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“NZ’s Climate Change Target” Talk on May 18, 2015, by:

Rose Penwarden, speaking this evening on behalf of Oil Free Otago and 350.org.

Summary:

This week Simon Bridges is in Melbourne promoting New Zealand as an exploration destination to some of the world’s largest petroleum companies. The NZ pavilion is being hosted by NZ P&M and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. Govt-owned GNS Science is there too.

Asking us to help set a target for Paris while at the same time continuing with their fossil fuel expansion agenda is not, as Simon Bridges said, a “*mixed and balanced approach to our energy future*” but a sham.

More forests are being cut down than planted – to be mainly replaced with dairy pasture, only adding to our emissions. Our ETS is a farce – but even so, our highest emitting industry is exempt. We subsidised the fossil fuel industry to the tune of \$46 million in 2013 while we stifle growth in clean low carbon enterprises. Our per capita emissions are some of the highest in the world, more than double those of the EU. With our carbon emissions going through the roof, instead of 5% below we are on track to be 34% above 1990 levels by 2020.

On Thursday the government will try to use the ‘cost’ argument. That’s what they’ve done in meetings so far – carefully framing action against climate change as a cost to households that we really probably can’t afford. They have carefully analysed the cost of mitigation, but have not analysed the cost of inaction. For example, the 0.5% this year’s February drought shaved off GDP growth, the estimated \$1.3 billion cost to GDP of the 2013 drought and the \$2.8 billion cost of the 2007-8 drought. That’s only droughts. How much have last week’s floods cost Wellington and Kapiti? The government’s intention seems to be to leave it to the next generation to pay. Continue fudging, playing around with carbon credits and forests, and leave true emissions reductions to them.

We can’t allow that. It will be too late by then. It’s crunch time. No room for pretence at action through creative accounting or figure fudging. We have to show the government that we have no time and no patience more flaky targets that they don’t intend to meet.

Oil Free Otago and 350.org urge Dunedin people to call the government out on Thursday *before* they try to fudge us with their one-sided cost argument.

Oil Free Otago and 350.org agree with Bob Lloyd and demand a target of **carbon neutrality by 2030** according to climate science. Anything less is committing our children to an uncertain, possibly unsurvivable future. This is achievable. NZ is in a unique position to do so, but it will take more guts than this government has thus far shown it is capable of.