

What is your background? Why are you running?

I am descended from English, Scottish, Irish, French-Jewish immigrants to Aotearoa. I don't know when they came here, but there is a story my Dad tells me about three Brazil brothers, one came to Australia, one to the USA, and one to here. They settled on the West Coast near Greymouth where they were largely coal miners and farmers and I think we have some family in Gloriavale, distant relatives! I grew up in Ōtepoti and I have lived in more houses than years in my life and I grew up with me, my sister, and my mother and she was a DPB and she was studying to become a lawyer and working, so I guess at an early age I was exposed to a lot of poverty and a lot of barriers to surviving. We lived in so many different houses, it was a matter of cost of living and being close to the schools that we needed to go to, so that was pretty tough. We would be spending about two thirds of our income on rent alone and there wasn't a lot for the rest. Pretty much every house I have ever lived in has been cold, damp, and draughty. So my foray into politics comes from that lived experience, and my mother, she has a disability that she was born with, and just seeing the treatment that she had in all the government institutions, her workplace and the public and how ableist our society is. It really just comes from my mother, she is my inspiration, my role model, and seeing how she just sacrificed so much to provide for us. And then just seeing how growing up, I grew up in a very labour strong household and then just seeing that disconnect, seeing all those promises and feeling no direct change and seeing things get worse, I just realised there is nothing more important to me than changing that, fixing that and removing those barriers, and making appropriate decision, because people who are being affected by policy are not being centered in that.

A bit more about my background, I went to Otago, I studied Law, Psychology, and a bit of French and it was through there that I got a bit more of a worldly understanding of why things are the way that they are. Going through uni, working 30 hour weeks in hospitality, dealing with being queer in quite a homophobic city, with that really just impacting my mental health and increasing anxiety and feeling this climate crisis and ecological crash and governments around the world going to fascist regimes go me really depressed and I think it was after uni that I got a bit more active and involved in community organising and direct actions activism, and being in there and being part of the community that was really empowered to make change and do care for one another inspired me to be here. I never really had much faith in politics because you see worldwide politicians promising things and not actually delivering, but I guess the way I see it we are all on the same level and politics is just the representation of the grass roots movement, the activism, the community organising. I was really just wanting to bring that all together and that was why I joined the Greens, with values there around first off just honouring Te Tiriti, and working from there to bring social responsibility, ecological wisdom and non-violent principles being at the core of our values. I think it is really important that we start from a place of values, and just tying that all together, recognising that I didn't see anyone else in Ōtepoti standing that represented these values in a meaningful way that comes from the communities that are marginalised. I also just felt a responsibility as a Pakeha living on unceded stolen land, Maori and Pacifica have been marginalised and brutalised and disproportionately affected in all social statistics, that's on us, that's on ongoing colonisation, and so yeah, it's really just being a good treaty partner and just standing up as a young person that recognises that we are running out of time before the impact

of ecological collapse and that our neoliberal capitalist system harms us and our wellbeing and the connection between people and that the same systems are harming people that are harming the lands. There has been good reform, but ultimately you can't reform an intrinsically flawed system, we need a mass overhaul. I am just wanting to bring my life experience and community voices and use my platform to uplift those voices that are not being heard or actively oppressed.

How have you engaged with the BLM movement?

It started with me thinking it's so important in these movements to go straight to the primary source, be on the ground with the communities directly affected. So what I did is I sought out those voices and opinions to just to inform myself about what is going on and then recognising again that white supremacy is a white person's problem and really just trying to take that on board and keep learning myself and teaching my own whiteness and own privilege and understanding what I need to work on better. I recognised that as a Pakeha we need to be educating other Pakeha about this, in the background Maori and Pacifica communities have been shouldering this burden forever and things are not going to change unless we actively be anti-racist. Locally that looked like supporting the BLM organising, I helped marshal and used my experience at community organising events and demonstrations to support them and take all that organisational work away so that the voices that were speaking at the rally could do that without having to do all that extra labour. That follows on to support those demands that BLM put forth to the council, the media, the university. I think an interesting one there is looking at statues, street names and representations of white supremacy in a colonial area. You've got to think what it means for a Maori or Pacifica person to see something like the Captain Cook hotel, that's just a reminder of genocide, I think it comes back to actually acknowledging the history and acknowledging that colonisation is still ongoing with the imposing of a supremacy of white eurocentric culture. In New Zealand we love to use the Haka at All Blacks games and we love to powhiri white institutions, we pick and choose the parts of Maori culture that we want to exploit. So yeah, it's really just been actively listening to the demands of BLM and Pakeha giving up the space and our time and energy to support that. It comes down to educating, we can pass as many laws and policy changes as we want, but it comes down to on the ground action.

Do you think that is the pathway forward for dealing with racial inequity in New Zealand society?

Yeah, I think that really the first step is acknowledging and educating, and beyond that it is about creating safe spaces and community networks of support. It looks like, especially with things like environmentalism and activism, that was born out of black and indigenous struggles, and we should acknowledge that. For me it's been a learning experience that environmentalism can be quite racist, not focusing on the marginalised communities that are most affected. For me it's going towards constitution transformation and supporting the work that the likes of Moana Jackson has been putting out, and a lot of the work that many rangatahi in Aotearoa are doing in their own communities. People are experts in their own lives and what they need. We don't need to follow the hierarchical colonial institutions' way of change, so it's like ceding power and space, time, energy and resources to tangata whenua led movements.

In relation to climate change, how do you think we should centre indigenous practices and voices?

Ultimately it is under the mantra of dismantling globally and building locally. In a way that begins with Tangata Whenua processes, actually looking at Te Tiriti and honouring it. We see a lot of consultation that is just reductive and insulting, we need to have meaningful partnership. In terms of centering their voices, I think it comes down to bits of cultural change, that comes back to educating. For a lot of Pakeha it they should be educating themselves on the history of these struggles and actually seeking to build meaningful relationships with Tangata whenua and supporting your local Marae. We can't do this work alone, we've got to all be working together.

Do you support a universal student allowance?

Yes! Young Greens have this plan that supports this and looks at a universal student allowance to all students regardless of their level. It's important to think about what education is to society, we say we value it because it contributes to the collective betterment of society. That we expect as a society for students to get a huge lifelong debt just to be able to participate in a way that society values is really cooked. We recognise that that is a labour and we are being exploited for our time and energy. It comes back to the fact that education has been commodified that started from the wrong values as to why education is so important. University is acting as a vessel for private interests to create good workers to come into them. The universal student allowance would really help students in a meaningful way by making it a livable rate and removing punitive measures of additional income, and removing the parental threshold. It's unacceptable that to get an education the only option is to increase debt.

Would you support a postgraduate student allowance? This was committed to by the government and we don't have it, what are your thoughts here?

I think that comes back to the Greens obviously support this and want to get this through, but there is a capacity issue, there are 8 MPs in parliament, they work so so hard, as well as doing that they do their best to engage us as members, but there is only so much 8 people can do. A lot of this gets stymied by lack of political will from Labour and them knowing that they can scapegoat NZ First. So that's my comment there.

How are you going to vote in the cannabis referendum?

An absolute yes! It defies belief that we even need to have this conversation, I understand why we are having it because there is a lot of cultural fallacy around what cannabis is. I support it because it was only ever criminalised because it was used as a racist tool to disempower communities as well as the economic reasons around cotton and big pharma and how useful hemp could be. I've experienced firsthand the health benefits of cannabis. The harm associated with cannabis isn't intrinsic to it, it comes from the criminalised status and the lack of informed understanding as to how to use it and do so in a safe way and lack of health support for the

underlying reasons someone may use cannabis. Treating it as a health issue rather than a criminal issue I think is really important.

Would you support a law change which would allow OUSA to have a spectrophotometer that would allow us to provide drug testing to students?

Absolutely! I think even going a step further and supporting the decriminalisation of drugs, following in the footsteps of the evidence based approach that we have seen in Portugal which shows the harm from drugs comes from the criminalisation, which ties into the defunding and abolition of police because if we look at the statistics around incarceration, 90% of people in prison have experienced mental health, distress, or addiction issues, 70% of people in prisons experience family or sexual violence and 64% of people in prisons have a traumatic brain injury, contrasted with 2% of the population, and 51% of men in prisons and 60% of prisoners are Maori. Effectively we have a criminal justice system that criminalises you for being poor. Why don't we instead look at why people are using drugs and the information they are lacking.

What would you do to support reform and development of the mental health sector?

I think what is lacking from the mental health discourse comes back to neoliberalism and individualism and how we have attributed our mental health to internal faults, saying that we personally are sick or not doing well and then not recognising the external systemic factors exacerbating that. Increasing mental health support is paramount and key, and doing so in a way centred around the people who are actually engaging those systems and listening to the mental health nurses who are actually on the ground working with the patients. I think also we really need to look and acknowledge our mental health comes from our poor housing, our lack of wage security, our lack of adequate nourishing food, it's looking at the ecological collapse and the associated lack of hope. The ultimate conspiracy is capitalism, this is the route course of our mental health, the disconnection from who we are as people. The best thing we can do for mental health is make strong resilient communities and addressing the source issues.

Would you support a minimum universal income?

These are really important first steps and I would use the language of guaranteed income, and that would need to be coupled with universal basic services. It involves ensuring benefits are lifted to appropriate levels. The guaranteed income would need to be done in a context acknowledging existing inequities in marginalised communities. A lot of this policy has been spearheaded by TOP, but they've really lacked intersectional analysis around Maori, Pacifica, people with disabilities and how we still need that individualised targeted assistance. But ensuring that guaranteed income is critical from achieving things like climate justice as well, because we need everyone at the table voicing their needs.

What would you do to improve student housing and flatting in Dunedin?

This starts with the fact of how disempowered students are. On top of all the other pressures there is a lack of accessibility to meaningful processes to really challenge landlords. Existing landlord abuses are part of a system that I don't think policy can fully change. The existing warrant of fitness policy focused around insulation and weatherproofing, and really empowering tenants and taking that burden off of them is good and starting a tenants union that can actually stand up for themselves. We should be supporting policy to retrofit and improve homes and nationalising utilities putting rent caps in place. Often two thirds of our income is on rent alone. But we need that combination of policy to improve renting situations and also emphasising tenant collective unions.

Do you think there is a housing crisis developing in Dunedin?

Absolutely! I think it's really important to talk about accessible housing, it was recently said that they were only aiming for 15% of houses nationwide being built to be accessible, and that not acceptable, it should be 100%. Housing really disconnects communities, people are not able to choose where to live in proximity to their whanau, their needs, and that's adding so much more stress and disconnect. We are in a housing crisis. I would almost say it is a greed crisis and the housing crisis is the effect, and this comes back to looking at historical accumulation of land and how people have been able to profit tax free.

What do you think about extending the winter energy payment to students?

Absolutely! I think any meaningful way of reducing economic pressure on students is really good. I absolutely support those kinds of abolitionist reforms, those reforms that are moving towards a more equal and just society. We are looking at Aurora energy in Otepoti who have deliberately not maintained their lines, and we are looking at private companies not taking responsibility for that, then increasing lines fees and shifting that cost back onto consumers. The needs we need to survive should be completely outside of private interests because privatisation has only worsened things. Some would argue that it has increased the speed we have gotten infrastructure, but I would argue that it has made things worse, we have this short term gain for this longer term pain of neglect in maintaining this infrastructure and not moving forward towards renewable energy systems. If we are centralising a power grid and this gets cut from a large event, that is not good, we need to be decentralising it.

Do you think that universities are overly reliant on income from international students? And how would you encourage universities to look after the international students they have?

I think it's deplorable how universities as an institution operate as a business and how they have commodified education. Inevitably living under this capitalistic model everyone is exploited, and I think particularly international students because of the cost to come here. What they pay to come here does not reflect the manaakitanga that they receive. To bring it back to the BLM movement, one of the demands was to get the university to acknowledge the racism experienced on the daily in courses with the racial bias there and racial bias in the experience interpersonally in the

community. The university needs to actively campaign to support cultural exchange, because that's what creates healthy communities, that connection and that support network. The university should also come out and explain why the Maori and Pacifica pathways are so important, because there is still a lot of misunderstanding and racist attitudes and beliefs from people who would self-identify as not racist.

Do you think that the university should be free for all?

Yes, absolutely. The people who decided university should cost all received university for free. Nothing is free in life, but we really need to shift the values of what is education and empower people to enter education. We look at how it's worked in Germany, offering free education, it has had positive effects. There is this fallacy of we need to make people pay for it so they value it, but this is wrong. We should be valuing education for what it brings. An investment in education is an investment in all of our futures. The barriers to access education should be removed and the cost borne by society.

How are you going to support the LGBTQIA+ community?

It same as with other issues of discrimination, it comes down to education and representation and not doing this in a tokenistic way. You have to ask people in these communities what they are experiencing, what forms of discrimination and then providing support. It starts there and needs to happen at every institutional level and not done in a way that is adding the effort onto those affected. We have to actively educate people on the history of pride, that it was actually a queer trans woman that started pride and it was actually from the violence and oppression that they were receiving from society as well. This involves supporting health services as well and making sure they are easily available for queer people to actually access and have support services provided by queer people for queer people. I think all these issues come back to the fact that why I am running for parliament is that politicians and government reactively deal with these issues, but we need to start becoming proactive as politicians and pushing these issues. It goes all the way back to schools and educating. Speaking to queer people around 18, seeing the representation in media, or Netflix, and seeing queer politicians stand up in their roles, they are so much more confident dealing with discrimination.

Do you support defunding police and prisons? And do you support the parallel justice system proposed by Moana Jackson?

The short answer is yes. The long answer is linked back to us actually being in violation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the reason we haven't acknowledged that is because the people in power benefit from white colonisation. The judges, the lawyers are property owners themselves. It all actually comes back to land. The whenua is the placenta, it is where life comes from, it is where life returns. So much of the power is predicated on who owns the land. So I do support. A lot of where white crime happens is in dispossession of land. Where people are connected to has been severed and that's the stem of a lot of the sociological reasons as to why Maori are incarcerated, and it goes back that we effectively have a racist criminal justice system that criminalises health

issues. More money has been spent on incarcerating Maori in the last three years than has ever been spent on treaty reparations. So our criminal justice system is in breach of Te Tiriti, Maori never see the sovereignty of the land of their people, so Maori should have absolute sovereignty and determination to have that parallel justice system and all the evidence shows that would better not only Maori, but also Pakeha. It's transitioning away from a punitive justice system.

To understand an institution we need to go back to the start, and if we go back to the start of who the police are, they were actually set up to steal land and to enforce slavery. So it's looking at now, the primary role of police isn't to serve communities, because prime is pretty steady, the primary role is to protect private property and protect private capital, it is the system that is oppressing the people and the land. Indigenous liberation from the criminal justice system is the type of justice we are seeking. No one is saying that police officers as individuals are terrible people, but looking at the system, any cop that tries to change this they get violently oppressed, they get silenced, they get intimidated, they get threatened. How can we trust an institution that consistently fucks up.

And looking at Moana Jackson, whanau, hapu, and iwi led is where we need to go when looking at transformation of justice. When we talk about prison and police abolition, it is not removing accountability, I think the important question is 'does our current criminal justice system give accountability? What we end up seeing in prisons is that we are perpetrating this same harm back towards people. So how is there any accountability, how is there any transformation to rehabilitate people. That's what is causing crimes, colonising institutions dispossessing Maori and Pacifica.

What one law would you want to change?

I will preface this by saying, why I want to go to parliament is to bring community decision making to parliament. The one law I would personally like to change, because it is really dear to my heart is overhauling the welfare system to not be punitive, and just be restorative and uplifting. To have it help us thrive, not barely survive. I think a larger law I would like to change would be constitution transformation, and that encompasses welfare, criminal justice abolition, because it is looking at indigenous rights and what protects mother earth. 80% of our remaining biodiversity is protected by indigenous people. So the one law I would change would be to give indigenous people power, cede them sovereignty.

Thoughts on a written constitution?

There's a lot of angles on this. I think it comes back to what type of written constitution. Are we talking Westminster style made for white eurocentric supremacists? Or is it coming from kaupapa Maori? So I would support a kaupapa Maori written constitution.