

# Preparing for our Future

## *An informal survey*

**It is obvious that the environment we live and work in is changing fast, posing both threats and opportunities. Peak oil scenarios, climate change, financial recession, government actions, terrorism and social disruption are already affecting us in various ways. And the problems of traffic congestion and power disruption, together with the costs of living, working and doing business, are all becoming more severe. But there are positive changes that we could take advantage of as well...**

It's also obvious that more could be done to prepare for the changes that are coming.

As a first step, I figured that it would be useful to share what people are already doing and thinking and decided to send four questions to as many names in my address book as was practical. A total of 815 names (including public and private organisations, community groups and organisations, and individuals) received an introductory email that went on to ask the following questions:

1. Do the issues we face require urgent action?
2. What are the top three issues that your organisation needs to prepare for?
3. What actions are you already taking to prepare for the coming threats and opportunities?
4. What would help you prepare for the future we face?

The option of requesting the report (without answering any questions) was also provided.

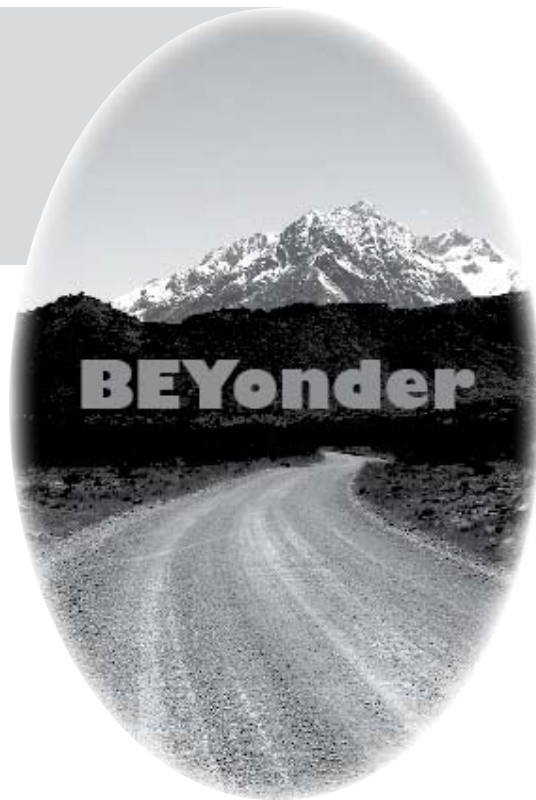
Responses were received from 61 people and organisations, a 7% response rate. These responses came from a wide cross section of New Zealand's population. Many are already active in the community (15 responses, 26%) and a further eleven were concerned individuals. Local government accounted for ten responses and employers and national government contributed nine responses each. The remainder were from education providers (4) and 'think tanks' (2).

Although 22 only wanted the report and felt that they were unable to contribute (*no time, we're public service and so can't comment, and so on*), the fact that they responded showed some interest. As one of these respondents said:

*The sharing of information will play a major role in how we deal with challenges we face in future. I appreciate your efforts to get some dialogue happening on the issues you mention.*

*I also appreciate your recognising the potential for positive change - I agree that we will find opportunities among challenges we face.*

The other 37 responses are provided on the following pages, grouped by question.



This survey and report was prepared by Bevis England, to share information and perhaps initiate further action. No respondents can be identified and the opinions they express are not necessarily shared by Bevis England.

Comments and suggestions are welcome, to [bevis@telework.co.nz](mailto:bevis@telework.co.nz)

## Question 1: Do the issues we face require urgent action?

It was no surprise that 19 respondents believed that urgent action was required: 8 simply responded Yes and a further 4 underlined their agreement with comments like of course, absolutely, No question. Other responses included:

*Yes, yes and yes. I believe that Rajendra Pachauri, Chairman of the IPCC summed it up well. He said, "If there's no action before 2012, that's too late. What we do in the next two to three years will determine our future. This is the defining moment."*

*Yes, to give confidence to the community that their wellbeing is being considered or should be a focus for wide consultative discussions.*

*The urgency is increasing as the problems grow.*

*I think they require urgent and wise action. However, there seems to be panic in the atmosphere due to the media hype.*

*Yes, the issues we face do require urgent action and the National Government is not moving fast enough to address these issues. I cannot believe the little they are doing compared with even Australia. However, I don't want them to borrow overseas just to give a small portion of the population a very small tax cut - that is making future generations pay. A tax cut will mean nothing. They should be investing in creating jobs (sorry I could go on for a while here).*

*Yes, urgent action indeed. And a general shift from mitigation/sustainability to adaptation/resilience (though not entirely abandoning m/s)*

*There are no surprises that they do. The recession is already here, climate change is already here. We need to address the effects of our working world, i.e. work smarter and take effective actions*

A further 9 responses were less categorical including comments such as "Some of the serious ones do, yes", "Yes, some more urgent than others, of course", and "Yes, probably but not sure what...". Additional responses included:

*You raise a very wide spectrum of issues and undoubtedly most of them do require action. Some like power disruption and traffic congestion probably have a more urgent or short-term focus, and with others like social disruption we are probably dealing with issues that have deeper causes and will require a concerted effort over time.*

*Some do others are more systemic and so require more deliberative and thoughtful responses. Urgent issues are to try and reassure individuals, and to ensure that the economy is flexible enough to make the changes it needs to make without being restricted.*

*I think it is generally accepted that climate change will lead to regulated transitioning to energy saving processes and products, and the development of renewable energy sources.*

*New Zealand needs particularly to point to acceptable features in this regard to support tourism and agriculture revenues. We also need to anticipate immigration and security issues which are likely to arise from climate change and water scarcity.*

*F&P illustrates the consequences of doing too little too late. However, it is also probably still the case that the main issues I see are ones of importance rather than urgency.*

*Action has already been initiated against some of the risks you've identified. All the others require action too but their degree of urgency varies.*

Four respondents recognised the complexity of the issues we face and underlined the need for wise and thoughtful action:

*Yes, but it is more important to make the right decisions which are strategic and place us in the strongest and best possible competitive position for the future. So short term we have to manage social issues surrounding reduced incomes and redundancies, but also focus on how we can be competitive in the long term.*

*They require thoughtful action and they also require multiple strategies. The problems are so serious that we cannot afford to put all our eggs in one basket, we have to run multiple approaches, some of which will be more successful than others and we need to be exceptionally clear and honest about which they are and trend towards more of those and less of others without actually closing down those that appear to be less successful because in dynamic situations we will need the ability to adapt and having choices in policy and economic and social actions is critical.*

*I am opposed to "urgent" action because it verges on reflexivity which will be based on previous assumptions and strategies and they are demonstrably wrong. What we need, ahead of action is leadership in thought and speech. The day our leadership openly embraces the problems and lays them out clearly and in full and without bias, we will be on the road to making the right moves. Right now we are still parked up, drunk and half dressed in a lay by.*

*Yes - but it needs to be considered and well informed action not a knee-jerk short fix reaction. With modern technology it is even easier to be overwhelmed by "mob" mentality and we could all be persuaded to jump off the cliff. While there are certainly many more sources of information there is little support yet for people to be able to understand and use it wisely.*

The remaining five responses introduced some additional perspectives:

*For local government there is not a sense of urgency in the issues described. We continue with our 10 to 15 year LTCCP's that don't address any of these issues and are aimed at ratepayer calming more than the effective*

governance of a city (my views and certainly not shared by those in charge).

First question I am happy to leave up to the politicians. I believe the biggest companies in the world have put us in the position we're in with their greed and I frankly feel like there's not much I can do about it all so I buy NZ made where possible, shop at the local farmers market and live my life.

I guess to me the 'issues' are perceived differently by

different folk: many people, for example, MAKE money in times of economic depression etc

The issues need to be addressed / discussed by the thought leaders with their "tribes". Get the knowledgeable to evangelise about the issues and possible solutions...

Issues of the day need to be more eloquently expressed to the everyday person. We should be expecting education and information that is as readily accessible as trashy woman's magazines.

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## Question 2. What are the top three issues that our community needs to prepare for?

When you ask 37 people what they think the major issues are, you get a huge range of answers. Some of the more than 125 answers to this question reflected specific personal concerns, some looked beyond this at our community and nation and others took a more philosophical approach. A few respondents said that many of these issues were so closely inter-connected that it was difficult to prioritise any particular issue.

The **economic system** and the current catastrophe were mentioned by the majority of respondents (32) although the way this concern was expressed varied considerably:

*The current global financial crisis*

*Risk around business and income certainty*

*Achieving financial and employment stability*

*Profit loss of many companies*

*A fundamental review of our financial systems and institutions which will have long-term consequences*

*Keeping the strength of our balance sheet in reserve*

*Lack of savings and long term investment capital*

*Employment and Unemployment*

*Poverty is going to be rife in the not too distant future. The wealthy will get wealthier, but the poor will be significantly fighting to survive,*

*I think there is some effort being taken especially by the larger funders who are getting stricter with money lending, so there will be less to go round.*

*Our economy is structured to consume and cause environmental damage and this link needs to be broken.*

*Economy may be the most important depending on the unravelling of the global monetary system*

*Monetary issues*

*Globalisation*

*Localised exchange systems,*

*Likely reduction in material standards of living and perhaps even disappearance of of the materialistic, consumerist lifestyle (e.g. lavish supplies and/or wide selection of key*

*resources; mobility; entertainment... may become history... but better things might come in their place...?)*

*Interest free finance (e.g. local savings and loans funds)*

*Tightening of the budget strings*

*Less cash flowing around. This will be seen directly by increased unemployment and hardship from reduced income, redundancy and reduced employment opportunities.*

*Uncertain prospects for income - sales revenue. We are not in a 'retail consumer' market and our sales could actually increase, but we have no way of knowing - so we need to plan for extreme flexibility.*

The second major concern was **climate change** and climate security, mentioned by eleven respondents.

This was followed by a range of **human resource** issues, mentioned by eight respondents.

*People Capability*

*Retaining important staff*

*Maximum flexibility from employees; i.e. if we cannot maintain current payroll levels for a period we need a flexible approach to maintain our workforce – while actually asking them to cover more ground.*

*Misalignment between workforce training and demand, including aging baby boomers who will not be able to afford retirement*

*Education- we need a more educated and skilled workforce*

*The scarcity of skills will remain a factor. The higher skilled are at this time less affected by business closure so good people are still hard to find. I think that when we find them we are better prepared to meet their demands in terms of working conditions (equipment, location, hours and salary). Council reaction to the downturn will also be to squeeze salaries for existing staff while still having to meet the market for new employees. Staff turnover may not rise significantly due to a depressed labour market but per capita productivity may suffer.*

*Exchanging labour for technology is less likely to occur because of the significantly different implementation costs.*

**Peak oil** scenarios and resource depletion were mentioned by eight respondents.

**Food** costs and security of supply were mentioned by seven respondents.

It was interesting that **government actions** or the lack of appropriate government action was mentioned by eight respondents, most of whom were in government employment.

*Significant lag in government response to traffic issues - roads, public transport, parking*

*Change of Government - changing Government priorities*

*The government needs to do their bit and should focus on removing transport congestion, improving business efficiency (high speed internet), reducing unnecessary bureaucracy which both impedes business productivity and burdens the taxpayer with unnecessary costs.*

*Local government reform - a short term issue with destabilizing impacts - maybe all will be clearer following the Commissions report release at the end of March*

*Regional Governance and the opportunities to improve the governance and the effectiveness of Auckland*

*In my area the economy has killed most property development so we as a Council become less active in promoting redevelopment of town centres and developing brown and green field stuff. Renewal capital spend may also be deferred leaving mainly reactive maintenance.*

*How we manage the growth and development of our City to ensure that we retain the quality of the natural environment and the quality of our neighbourhoods, while providing lifestyle choice and the range of facilities that will make us an attractive place to live and do business in and visit.*

The reliability of our **energy supply** concerned six respondents.

*I guess on a personal basis, the misuse and non-availability of energy is a worry. Here in New Zealand, we have a "non-nuclear" stance that has been somewhat perverted from its original intent. The real issue was nuclear weapons - how did this get realigned to be anti-nuclear power? Safe nuclear power is available, and a realistic route to cheaper power. I can't see it happening in NZ for a while.*

**Water** security and costs was mentioned by five people.

**Family issues** were considered important by four respondents.

*Domestic violence, theft, murder will be on the rise, Things that we are not really looking forward to.*

*The breakdown of the family structure: I do think family issues top the list & bringing kids up responsibly in a loving environment is the greatest responsibility any of us have. But the extent to which that is being done properly seems to be lessening over time.*

*We need to develop strategies to address our aging population needs.*

**Transport** concerned five respondents.

*I guess this is linked to energy as well - One has only to be on the Auckland motorway during peak traffic to observe an enormous amount of energy being wasted, carrying people nowhere at very low speed. Our transport infrastructure has been crumbling for some time, and I think we missed the boat back in the 60s when Robbie's rapid-rail system was shot down. Thank goodness his efforts on the sewage system "bore fruit". (Dodgy metaphor, I know!)*

*Increasing time wasted because of traffic congestion*

*Lack of transport*

**Social and community interaction** was raised by four respondents

*The cost of staying connected (not just telecomm costs, but also the time cost of proliferating social networks)*

*How to live together comfortably as communities of different people,*

*How to interact in possibly a hostile world*

*Community building*

The **way we think** about these issues (and how our opinions are formed) concerned four people.

*Lack of critical thinking skills in general public resulting in knee-jerk reactions*

*Businesses too small in their thinking and/or resources to develop international revenues*

*Counter-information - the spread of weirder and weirder beliefs among the moderately well-educated. - religion, homoeopathy, various types of faith-healing, and of course the outright lies that are occasionally promulgated via the internet as being a real and realistic world-view. How can we expect people to interpret real information when their information structures are founded on such shonky bases?*

*Personal sense of clarity of personal vision, collective vision and the feeling we HAVE a vehicle that WILL support us towards fulfilling this vision*

*Adjusting without restructuring*

Challenges to public **security and safety** including natural disaster, war and terrorism were mentioned three times as were issues related to **housing** and shelter.

Personal **stress** and worry was an issue for two respondents and a general uncertainty about the future also concerned two people:

*The top issue is just uncertainty about what/how world 'systems' will recover or re-invent themselves (e.g. economic systems, societal structures etc).*

Two people also mentioned the challenge of identifying and profiting from **new opportunities**.

*The recession is - I hope - a short-term evil; the real question is, what will happen after that?*

*Taking advantage of the opportunities that the economic situation is throwing up. We have a raft of new business opportunities, but the challenge is finding the time to cater for them properly. Now would be a great time to take on Interns.*

**Environmental contamination** and standards were mentioned by only three respondents.

**Health** and the likelihood of a pandemic were mentioned by three people:

*The effects of the economic catastrophe, climate change and resource depletion will make an outbreak more likely, harder to detect and impossible to respond to.*

There were two mentions of **drugs** and **gangs** and their influence on society.

Two respondents mentioned preparing for our future through increased **infrastructure investment**, with one expressing it as follows:

*The core physical and social infrastructure services for the city to ensure that we are an international city of world class standing. This includes a range of issues ... all of which have significant projects underway.*

And a lack of **time** was an issue for two respondents:

*There is so much to do and not enough time. I find that I already feel I have done so much in the first two months without really doing much.*

*Time Management (stop and smell the roses - take time out to think)*

And then there was a range of issues that were mentioned only once. These included becoming self-sufficient before it's forced on us, maintaining our rights to free communication and movement, presumption of innocence, etc., educating our children to be creators, not consumers, and social unrest:

*People striking like in England against foreigners getting all the jobs because they will work for less. They don't mind earning less just to get a job because they are all living in the one house (10-12+ family members) and can have half a dozen incomes in the one house so they go after the low paid jobs that used to be the domain of ordinary NZers, so ordinary NZers are left without jobs. (sorry won't go on here either).*

Other issues mentioned only once included people using their power willy nilly for the wrong reasons, guns in society in NZ, dependence on the welfare state, gaining youth engagement in all these issues, and wastage/efficiency:

*We need to reduce all wastage that leads to a lack of productivity and adds cost. The private sector will focus on this themselves and where they can but Government must also play its part.*

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### **Question 3. What actions are you already taking to prepare for the coming threats and opportunities?**

The answers to the preceding question suggest that there is much that worries us. But we are a resilient people and many of us are already taking steps to prepare ourselves.

#### **Personal Finance**

*Living within our means/Continuing to live simply, mentioned five times*

*Paying off debt as fast as possible, mentioned three times*

*Increasing savings, mentioned three times*

*Buying big ticket items now, while prices are low and we have the cash*

#### **Home and Garden**

*Growing more food, mentioned six times*

*Energy efficient housing (double glazing, insulation, solar power), mentioned five times*

*Recycling, mentioned three times*

*Saving water and power, mentioned twice*

*Running a worm farm*

*I have dropped out of the paid workforce (my wife still has a job) so that we can;*

- a. *Develop a serious emergency action plan that includes access to food, energy, medication and cash that will enable us to isolate on site for at least 6 months*
- b. *Install 8,000 litres of rainwater storage, with filters under my house*
- c. *Install solar hot water heating*
- d. *We are working on buying a "Green Plug" PV power management system to support b and c in the case of network failures in power and water either intermittently or, in the case of a pandemic, permanently for extended periods*
- e. *We have a gas hob for cooking that runs off bottled gas and we have at least 2 full 9kg tanks in addition to the one in use. Each tank gives at least 5 months cooking.*
- f. *We have a wood stove (thinking about upgrading to a wood oven) and my nephew in law and I are working on splitting and stacking 5 year's supply for it by the end of the summer.*
- g. *We are running a coppicing experiment that will see about 30 eucalypt trees around the borders of our*

- property growing 700-1000 kilos of wood a year for the longer term sustainability of the wood fire
- h. We have converted a small kitchen garden that we inherited into about 50 square meters of permaculture (eventually) beds that have been producing all our greens for over a year and are now starting to produce starch crops (potatoes, swedes, turnips) as well as tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, cucumbers, corn, melons, pumpkins and chillis, plus a wide range of herbs, companion flowers etc. We will be adding a fruit and nut orchard this winter and next summer will experiment with quinoa and Amaranth as grains. We have also bought a chicken coop and will hope to have that in operation mid winter. (I have photos of most of this if you are interested)
  - i. Having disbelieved the BS from the financial experts we have paid off our mortgage and saved some money that we are now assiduously turning into real stuff, including tools, supplies such as wire, fastenings, hoses, irrigation systems and timber, with the objective of spending into the deflation so that we have very little cash left when the hyper inflationary phase kicks in.
  - j. We have plans drawn up for extensions to our house (to be paid from savings and completed by later this year) that will enable us to accommodate up to 8 people without stepping on each other's toes should it be necessary and the economic crisis gets bad enough.

### Transport choices

Minimising travel (including telework), mentioned seven times

Using more efficient transport (including hybrid cars), mentioned three times

Planning travel to avoid congestion

I have moved closer to public transport and my workplace.

### Personal

Staying positive and optimistic, mentioned twice

Maintaining healthy living habits, mentioned twice

Upgrading my personal skills, personal responsibility; and a personal sense of clarity of personal and collective vision, mentioned twice

Living in New Zealand

Buying locally sourced products and produce

Actively promoting energy efficiency and renewables

Believing that threats only exists if 'I' feel I have something to lose, and that too in the bigger sense is subjective

Being open to new ideas and challenges

Looking for a piece of land that provides a reliable supply of water, food, shelter and energy

I am standing for Parliament in an attempt to influence legislation.

I am reducing my personal and my family's carbon footprint.

Reducing consumerism

Caring for others around me

Looking at every way we can be part of a solution / minimisation of the negative effects

Keeping myself informed

I've made a self-reproducing machine that can fabricate useful devices and is Open Sourced.

### In Business:

Aggressive recruitment, mentioned two times

Reducing business expenses

Maintaining tight control on staff numbers

Working more effectively (looking at ways of achieving more with less

Investing in business infrastructure

Improved business monitoring

Staff training/development

Flexible work arrangements, mentioned twice

Business flexibility (balancing fixed and variable costs)

Advising on how to maximise capital utilisation in business

Preparing for opportunities

New business investment

Providing support for aspiring exporters

Concentrating on business tools/products that are versatile, multi-purpose and reusable, and that do not have expensive third-party costs

Trying to keep up to date with IT innovations

Developing alliances with academia

Entered into a cycle of future planning - 'Streamlining' is the new buzz word

Running businesses as efficiently as possible and gearing them conservatively.

We have altered our sales strategy to a lower price, higher volume model, but with a recurring revenue component.

We are testing new market opportunities. Our challenge is finding the time to follow up with the work required to take advantage of the opportunities that look like they will lead to revenue.

We have always managed a very 'tight ship'; i.e. on top of debtors etc; have no spare resource; and have managers on variable monthly salaries. So we are almost as well prepared as we can be. Our main action is working out how we can take advantage of what we see as a major business opportunity.

To be honest I think we are getting too bogged down in what is wrong and what is going to happen next and creating our own problems. My view, and our board's, is to cut expenses and get on with it and stop navel gazing on what might happen. I belong to a business group that feels the same; there is too much waiting to see what is going to happen and who is going to help us. Look after yourself and keep your expenses down and eyes open for opportunities which are happening as many business's take their eye off the ball and spend more time reading the papers than running their business's.

### In 'Government'

Working on new urban designs

Community building

On behalf of the communities we serve, we have developed short and long term plans to address most of the issues you raise. We are in the early stages of developing a ten-year plan for our city, focussed on council spending, that takes account of these issues. It is based on a strategic direction for the city laid down and refined over the past several decades, with themes like promotion of tourism, investment in public transport, preservation of our green environment, and nurturing of the arts.

We are not really doing anything much to prepare - its more of a wait and see and then act.

Opposition to change is what we are doing.

We have an extensive focus on a range of issues that impact the matters mentioned above. Our strategic plan focuses on seven core areas, namely our economic prosperity, our natural environment, our built environment, lifestyle choice, community development, transportation and having an efficient, capable and user-friendly council. These are set out on our web site...

### In Education

Trying to educate children to succeed

Teaching the value of real data and facilitating the transition from data to wisdom

None, except studying and lecturing on the matter... and occasionally enjoying the party particularly consciously while it lasts, so that the memory of it 10 or 20 years from now is vivid... ;-)

**Note:** A number of respondents are already working in the field of "sustainability", educating and networking prospective solutions, developing programmes to enhance our welfare and security, establishing a community garden, working with the community to reduce household impacts on the environment, supporting a housing coordinator role, delivering services to reach youth rather than them going out to reach the services, building alliances to support neighbourhood action, organising a potato crop for a local food bank, establishing interest free eco-housing, driving a major environmental exhibition, driving the development of Transition Towns, teaching permaculture, and establish learning opportunities for sustainable living.

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## Question 4. What would help you prepare for the future we face?

I don't know what would help me prepare for the future apart from what I am already doing.

The ability to foresee the future, to predict the degree of down turn in international trade and travel and to be able to predict, with some certainty, when the markets will start to recover

There were many ideas about what could help us take the actions we need. Many respondents wanted leadership, greater investment, communication, incentives, while others wanted help or had some more specific suggestions..

**Leadership** and its various components were mentioned fifteen times, including such comments as:

A Plan.

A clear strategy

Governance

Sensible, well justified and consistent policies from the government to lower risk

Knowing we have intelligent leadership - personnel and structures available.

More people who "get it"- who understand that we need to be taking action now. If these people included those with the more immediate power to make changes that would make it easier.

Having a shared end point and understanding of approaches across a diverse range of stakeholders

The knowledge that the global challenges are actually being taken seriously by politicians - we don't want to see them fiddling (time as well as the books) while Rome burns

A supportive government who can see the benefit that companies like ours can bring to the rest of NZ business - in terms of productivity improvement.

Provide moral leadership from government to focus on, encourage and incentivise products and services that are beneficial to people, and to tax and discourage destructive products and activities.

Australia keeps coming up with great ideas and incentives - why can't NZ?

I would just like to see more action from the government to help employers and businesses keep running.

Clear government strategy on both short and long term objectives.

That our community leadership starts to focus on the things that matter, food and energy security, elimination of wasteful and destructive activities, minimising resource depletion, public transport, rapidly available primary health care and climate change mitigation (we are going to get big changes, not to prepare is totally irresponsible, to keep on "questioning" it is nigh on treason).

Thirteen mentioned **investment**. Four respondents wanted to see electrification and continued improvement of the public transport system. Other comments included:

*Funding*

*We need more wind farms and hopefully tidal generators.*

*Investing in change capability.*

*Investment – to take advantage of the opportunity in NZ and offshore.*

*A massive investment by the government into new, resilient, localised, decentralised... forms of infrastructure, into re-skilling of labour for the new technologies, and into public education about what our 'transitional' lifestyles are likely to be, why 'energy descent' is necessary and feasible, and why all this is not such a disaster after all - unless we make it so*

*The areas of NZ that are suffering drought actually get quite a lot of rain - but there is no infrastructure in place to harvest and store that rain.*

*Government funding for the kind of work that needs doing (holistic and not silo based)- some of this is happening in small ways in a few places*

*If the government created work which supported the transition, then they would go down in history as visionary.*

*Encourage research into clean energy and clean technology.*

**Communication** was also identified as an important aid, and was mentioned nine times, including the following:

*At a personal level I believe that detailed clear information is important.*

*Working with adequate forums for constructive change*

*Working with appropriate Education facilities which are preparing people for sustainable lifestyles with voting and consumer options*

*We need to understand that we only have a limited carbon budget and we need to know how much of that budget we have used. An associated idea is that we should be informed by the power companies how much of their power is produced from sustainable sources and by the producers of goods what CO2 has been released due to their manufacture and transportation.*

*Effective communication with Government*

*Better access to politicians: They are abysmally educated and prepared for the times that are upon us.*

*A public discourse that acknowledges and encompasses some reality instead of this market-based fantasy and addiction to growth*

The nine who mentioned **financial incentives** included tax breaks for self-sufficiency and:

*Greater funding to community organisations for community driven initiatives; including encouraging business growth at a more localised level*

*Government recognition of the value of economic diesel cars & incentivising their use instead of discouraging them via ridiculous road user charges*

*Support for backyard and community gardening.*

*Increase in production of local produce and rewards for buying/selling locally (not too sure what that looks like, but we need to be exporting/importing less in the future somehow)*

The three who wanted **help** included the following:

*Help – at a strategy level and at a market support level to process the transactions. We are well covered from a technical and operations perspective.*

*Effective prioritisation methodologies*

Other specific actions that were mentioned included:

*Financial security and job security*

*Better policing, including clampdowns on drugs, guns and gangs (mentioned three times)*

*Encouraging people to be responsible for themselves in health, behaviour, and financially, showing respect for themselves, others, and the environment, mentioned twice*

*Better integration and joining up of services for the elderly, mentioned twice*

*Improved efficiency of houses would help, mentioned twice*

*The protection of New Zealand from large overseas corporate interests,*

*The removal of payment to families for doing nothing*

*A sense of urgency re Climate change across all parties and sectors*

*Good health, skills and a positive attitude.*

*Real clean and green country (not just a PR statement)*

*Greater financial awareness in all people;*

*Reduce or remove advertising for destructive products such as alcohol.*

*Stuff like local green currencies that enable people to discover and exchange work and resources without having to "have a job".*

*Discourage all gambling.*

*Access to cheaper alternative fuels*

*Greater acceptance at work of working from home plus flexible commuting hours*

*Increased availability of affordable electric or hybrid vehicles*

*Lower telecommunications costs and faster network speeds*

*More user-friendly tools for web development*

*Streamline Council processes for on-site water storage and solar hot water systems.*

*Streamline electricity supplier procedures for on-site distributed electricity generation.*

*Higher taxes for the wealthy, and more government support for families and people on benefits.*

*Eliminate plastic bags and only use biodegradable packaging.*

*Encourage small businesses and discourage very large businesses. Keep monopolies and public good activities in public hands. A private business should never be so important or so large that it cannot be allowed to fail. Remove the goal of endless growth and instead aim for environmental equilibrium, by way of an increase in activities which promote community and environmental harmony, and an urgent reduction in activities which are socially or environmentally harmful.*

*Intensification of existing town centres*

*They should have more control over the price of petrol as this affects everyone. When the price went up last year, there were fewer cars on the road - that was good.*

*What would prepare us is fundamentally different form of city infrastructure management - a board of governance that understands the subject and makes decisions using defensible business tools. The political side can play its part in the social values etc of the city by contracting the city corporation to provide things desired together with funding for the project. This may give us something that can handle change and can manage the excesses of societal demands within a financial regime acceptable to all (if not agreeable to all).*

*New Zealand could be easily insulated from the current global crisis by opening up our immigration. Allowing 50-60,000 educated and moderately wealthy (in global terms) individual into NZ each year for the next two years will stimulate the economy. This should only be done however if the long term strategy is put in place to improve our overall performance. Educated immigrants can work from NZ in a global environment as long as we have a world class infrastructure- high speed broadband throughout NZ.*

For some respondents seeing others doing their share was very important but there was a recurring theme:

*I'm not sure. I can really only give a rather silly answer: time. Like most, I seem to have so much to do on a day to day basis to try to earn the daily bread, feed the mortgage etc, that there isn't a lot left over to address bigger issues.*

Perhaps all we really need is a sublime state of mind and the ability to be 'nimble', responsive and open to new opportunities.

# Conclusion

It is apparent from the answers to the **first** question that almost all respondents think that some form of action is required. It is notable, however, that there is a strong feeling that knee-jerk reactions are not what we need: wise, considered and effective action is needed.

The **second** question threw up a virtually endless list of problems and challenges ranging from the economic system and its failings through to a lack of time. Looking at this list it might be easy to just give up and, as one respondent expressed it, *enjoy the party while we still can* but the responses to the **third** question showed that most respondents are thinking seriously about the challenges they face and are taking actions personally, financially, in their businesses, and through local government. Some of these actions might be more effective and important than others but each is a valid response to the issues that respondents have perceived.

The **fourth** question threw up what we most need to be thinking about now. Effective (wise) leadership, together with communication (including clear information, consultation, and advocacy) were mentioned 24 times. Once this is in place we can justify the levels of investment and financial incentive that 22 respondents identified as being important. And a great deal of this could perhaps be directed towards the 30-odd specific actions that were also identified as important.

Of course, this survey is not a statistically valid exercise: the mailing list was very broad and the questions were deliberately loose, inviting thought and a wide range of possible responses. But it does, I believe, provide a useful overview of what people are thinking and what many are already doing. As such it could be instructive and inspirational for many participants.

What's next?

That's up to each of us to work out for ourselves. There might be encouragement and a new mandate for those in leadership positions who want to take more effective action. There might be ideas (from the third question) that we can use in our organisations, our work or our lives. But perhaps just knowing that many others are thinking about these issues (and doing things) is enough...

For myself, I will be editing and abbreviating this document and bringing it to the attention of appropriate decision makers and selected media outlets. If you have any further comments or suggestions feel free to get in touch.

Thank you for your participation. It was much appreciated by me and perhaps it's been useful for you also.

**Bevis England**  
**Titirangi**  
**bevis@telework.co.nz**

