Our government’s deny-as-much-as-possible and do-as-little-as-possible attitude towards climate change is wrong for so many reasons. Arguments over carbon offsets and 5% versus 10% are beside the point. We are discussing the future of civilisation. And it is not just about climate change. Climate change is a call to action to change so many things that have gone wrong. The government needs to lead and not be led. The quality of life of our children is at stake.

This country could be a pioneer. We have so many smart, innovative individuals who need to be listened to. We have people who have been living sustainably for years who understand better than any academic or industry representative the practice and possibilities of a sustainable life. We have successful organic farmers. We have environmental groups who are part of a global network with enormous resources of knowhow. We have so much that is being suppressed.

Our reliance on fossil fuels must stop. Yes, the fuel companies can keep us going for another half century, but only at the cost of ravaging the planet, and when the half century is up, what then? The time to begin leaving fossil fuels behind is now. Once the decision is made, the means to do so will start to appear.

Our reliance on animal agriculture must stop. Yes, farmers are turning to dairying at a frantic rate, but only at the cost of ravaging our land, and it’s an industry that is dying in the face of growing overseas competition. There is nothing more certain than that our descendants will condemn us for consuming and abusing animals, not just for ethical reasons, but because of the waste and pollution of animal agriculture.

International free trade must be restricted. The idea was all very well, but the reality is the loss of sovereignty and jobs to global corporations that care about nothing except money.

New Zealand must become self-sufficient in food production: first to reduce emissions; second for the health of its people; and third as a response to the threat of international disruptions. We must encourage community gardens, the widespread planting of fruit and nut trees, vegetable gardens in every residential section, composting, organic agriculture.

Help must be provided to allow as many households as possible to have solar panels, windmills, power storage batteries and water tanks.

We must promote healthier lifestyles, with better diets and less reliance on drugs. Our public health service must be independent of commercial interests.

We need efficient public transport—no more motorways. We need more efficient rubbish recycling. We must return to the production of goods that last and can be repaired, and which are made here, in New Zealand. This will reduce waste and greenhouse emissions and provide meaningful jobs for our unemployed people.

We need to educate our children to prepare them for a different future.

Yes, this will cost money (but then the whole unstable structure of money as an intermediary of exchange, with all the associated hoarding and speculating, may be about to collapse anyway), and yes, many will resist (but most will do so from ignorance, which can be corrected), but none of this is
new and untried, all the resources of knowledge and skill are in place. All we need is the will. Again, we need a government that provides leadership.

We have so many people with the passion, commitment, experience and skill to implement these changes. All we need is for a very small number of people in parliament to have the courage and vision to let them act.