

Date: Thursday 5 November 2015
Time: 5:15pm
Meeting Room: Waiheke Local Board Office
Venue: 10 Belgium Street
Ostend
Waiheke Island

Waiheke Local Board

OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

ITEM	TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
9.2	Auckland Councils use of fossil fuels - Hanne Sorensen	
	A. Presentation to Waiheke Local Board	3

Presentation to Waiheke Local Board

I am speaking for Our Children's Climate today.

I would like to ask you as our Local Board to advocate on behalf of our children and future generations; can you please urge Auckland City Council to divest from fossil fuels? If the council has any of our money invested in fossil fuel stocks, bonds or similar assets, can you please do anything in your power to change that?

I assume that as members of our Local Board you take the warnings of the world's climate scientists seriously. They are telling us that climate change is already affecting the planet, that the climate is heating faster than at any other time in human history, and that it is caused by the CO2 emissions from our burning of oil, coal and gas.

At the Copenhagen climate conference in 2009 it was agreed that "deep cuts in global emissions are required... so as to hold the increase in global temperature below two degrees Celsius."

So far, we've raised the average temperature of the planet just under 0.8 degrees Celsius, and that has caused far more damage than most scientists expected. A third of summer sea ice in the Arctic is gone and the oceans are 30 percent more acidic. The government of Kiribati has bought land in Fiji. Kiribati is subject to repeated flooding of its many atolls, and as sea levels rise further the population has a 20 sq km refuge nearly 2000 kms away if they have to abandon their homeland.

Given those impacts many scientists have come to think that two degrees is far too lenient a target. However let's stick with that right now, since that is the current internationally agreed goal.

The proven coal, oil and gas reserves of the fossil-fuel companies and the oil producing countries, in other words the fossil fuel we're currently planning to burn, are five times as much as the climate scientists think is safe to burn. This means we have to keep 80% of those reserves locked up in the ground to stay below 2 degrees Celsius.

With that in mind how can any one in their right mind think the fossil fuel industry a sane thing to invest in? Our council shouldn't be investing in something that's so clearly against our interests; an industry that if not checked, is set to cause runaway climate change and propel the Earth's temperatures above a liveable limit.

Divestment has worked before. It was one of many things that contributed to the crumbling of South Africa's apartheid system. Divestment from fossil fuels will free up resources better invested in developing new technology, to help our goal of attaining a sustainable future.

Divestment is hardly a fringe choice of action either. There are currently over 400 divestment campaigns at campuses worldwide. 40 educational institutions have already chosen to move their endowments away from coal, oil and gas companies because they recognise fossil fuels carry ethical and financial risks. Worldwide pledges to divest now stand at US\$2.6 trillion (US\$2,600,000,000,000). In New Zealand such diverse organisations as Vitoria University, The University of Otago Foundation Trust, The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, The Anglican Church of Aotearoa and Dunedin City are divesting.

For inspiration I will leave you with just a short list of other organisations from around the world who have chosen to divest:

The universities of
Surrey, UK
Hawaii, USA
Glasgow, UK

The National Synod of Scotland and
The Church of Sweden

The California Academy of Sciences and
The Australian Academy of Science

The cities of
Victoria, Canada
Seattle, USA
San Francisco, USA
Oxford, UK
Oslo, Norway
New Castle, Australia
Melbourne, Australia
Freemantle, Australia

Adelaide Bank and
numerous Australian super funds.

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