELFARE

UnitedFuture has become increasingly concerned with the number of serious and fatal dog attacks that have occurred throughout New Zealand over the last few years. Equally, the perpetrators of animal cruelty must face consequences that give weight to the brutality of the crime rather than the status of the victim. In terms of animal welfare in primary industries, UnitedFuture supports measures that inform consumer choice and confidence.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Continue to put dangerous dog breeds on a ban-list and require neutering for dogs on that list as well as placing a ban on new animals. No one will have to give up their current pet, but over time the number of dangerous dogs will decline until such breeds no longer exist in New Zealand;
- Promote mandatory standardised labelling with regard to the use of animals in food production (e.g. to prevent misleading advertising which blurs the distinction between battery and free-range eggs);
- Increase the number of Animal Welfare Inspectors from the current 11;
- Support measures that move us in the direction of outlawing practices in New Zealand such as sow stalls and battery caged hen, farrowing crates, and the like, whilst ensuring that this doesn't result in New Zealanders buying products from offshore markets where the restrictions aren't the same;
- Support the phasing out of the sale and use of gin traps.

ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

As New Zealanders enjoy and recognise their cultural diversity; the celebration of those cultures, their histories and the arts associated with them has risen to be of great importance. UnitedFuture is committed to promoting an environment where the cultural identities of a diverse people are recognised and actively upheld.

It is UnitedFuture's position to:

- Recognise the special place of Maori and Pacific culture in New Zealand society;
- Review the funding of Creative New Zealand with a view to increasing accountability, and require 'simple English' explanations of all public monies allocated for cultural purposes;
- Require Creative New Zealand to 'bring art to the people' through increased community involvement;
- Strengthen community participation at all levels in Heritage New Zealand and provide adequate resourcing for its work;
- Encourage government and community involvement in the preservation of historic places;
- Support the work of the New Zealand Film Commission;
- Acknowledge the contribution of artistic and cultural activities to the economy through funding assistance;
- Encourage all television and radio channels to raise the profile of local content in programming and productions through NZ on Air.

AUCKLAND ISSUES

Amalgamation is but one step towards an Auckland that runs better and can be seen as a powerhouse for the country rather than a problem that needs to be solved. There are at least three measures in the fields of transport, housing and planning that should be prioritised to move the city forward.

It is UnitedFuture's position to:

- Make a rail link to the airport, at first from Papatoetoe, as the first transport priority, with 50% of funding from central government, ahead of the Central Rail Loop which costs four times as much;
- Simplify the process of converting cross-leased sections to freehold title, by legislation if necessary, rather than focusing primarily on continuing to reduce the size of subdivided properties;
- Ensure there is widespread support for the Auckland Unitary Plan (and the focus on CBD development) by requiring a referendum to be held at the time of the next local authority elections.

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR

UnitedFuture supports the vital role that volunteer and community agencies play in our society. These agencies often have the expertise, networks and strong community focus to deliver services more effectively than government.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Work with the community and voluntary sector to create a forum for leaders of the sector, with the same function and gravitas as the Iwi Leaders Forum. This will help ensure:
 - greater coordination between government and NGOs, as well as within the voluntary sector, building a stronger consensus for decisions that affect those using agencies' services;
 - a focus on developing supportive and mutually beneficial partnerships between the Government, the community, and voluntary agencies, including greater cooperation between agencies at a local and regional level;
 - government departments keep voluntary agencies up to date with policies that affect their work, and foster policy development networks with voluntary and cultural groups; and
 - the development of long-term and sustainable funding pathways for the sector, including the development of social lending and social entrepreneurship schemes;
- Pay premiums to not-for-profit agencies who find sustained employment for the long-term unemployed, with higher rates available for placing clients who face the greatest barriers to employment;
- Establish Family Support Service Co-ordinators, located in Family Service Centres wherever possible, who help families to access government and NGO-provided services such as budget advice, addiction treatment, parenting education, anger management courses, counselling, employment training, and maternity, child care, mental health and child health services;
- Initiate a review of the Charities Act to ensure that it fosters the vitality and success of the voluntary sector and encourages philanthropy and generosity by New Zealanders;
- Establish overseas aid at 0.5% of GDP immediately and reach the accepted international millennium goal of 0.7% by 2020;
- Explore further ways of encouraging greater social participation in voluntary organisations, e.g. seek the active involvement of employers and unions to loan employees out to voluntary organisations in need of specialist skills;

- Encourage young people to become involved in voluntary activities;
- Review the compliance costs imposed on voluntary agencies by legislation, such as occupational health and safety regulations;
- Expand on our previous initiatives of making all charitable donations tax deductible, introducing payroll giving to include gift aid, and extension of access to imputation credits.

CONSTITUTION AND CITIZENSHIP

Building on the work of the Constitutional Advisory Panel

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Continue the public conversation on constitutional matters, as recommended by the Constitutional Advisory Panel, with the aim of developing reform options on issues such as a written constitution and the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in time for a referendum in 2017;
- Prioritise a public debate on the glaring omission from the terms of reference for the Constitutional Advisory Panel, namely consideration of whether New Zealand should move to a republic within the Commonwealth in the future;
- Establish a New Zealand Day, separate from Waitangi Day, to celebrate our nation's history, multicultural society, and to discuss the potential for the future;
- Introduce a Multicultural Act, similar to legislation in Canada, for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in New Zealand;
- Consider making the Constitutional Advisory Panel a permanent or long term institution, with administrative support from the Ministry of Justice or Ministry of Culture and Heritage, to ensure the conversation about our Constitution arrangements continues;
- Review the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, with particular reference to the use and effectiveness of section 7.

The Electoral System

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Investigate an extension of the Parliamentary term to four years, with a fixed election day;
- Re-introduce the "waka-jumping" legislation to require list MPs who leave the parties under whose banner they were elected to also resign from Parliament.

Civics and Citizenship

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure that young New Zealanders understand their civic rights and responsibilities by introducing compulsory and comprehensive civics education from years 1-13, including information about elections, our electoral

system, our Parliament, central and local government, courts, the Head of State and other institutions;

- Create a fund – available to lower decile schools and schools with disadvantaged students – to bring their students to Wellington to visit institutions such as Parliament, the Treaty of Waitangi, National Library, Te Papa, and to meet MPs, Ministers, the Governor-General, and Judges;
- Require immigrants to take a civics course as part of becoming a New Zealand citizen, to promote civic understanding and the norms and expectations of New Zealand society;
- Investigate the introduction of a graded system towards citizenship, to develop the idea that citizenship is a privilege and not a right, as well as investigating the introduction of a citizenship test.

EMERGENCY & CIVIL DEFENCE SERVICES

UnitedFuture's Emergency Services Policy unifies the emergency services on a policy and funding level, yet enables them to keep their distinct individual roles. Services will be better able to work jointly or individually, as required, in times of local emergency. They will also co-ordinate more effectively during a major national emergency.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Establish a new Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA), responsible to the Minister of Internal Affairs, to replace the Fire Service Commission and the present Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management;
- Ensure that the new Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA):
 - assumes responsibility for funding, auditing, and purchase and contract agreements;
 - develops policy and establishes and monitors national operational standards to ensure the better co-ordination of emergency services;
 - funds the establishment of three common communication centres nationwide to handle all emergency calls;
 - integrates and co-ordinates under a single authority the different emergency services, including the armed services, on both national and local levels to deal with civil emergencies;
- Introduce more flexibility for EQC claims procedures;
- Ensure that public donations to national disaster relief are at least matched dollar for dollar by the government;
- Promote co-operation between community groups, such as Neighbourhood Support and Community Patrol groups, and Police and local councils. Encourage these groups to share information, develop community safety initiatives in line with Police crime reduction strategies, and to also function as Emergency Readiness teams, providing a street-level infrastructure for civil defence assistance;
- Establish a dedicated non-emergency phone line to deal with less urgent incidents, operated at the local level;
- Ensure that ambulance and air rescue services are maintained at a level that does not compromise public safety.

ETHNIC AFFAIRS

The world today is increasingly interconnected. As a result, people of different cultures and religious beliefs have converged together. New Zealand has long since welcomed people of diverse ethnic background to its shores. Diversity has made our New Zealand society culturally rich yet it has also presented us with challenges that must be taken seriously so we are able to create social harmony and peaceful co-existence.

In keeping with the guiding principles of the UnitedFuture Party, we affirm that we are interested in creating a modern multicultural society which encourages social harmony and unity through respect for individual differences and cultural diversity.

New Zealand is a multi-racial and multi-religious society. Being critically aware of the crippling effect of communal tensions around the world, the UF Party will ensure that our policies are geared towards New Zealand giving importance to promoting and maintaining racial and religious harmony.

Our Ethnic Affairs policy will ensure that the provision of equality of opportunity for all New Zealanders to progress will continue unabated so that it will provide the broader context for the growth of social cohesion. We will continue to advocate for tolerance and respect for different cultures and religious beliefs allowing them to express freely without impinging on our laws and social norms. We will ensure that the core principles of multiculturalism, tolerance and equal opportunity for all will be the shining beacons of our nation. We want a country where everyone can hold their head up high, irrespective of religion, faith, belief, ethnicity, and social origin.

UnitedFuture will endeavour to listen to all ethnic groups in New Zealand and work together in ensuring that their valuable representations are heard on various issues.

It is UnitedFuture Policy to:

- Accept the recommendations of the Constitutional Advisory Panel to continue the "constitutional conversation". UnitedFuture will work with the government to ensure that ethnic communities are given opportunities to have a deeper understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi and tangata whenua;
- Allocate more resources to provide support for new migrants as they settle in New Zealand, so that they are able to integrate themselves well with the mainstream population. A steady stream of diverse ethnic communities have arrived in New Zealand by way of family/business migrations and through refugee intakes and made New Zealand their home (approximately 13% of the total population);
- Continue to advocate for equal employment opportunities for ethnic minorities, who are under-represented in public service, media and private businesses;

- Offer appropriate training and re-training for new migrants in relevant fields of work (e.g. nursing, child care and elderly care);
- Allocate funding to provide appropriate English classes for migrants to help them participate in civil society;
- Facilitate and support ethnic communities to initiate targeted programmes to educate their youth about their cultural roots and traditions;
- Advocate for government agencies and NGOs to engage with the different ethnic communities and provide them with culturally appropriate services to address family violence;
- Oppose the current Government's proposal to abolish the specific title and office of the Race Relations Commissioner. This will result in a loss of advocacy to question racially motivated actions, and runs counter to our commitment to promoting tolerance and understanding amongst the ethnic communities of New Zealand;
- Recognise that an aging population generates specific issues for ethnic communities (such as the need to integrate elderly migrants into the wider community), and work with communities on programmes and initiatives to help seniors feel valued in our society;
- Overhaul the various programmes and funding arrangements to assist migrant settlement to ensure they are appropriately targeted to the needs of ethnic communities, identify service gaps, and encourage integration and social cohesion.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

UnitedFuture is committed to an ethical foreign policy, based on the principles of international justice, human rights, human security and democracy. Our policy is therefore built on the principles of our country's constructive multilateral engagement with other states to build a safe and globally connected world, and to promote the freedom and equality of all its peoples as follows.

Key issues:

- Contributing to successful peacekeeping and peace building operations
- Encouraging economic development and political stability in the Pacific region
- Securing Free Trade Agreements with important trading partners

Human Security

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Promote international peace and human security in international affairs – the freedom from want and fear, oppression, hunger, disease and war;
- Retain New Zealand's nuclear-free status and international leadership on disarmament issues, actively striving to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons;
- Continue to advocate for disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical, nuclear and biological weapons and technologies and anti-civilian munitions such as cluster bombs and land mines;
- Monitor and fulfil New Zealand's obligations under human rights conventions;
- Continue to work towards the Millennium Development Goals and The International Development Targets;
- Establish overseas aid at 0.5% of GDP immediately and reach the accepted international millennium goal of 0.7% by 2020;
- Encourage young New Zealanders to volunteer overseas, including tasking MFAT to work with the US State Department on New Zealanders being able to have some involvement in the Peace Corps;
- Encourage the promotion and strengthening of democracy throughout the international community;
- Play an active role in the fight against violent terrorist organisations, corruption, money laundering, cyber-crime and drug and people trafficking;

- Reach a multi-party accord on ten year defence and capital equipment funding for the New Zealand Defence Force so that it is well equipped to meet peacekeeping, peace building, humanitarian and disaster relief operations. We believe the focus should be on 'the best small integrated defence force in the world';
- Fulfil New Zealand's commitment to refugees and encourage inward immigration of key workers and international students, whilst developing incentives for New Zealanders to stay in New Zealand.

Institutional and Multilateral Engagement

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Promote reform of the United Nations through broadening the membership of the Security Council, and the abolition of the veto;
- Play an active role in and support the United Nations and its agencies as the primary international organisation for resolving disputes, conflict and finding solutions to global problems;
- Actively promote the rights of new and emerging democracies to participate fully in the work of international organisations;
- Support the contribution of NGOs in issues of international development;
- Support free and fair trade and embrace free trade agreements and pacts where there is a reasonable opportunity for New Zealand to benefit, and where New Zealand's unique comparative advantages are preserved;
- Pursue Free Trade Agreements with key trading partners, with a particular focus on India, Japan, the US and Korea;
- Lobby for a better deal for NZ businesses and exporters, including the agricultural sector, with the expanded European Union;
- Fully support regular international and regional meetings (e.g. APEC and CHOGM) and support a bid for New Zealand to host the World Trade Expo within the next ten years;
- Emphasise our developing relationships with Asia and the Pacific Rim, while recognising historical links with the Commonwealth and other parts of the world;
- Continue to support the cancellation of third world debt. Investment by these nations in human development should take priority over debt repayments;
- Support the right to self-determination of the people of Taiwan and Tibet.

The Pacific

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Encourage the democratisation and development of Pacific nations;
- Assist in the peaceful resolution of Asia-Pacific issues by offering intermediary facilities, resources and expertise;
- Promote regional agreement on transnational law and order issues across the South Pacific;
- Support the Pacific Islands Forum in encouraging good governance, economic development and political stability in the Pacific Region.

IMMIGRATION

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Develop a 10-year population strategy to identify the impact of demographic changes on our society, the economy, and other areas of government policy, and to develop policies to minimise the costs and capitalise on benefits that these changes may bring;
- Prioritise the residency applications of those who have skills we need and a job offer that is relevant to those skills, and regularly update the priority occupations list;
- Devise comprehensive and integrated immigrant settlement programmes, in consultation with the Federation of Multicultural Councils, to ensure that all new immigrants receive full information and ongoing support on all aspects of New Zealand society, including language, customs, job placement programmes, health and social services;
- Focus efforts on ensuring that those who arrive in New Zealand under the family or humanitarian quotas are supported into viable training and employment opportunities, to enable them to obtain financial independence faster and to counter negative stereotypes about some migrant groups;
- Establish a one-stop Business Development Agency to help migrants in setting up their own businesses;
- Encourage all migrants to consider themselves as New Zealanders, by encouraging participation in community activities and pursuits amongst migrant groups, while supporting ethnic associations and providing positive opportunities for all New Zealanders to express their cultural heritage;
- Establish a retirement visa to allow parents of permanent residents and citizens to be sponsored to settle in New Zealand, provided the majority of immediate family members are already resident in New Zealand;
- Allow siblings of permanent residents and citizens more easy access to short-term visitors and limited purpose visas;
- Provide additional staffing resources to the Immigration Service to meet customer demand and speed up the applications process, especially in Auckland and at pressure points overseas;
- Increase resources for ESOL programmes to ensure that our newest residents can participate fully in education and life in New Zealand. Improving English language skills is a major factor in making friends outside migrants' own ethnic groups. Move away from classroom-based delivery to home tutoring or work-based lessons and give intensive English training for teachers already in immigrant communities so they can set up their own classes;

- Review the operations of NZQA to ensure that the process of formally recognising migrants' skills is effective and efficient;
- Ensure that advice and information is available to businesses to support them in hiring migrants to fill skill shortages, and support migrants with workshops and training to learn about the Kiwi work environment;
- Develop a global online service that matches potential skilled migrants with job opportunities in New Zealand to help fill critical skill shortages;
- Establish a specific employment placement service for refugees;
- Establish a nationally coordinated "mentor" programme whereby all those accepted for migration to New Zealand are put in touch with a trained volunteer mentor prior to arrival in New Zealand. The mentor will be able to discuss settlement issues and direct migrants to necessary specialist resources throughout the process of preparing to migrate and for the first 12 months in New Zealand;
- Increase the current refugee quota to 1,000 from the current 750 per annum.
- Allocate more resources to provide support for new migrants as they settle in New Zealand, so that they are able to integrate themselves well with the mainstream population;
- Continue to advocate for equal employment opportunities for ethnic minorities, who are under-represented in public service, media and private businesses;
- Offer appropriate training and re-training for new migrants in relevant fields of work (e.g. nursing, child care and elderly care);
- Allocate funding to provide appropriate English classes for migrants to help them participate in civil society;
- Facilitate and support ethnic communities to initiate targeted programmes to educate their youth about their cultural roots and traditions;
- Advocate for government agencies and NGOs to engage with the different ethnic communities and provide them with culturally appropriate services to address family violence;
- Overhaul the various programmes and funding arrangements to assist migrant settlement to ensure they are appropriately targeted to the needs of ethnic communities, identify service gaps, and encourage integration and social cohesion.

JUSTICE, POLICE AND CORRECTIONS

UnitedFuture believes that strong local communities are the building blocks of a successful nation. For this reason we will work to ensure that New Zealand communities are safe and considerate places where one can confidently raise a family free from the threat of violence and property damage or loss.

Police

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Ensure adequate police coverage of rural areas;
- Establish community safety plans with police, local bodies and communities, building off local knowledge and community relationships, and ensure that all households can receive information about local policing issues;
- Ensure that police target and monitor the persistent criminals in our communities, particularly gangs;
- Ensure that police co-ordinate closely with social service and child protection agencies in each community, including automatic referral of any criminal activity that involves children, to improve responses to domestic violence and child abuse;
- Establish a transparent Police staffing formula that ensures a minimum presence in all areas, yet allows for extra police to be re-deployed where the crime rate exceeds the national average;
- Encourage volunteer and community agencies to take a role in promoting a crime free society.

Support for Victims

When it comes to dealing with crime in New Zealand often the plight of the victim is overlooked. UnitedFuture is committed to upholding the rights of victims and putting in place a system that ensures the victims of crime are compensated for the emotional, physical and financial harm they have suffered.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Fully support victim restoration programmes for non-violent crimes to ensure those offenders and their families compensate victims for their losses and face up to the people they have hurt;
- Ensure that offenders complete their commitments under restorative justice contracts, and ensure that victims are kept informed of progress if they wish to be;

- Ensure that victims are informed about an offender's criminal history before they participate in restorative justice programmes such as family group conferences;
- Ensure that Courts make the welfare and safety of victims, their families and the public paramount when considering bail applications;
- Recover reparation to victims through a restitution order at sentencing that would automatically deduct at least 10% of an offender's earnings;
- Ensure that the Parole Board consider the impact on victims and the community when considering the conditions placed on parolees (e.g. restrictions on where they will be located);
- Ensure that Parole Board decision-making processes are made available for scrutiny, and are subject to appeal by victims;
- Support moves to allow the Parole Board discretion to decide when offenders can re-appear for parole proceedings and allow them to defer hearings for up to five years;
- Consider parole applications for non-violent offences through a restorative approach with direct involvement of the victim;
- Promote greater public understanding of the law surrounding self-defence so that people know what they can and cannot do to protect themselves, their families and their property.

Early Intervention

UnitedFuture strongly believes in the theory of having 'a fence at the top of the cliff rather than an ambulance at the bottom' when it comes to dealing with young offenders or at-risk youth. It is a fact that most violent and serious crime in New Zealand is committed by people who are young or have previously been convicted at a young age.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Improve access to effective parenting programmes for a wider range of parents and parenting stages;
- Ensure that character education programmes, also known as values education and life-skills education, are established in full consultation with parents and staff and operate in all of New Zealand's schools. Character education is about incorporating universal values such as honesty, respect for others and the law, tolerance, fairness, caring and social responsibility into a school's culture;
- Get tough on truancy by establishing a national, centralised database to track student enrolment and attendance;

- Enable education authorities to seek 'parenting orders' requiring the parents of chronic truants to attend parenting classes, as well as 'parenting contracts', whereby the parent and the school agree on steps they will take to improve the child's behaviour;
- Expand the Social Workers in Schools Programme beyond decile 1-3 schools;
- Use reparations, electronic monitoring and work on community projects (e.g. removing graffiti, house construction) as initial sentencing options for youth offenders, established through contracts drawn up between the police, the offender and their family, and backed up by harsher supervision for compliance failures;
- Support NGO mentoring programmes, such as the Buddy programme, whereby at-risk youth lacking responsible role models are in regular contact with others in the community who can have a positive influence on their behaviour, and the behaviour of their families;
- Increase the number of truancy officers, especially in areas with persistent high rates of truancy;
- Resource alternative education providers to work with at-risk youth who have dropped out of mainstream schooling;
- Ensure that schools implement anti-bullying strategies, safe classroom programmes and anti-drug policies in consultation with the police and other agencies;
- Increase funding for appropriate early intervention supervision and diversionary programmes for youth at risk;
- Extend that any reparations, apologies or punishment agreed to by a child or youth at family group conferences are enforced;
- Establish links with the business community to mentor and support at risk young people;
- Foster co-operation and information sharing between police, courts, schools, community groups and social services when dealing with at-risk families and youth;
- Increase funding for adult literacy programmes, and ensure that every community education centre runs such programmes;
- Increase resources for mental health professionals to ensure that those who may pose a risk to others or themselves are adequately assessed and treated.

See also UnitedFuture Policy on Education – [Creating a Safe Learning Environment](#)

Providing a Co-ordinated Response to Offending

Smooth running of our court, prison and probation systems is crucial if we are to successfully manage the implementation of justice in New Zealand.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Allow treatment options to be incorporated into sentencing, combined with the use of further sanctions for continued abuse of drugs and other re-offending;
- Actively promote non-judicial case resolution (mediation or arbitration) for civil cases, making it a compulsory first step prior to court action;
- Develop the concept of community courts for low-level criminal cases, as advanced by the Law Commission, to put the victim back in control of the process, and seek to bring about mediated resolutions between offender and victim while ensuring that the need for societal condemnation of actions (the punitive element) is factored in;
- Continue to tender prison management to both state and private providers, and ensure that prison construction costs are minimised;
- Ensure that prison inmates undertake employment while inside at 'normal' pay rates with deductions for tax, cost of board and keep, restitution to victims, fines, and their own family;
- Ensure that prison inmates participate in educational programmes for literacy, numeracy, employment skills and character;
- Ensure that prison inmates are provided with co-ordinated re-integration services upon release, including stricter supervision regimes, mandatory drug-testing and drug treatment options, mandatory community work for those without paid work, and access to suitable and stable accommodation, with accountability mechanisms for enforcement failures;
- Increase the resources available to Environmental and Scientific Research (ESR) to ensure the speedy analysis of evidence;
- Ensure that offenders are brought before a court within 48 hours of being charged;
- Ensure that courts are presented with all information relevant to the case, including inviting the accused to give his or her version of events or risk an adverse inference being drawn;
- Introduce stronger penalties for failure to disclose all relevant evidence in civil cases;
- Monitor the television viewing of prison inmates to ensure that it is non-violent and educational;

- Ensure that the Community Probation Service is sufficiently staffed to enforce release conditions and enhance public safety;
- Ensure that there are sufficient secure places in Youth Justice facilities;
- Establish a taskforce to consider the management/treatment of people with mental illness in the criminal justice system;
- Improve co-operation between New Zealand and Australia to manage citizens that commit crime overseas, including notification at sentencing, and legislative co-operation to ensure that parole and post-sentencing regimes may be enforced on repatriated nationals;
- Ensure that all residents without New Zealand citizenship who are found guilty of a violent offence are deported as soon as possible;
- Support the 'Friends of the Court' (amicus curiae) system for Environment Court hearings. The 'Friends of the Court' provides independent and objective advice to assist the court in making a decision. This makes it easier for community groups and NGOs, relieving them of the cost of court proceedings and having to employ expert consultants.

Reducing Recidivism

It is a fact that the vast majority of inmates in New Zealand prisons are repeat offenders or are future repeat offenders. UnitedFuture is committed to working with NGO organisations to reduce the rate of recidivism in New Zealand. This does not mean that we are soft on crime, rather, we want to stop more crime from being committed.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Make drug and alcohol rehabilitation courses available for inmates who have been identified with drug or alcohol addictions;
- Make literacy programmes available for those inmates who have been identified as having difficulty with reading and writing, in an effort to more successfully integrate inmates back into society upon release;
- Introduce tougher minimum penalties for child abuse and neglect, child sexual offences and child pornography;
- Concurrent sentences are not to be a default position, with Judges to use their discretion to recommend concurrent or cumulative sentences;
- Make suitable employment and accommodation integral components of the parole process. One of the major causes of recidivism is the lack of opportunities available to inmates once they leave prison. Financial stability, job prospects and adequate accommodation are prerequisites for 'a new start';

- Introduce minimum sentences that more accurately reflect the nature of offending, the impact on victims, and the social denunciation of crime;
- Encourage the use of creative and individualised parole provisions (e.g. curfews, weekend detainment, community work) to assist in the rehabilitation of the offender;
- Ensure that parole conditions for sex offenders include monitoring, curfews, residential assessments and ongoing treatment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

UnitedFuture recognises that it is through local government that communities can provide for their social, environmental, economic and cultural needs in the first instance.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Review the funding and purpose of Local Government;
- Reduce the number of Territorial Authorities where practical by incentivising local government councils to work together;
- Incentivise the increased use of shared services amongst Local Authorities;
- Require the Ministry for the Environment to take a more active role in ensuring that Regional Councils perform their environmental monitoring and enforcement responsibilities under the Resource Management Act;
- Conduct regular reviews of the Resource Management Act's operation, and ensure that local authorities are given the necessary resources and administrative support to carry out their statutory role;
- Progressively align the electoral boundaries for all other elected bodies, such as District Health Boards, with those of Regional Councils;
- Collect EQC and fire levies as a component of property owner's rates instead of their insurance premiums (to prevent 'free riding' on the system by the uninsured);
- Initiate a programme of citizenship and civics education in schools and communities, including some consideration of local government, to address low voter participation;
- Continue to support the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs so it can continue addressing the local employment needs of youth.

Localism

It is time for a fundamental review of the relationship between local and central government, about the extent to which local authorities are able to set their own policy targets and aims. New Zealand has few checks on central executive power, and for all of the talk of devolution, the reality is that since the early 1990s successive governments have centralised more and more activity at the expense of local communities. Although MMP has improved the checks and balances, "localism" can also help diffuse power whilst keeping the system efficient and effective for citizens and taxpayers.

United Future is strongly committed to promoting debate about a localist agenda, that would enable local communities to take more responsibility for their own actions and priorities, with central government in a supporting, not dictating, role.

That means central and local government working together in a new partnership of equals to achieve regional potential, and welding that together into the overall national interest. It means flattening out the top down approach of the last couple of decades, and recognising that both central and local government have equally important but quite distinct role to play.

There are a number of policy areas where local authorities could have a greater role in decision-making, including:

- *Education*: planning for the number of schools, teacher/student ratios, local policies on how to achieve national standards;
- *Social Development*: local welfare policies and goals, provision through national policies such as Whanau Ora;
- *Transport*: local petrol levies, more input on which projects are prioritised, greater devolution of national transport funding;
- *Environment*: national bottom lines able to be strengthened locally, local environmental priorities;
- *Housing*: make it easier for local authorities to develop own housing areas, alternatives to rating, more say over state housing design and location.

TREATY OF WAITANGI

UnitedFuture recognises the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of New Zealand and believes it still has an important role to play. The Treaty provides the framework for a unique relationship between tangata whenua and the many other people of diverse cultures who make New Zealand their home. UnitedFuture is committed to addressing Treaty of Waitangi issues in a way that benefits everyone and believes that the first step is the fair and reasonable settlement of legitimate Treaty grievances. This needs to be accompanied by a process which will lead to achieving together a common understanding of the future role of the Treaty in our nation.

The Claims Settlement Process

UnitedFuture supports the current process of resolving genuine historical Treaty grievances. While there has been considerable progress towards the resolution of the many claims that have been lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal, we believe this process needs to be completed as soon as possible.

It is UnitedFuture policy to:

- Commit to the settlement of outstanding historical grievances, and resource the claims process to ensure that this becomes a reality;
- Ensure that settlements fit within the norms of a modern liberal democratic society – i.e. they should not give one class of citizens' greater rights than others but should recognize the unique place that hapū, whānau and iwi have had in our country;
- Ensure that settlements with iwi and other large natural groupings recognise hapū and whānau structures where appropriate;
- Ensure that, as a pre-requisite to treaty settlements, robust governance structures are established by iwi and urban trusts for the long term benefit of the recipients;
- Ensure that all Crown agencies are aware of the need to assist Chief Crown Negotiators and the Office of Treaty Settlements in developing redress options;
- Speed up the process of ascertaining iwi interest in surplus or abandoned Crown property (e.g. closed school sites) to enable the future of these properties to be resolved;
- Encourage iwi to obtain financial advice to help manage settlement redress assets and cash so they can achieve their goals for their members;
- Work in partnership with iwi to develop former Crown land, including land returned through Treaty settlements, for housing;

- Establish a new national day on which all New Zealanders celebrate the unique gift we possess by being part of this nation. This will be separate from Waitangi Day, which will also be retained and celebrated.