

# Climate Justice Taranaki

## Newsletter 21 September 2011

Kia ora koutou,

just a quick update again from Climate Justice Taranaki, some things to do and some upcoming events. We are still looking into monitoring reports from drilling waste and fracking sites and trying to stop new drilling consent applications around Taranaki. It is now questionable as to whether the regional council was illegally allowing drilling activities (see media release below). And waste 'landfarms' and deepwell injection sites are showing up disturbing waste management practices that were given the green stamp by council who may also be breaching their own consents in doing so (more on that soon).

We are growing more confident that we can get fracking banned in Taranaki and Aotearoa as international concern grows and communities begin to speak out across Aotearoa. We need to move away from petroleum dependency and fossil fuel extraction now.

Here are 5 easy things we can all do this week to contribute to our growing movement:

1. Write a letter to the Daily News saying you oppose fracking and have concerns about climate change. Email it to [editor@dailynews.co.nz](mailto:editor@dailynews.co.nz)
  2. Write to the Taranaki Regional Council and say you want fracking banned under the Regional Freshwater Plan Review. Email the Director of Resource Management: [Fred.McLay@trc.govt.nz](mailto:Fred.McLay@trc.govt.nz)
  3. Come to the 'Moving Planet' event in New Plymouth this Saturday (more information below) to learn more and meet some like-minded people in our community.
  4. Paint a sign opposing the drilling and put it somewhere visible like on your gate.
  5. Talk to your friends and family about the drilling. Let's have discussions on how we can decrease our fossil fuel dependency and greenhouse gas emissions.
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#### 1. 'Moving Planet Day' - Saturday, 24 Sept 2011

- To get us moving beyond fossil fuels - 12-1pm, Green area beside the Windwand carpark, New Plymouth

Jump on your bike, strap on your skates or lace up your shoes and head to the park beside the windwand for a car-free family picnic. Events are planned across the country and overseas to raise awareness of action needed to combat climate change.

Join Drumrise (drum group), Mountain City Rollers (roller derby league), Hive Taranaki and Let's Go for electric bike fun, bike workshops, spot prizes, stalls (including CJT's), info and more.

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#### 2. Iwi challenge drilling permits (Parihaka & Te Whanau-a-Apanui on Radio NZ)

Greenpeace and Te Whanau-a-Apanui filed a legal challenge this week against the governments issuing of an exploration permit to Petrobras:

<http://podcast.radionz.co.nz/mnr/mnr-20110920-0735-oil-representatives-dismiss-legal-challenge-as-stunt-048.mp3>

Have a listen to voices from Parihaka in opposition to the drilling and use of culturally important names for permits. Quotes from Rangikotuku Rukutai, Ruakere Hond and Rata Pue:

<http://podcast.radionz.co.nz/mnr/mnr-20110920-0839-taranaki-maori-launch-two-attacks-on-oil-and-gas-mining-048.mp3>

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#### 3. Was or is Taranaki fracking illegal? (CJT MEDIA RELEASE: 21 Sept 2011)

A recent Official Information Act request by local group Climate Justice Taranaki (CJT) reveals that fracking and drilling now suddenly need a consent from the Taranaki Regional Council under the Resource Management Act (RMA). The climate group is investigating whether all the fracking and drilling of recent years therefore took place illegally.

“We have obtained a letter from the Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) to the oil and gas companies which says that after seeking legal advice a resource consent is now required under several sections of the Resource Management Act that deals with discharge of contaminants” says CJT member Emily Bailey.

The Chief Executive of TRC says they received a legal opinion by law firm Simpson Grierson after “some members of society ... expressed concern about fracking”. The legal opinion however is being withheld because it is deemed it will breach 'legal professional privilege' under Section 7(2)g of the Local Government Official Information & Meetings Act 1987.

The letter to the companies, dated 29 July 2011, states that “from the date of this letter, resource consent will be required for fracking in Taranaki under Rule 44 [of the Fresh Water Plan].”

“We're glad the Regional Council made fracking and all drilling an activity that requires a resource consent however TRC says these consents are 'likely to be processed as non-notified' which locks the community out of important discussions concerning our community's well-being. The recent rushed policy change puts into question TRC's upholding of its obligations under the RMA. The Council's new contemplation that fracking could become a permitted activity under the revised Fresh Water Plan because they assume it has 'no more than minor adverse effects and lack of affected parties', is completely contrary to growing evidence from similar practices overseas.”

“Given that the Fresh Water Plan has been in place for 10 years and the RMA came into effect in 1991, we now have serious concerns that fracking has been taking place in the Taranaki region illegally and that it

is about to be swept under the carpet again under new and inadequate policy.

The RMA states clearly that discharge of contaminants from industrial premises into land requires a resource consent to minimise adverse effects. Companies like TAG Oil and Todd Energy have in recent years pumped countless litres of highly toxic chemicals into the earth to access 'tight' oil and gas. These fracking chemicals are then discharged into our environment along with other toxic drilling chemicals all companies use to drill their wells. It is not best practice.”

“Also in the letter is mention that some companies have so far refused to 'voluntarily supply information on fracking' during Council's attempt to compile an information sheet. While it does not state which companies weren't co-operating, the Council has indicated that they will be 'identified in any public communication on the matter'. It is frustrating that TRC assumed minor effects when they do not know all the chemicals being used.”

Climate Justice Taranaki will keep pushing for a ban on fracking.

Researcher Robyn Harris-Iles comments: “Fracking is by far the worst environmental disaster we are facing in this country because the process not only endangers our groundwater aquifers with toxic chemicals and radioactive particles; these poisonous toxins and heavy metals are spread on land and discharged into our streams, rivers and coastal waters. Pollution from fracking also affects the air we breathe, with dangerous gases being emitted throughout the process. We need to put an end to fossil fuel extraction by developing clean alternative energy that protects us and our environment for future generations.”

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#### **4. Sustainable Living Programme comes to Taranaki**

Hive Taranaki and the New Plymouth District Council have successfully got the Sustainable Living Programme (SLP) started in Taranaki. The SLP was started in Christchurch as a series of workshops to guide communities towards finding their own

solutions to live more sustainably. Councils around Aotearoa have adopted the programme and are finding it a great success. The New Plymouth Council has provided funding for one year of workshops so far that are due to start soon, so if you're keen to attend get in touch with Hive Taranaki: 06 769 6008 or email [bee@hivetaranaki.com](mailto:bee@hivetaranaki.com)

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## **5. Coal Action Network's Jeanette Fitzsimons calls for help this summer to stop lignite mining**

Come and support the people of Southland who are fighting Big Coal – or rather, Big Lignite. Mike Dumbarr has a lovely farm near Mataura. All his neighbours have sold, under pressure, to Solid Energy for lignite mining. Mike has said “NO”!

Mike has welcomed us to camp on his land from Friday 20 to Monday 23 January. Mike's farm is half a km from the site of the pilot lignite briquetting plant. The two local councils recently consented this plant with no public consultation. It will likely be under construction in January.

We plan to stand alongside the people of Southland who are worried about health effects, loss of high quality farmland, noise, water pollution, and of course climate change. We want to listen to their concerns, help where we can, and bring the stories of other coal communities, and the issue of climate change, to Southland. We also want to send a message to Solid Energy and the councils that the people are very concerned about their plans. Plus, we hope a whole lot of people who come from around the country will take the anti-lignite campaign back to their communities.

There will be family camping, live music, fun for the kids, big cook-ups, visits to the lignite mine, workshops on strategy, information from various groups actively campaigning against coal, training in non-violent direct action, videos, and an Open day in Mataura where we build relationships with local people and offer speakers and discussion groups on the issues relating to lignite.

Pre-registration is essential and a registration form will be available on our website during October. We are working on shared transport from other parts of the country. In the meantime, mark the dates in your diaries.

**\*Help needed\***

If you can offer skills such as workshop facilitation, cooking, construction, music, logistics, kids' activities, please let us know by emailing [canasummerfestival@gmail.com](mailto:canasummerfestival@gmail.com). This is a festival for movement-building, so we would love you to be involved. We will be putting a call out for more specific help closer to the time, but for now, any offers would be very welcome.

We also need money. There is no charge for using the site but there will be for marquees, stage, sound system, equipment, and the hire of the Mataura hall. Perhaps if you would love to come and can't, you could donate part of what you would have spent to get there? Fundraising events are also welcomed! Bank account # is Kiwibank, Coal Action Network, Kiwibank account: 38 9011 0484435 00

Hope you can make it.

Jeanette Fitzsimons

\* CANA have also asked us to pass on a plea for people to send letters to MP Kate Wilkinson, Minister for the Environment, calling on her to save the Denniston Plateau, near Westport, from a massive open cast coalmining project that will effectively remove the mountain top. You can email her ([kate.wilkinson@national.org.nz](mailto:kate.wilkinson@national.org.nz)) or send her a letter: Free Post, Kate Wilkinson, Minister for the Environment, Parliament Building, Wellington. See <http://coalactionnetworkaotearoa.wordpress.com>

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Climate Justice Taranaki

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