

## Real Prosperity?

Taranaki's booming fossil fuel industry is raising salaries, attracting foreign experts. If only those impressive salaries were for creation of sustainable technologies and renewable energy, rather than increased mining of non-renewables, with their inherent pollution and toxic legacy. According to the World Bank, continuing down this 'oil business is booming' path will raise global average temperature between 4-6 degrees C this century, effectively making large parts of our planet uninhabitable to people born this very year. This is not some science fiction scenario of the far future, but the short-term result of our collective failure to address a simple, well understood issue. The reasons why we are failing to act, however, are more complex. These include industrial-scale political lobbying and dissembling, compliant media, and a public lulled into a false sense of security on the one hand, or the 'too hard basket' on the other. All contribute to systemic government inaction. With fossil fuel companies among earth's richest, it is one of civilization's great ironies that those causing greatest harm to earth's environment and future generations are most rewarded financially. Surely responsible energy companies making billions of dollars annually should be leading the urgent transition from polluting fossil fuels to clean renewables? Instead, they seek ever more risky 'unconventional' oil reserves, some, ironically, such as the Arctic, made more accessible by climate change. With NZ's offshore areas also targeted, recent Arctic drilling blunders, and a relentlessly rising sea, do not augur well for the future of our coasts.

Letter by Lyndon DeVantier in response to <http://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/8145021/Highest-salaries-positive-growth> Published on 8 Jan 2013 as letter of the day: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/8152595/Resources-gain-a-false-economy>