

### **Time to Diversify**

Loss of jobs in the fossil fuel industry (*Daily News*, February 13) should be a wake-up call, if any more were needed, that it is well past time for Taranaki and New Zealand to diversify our economy away from such mining. This industry, a major polluter both locally and globally, and subject to the vagaries of international markets influenced by Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), oil-rich nations and futures speculators, has passed its use-by date. Many companies present in Taranaki are foreign-owned and employ / sack local staff in line with wildly fluctuating market forces well beyond New Zealand's control. That this is not a reliable, long-term source of employment will become more apparent as enlightened nations continue to develop and expand alternative energy sources that are renewable and clean. Such clear longer-term planning will stand those nations in good stead during the latter part of this century, when climate change impacts become more severe, and any remaining fossil fuel producers are regarded as pariah states, trends that are already apparent. In these respects, our government's intention to be a net exporter by 2030 is foolish. New Zealand has a wealth of clean, renewable energy and opportunities for long-term reliable employment. Transitioning our transport and food production systems off fossil fuels will be more challenging, but great opportunities exist for innovative thinking and investment.

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