

Who are you? Where are you from? Why are you running?

I was born in Rotorua, I lived there most of my life, and then I went to boarding school and have now been in academia for 5 years! I graduated last year with my BA in PPE. It took me a while to get a BA. I guess I'm running because I don't think I see any value in the other parties, I think they've let us down a lot, especially the 80s and all those reforms. The only party offering any alternative to their liberalism is NZ First. Other than that I think every kiwi should take pride in New Zealand, and want to better New Zealand, and if you are going to be making legislation, you should be putting New Zealander's first.

Why are you running for Dunedin?

Because I have a few skills, but talking and listening are probably my best skills, and it is an opportunity to take advantage of those and better the community in any way that I can. There are so many things that we need to fix in Aotearoa, we've got to start somewhere.

Who do you think is going to win the Dunedin electorate?

It's a tough one, because obviously everything has happened with David Clark, and I know a lot of students are backing Jack Brazil, he's a good guy, if he wasn't in the green party I would probably vote for him. It's going to be close, because also we have Ben Peters from TOP who is also a very good candidate, so we could see a lot of votes that could have gone to David Clark go to us three, which will narrow the race between him and Michael. Michael in my opinion is just as bad as David Clark because sure he's managed a hospital before, but that's the whole problem with the current DHB that we have, that you have people running the hospitals that aren't medical professionals, but that's a personal opinion.

What are you going to do to improve student homes and flatting in Dunedin? Are you concerned about the developing housing crisis?

My first thing is, any New Zealander that lives in an unhealthy home is one New Zealander too many. Granted a large proportion of them are students, but I think we need to address unhealthy homes for all New Zealanders. Any process we go through will include students in that. NZ First has always included a system where you don't punish landlords, for instance what you could do is write in your costs of improving your home into your tax return, and obviously that way renters get a better house and landlords get money back.

And the housing crisis, of course I'm concerned, interestingly enough Dunedin went down in house prices, so of course it is a problem, but currently Dunedin is looking more and more attractive to first home buyers. It's about ensuring that we can have healthy homes.

Do you think that Dunedin being attractive for first time buyers in turn causes a problem for students?

We can definitely see a demand problem, even recently the number of google searches for houses in Dunedin is ten times as much as it was this time last year.

Take for example one of the issues that I have with the way Labour and Greens go about this issue, they increase student allowance and then the rent goes up. We need to find a way to help the students without incentivising landlords to make more money. The solution has got to be a two way street.

Do you support a rental warrant of fitness?

There's a healthy living home standard currently. My key thing on that would be as long as there is not a huge cost to the bureaucracy of upholding that because you could be putting that cost into building better homes.

Are you committed to extending the winter energy payment to students?

I could be. I think NZ First would back it as well, as we want to treat every New Zealander equally. The whole point was so superannuants wouldn't need to pay extra to keep warm. I know what it is like only having your heater on an hour per day. This is definitely something I would be keen to work on.

Do you think that the university is too reliant on income from international students? And how do you think universities could better support the international students that they already have?

Big yes. And I put that down to a lack of forethought from previous national and labour governments. They've let it get to a point where an institution that is supposed to be investing in our human capital is relying on international income. When did it suddenly become that universities were not about upskilling New Zealanders and making them an asset to our country. So on one hand NZ First is keen to make sure that international students are here purely for study, on the other hand we are keen to have an independent authority exists making sure a voice is upheld in all tertiary institutions for all students, including international students.

There is benefit to us in NZ being able to study overseas, and this is reciprocal. How do you feel this factors into the idea that we shouldn't have international students come here to stay and instead just study?

If they come here, study in NEW Zealand, decide that they love New Zealand and want to stay, I support that. It's just about a year ago where an institution in Auckland was found to be a tool for immigration rather than students actually doing study. But they are an important asset to everything, to our economy.

Do you support a universal student allowance?

Yes. We are the only demographic in New Zealand that are forced to borrow to live. If you are going to treat education as an investment, then you need to be paying a universal student allowance. Even economically, if you have less debt, you have more money to spend, it's a win-win.

What do you think this should be at?

It's got to be enough to live. I don't want to give you a definite number because I haven't looked at all the living costs involved. But lets say about \$150 in Dunedin or maybe \$200 plus in Auckland. It would have to be able to include your rent, electricity, and probably internet because internet these days is a necessity. Maybe upwards of \$250 or \$300.

Are you in favour of reintroducing a postgraduate student allowance? What are your thoughts on this having not happened?

This is what happens when you have a coalition partner that isn't balancing moderation or common sense. I mean personally I can't speak for cabinet and government, but it is likely a work in progress. I think what we need is more of a mandate, we need people to come out and say I'll support you if you support a PSA. One thing we have always been keen on is a universal student allowance, and perhaps interestingly fully paid scholarships from start to finish for people who will be the first in their family to go to university.

What do you think about interest on student loans for people who go overseas?

So the reason why I voted for NZ First when I was 18 was there dollar for dollar repayment scheme. So if you did a three year degree and then worked in New Zealand for three years afterwards, the equivalent in tax that you paid would be fully paid towards your student loan. So the idea is you are filling that jobs gap in New Zealand, and then if you did go overseas you would still pay the interest on your loan. So the idea is you got your degree, worked here for a certain amount of time, you would then be able to go overseas and earn more if you liked.

Do you think that will help reduce student debt?

Definitely. We are the only party offering a way to support tertiary education without running at a loss.

Does NZ First support Labours fees free?

Hmm, Cabinet has NZ First in it and we passed it. So in that regard yes. In the regard the it is the be all and end all of tertiary education policy, no. There is far more that we could be doing. Outcomes of the fees free hasn't been the desired outcome at all. It is costing us money, and there are less people going to university.

Do you think that was the desired outcome, having more people go to university?

Well the reality is if you are looking at it from a political-economic point of view you want people to be going so there is a labour force, and your people are more upskilled. You are investing money for those results.

Would you support a law change to allow OUSA to get a spectrophotometer and supply drug testing to students?

Yeah, though it's a lot more complicated than yes or no. On principle the way the current pill testing works, no. I don't think any New Zealander that wants to support the community would endorse pill testing the way it is run. There are key caveats to that. The first is you are not told what your pill is, so if you go and get your MDMA tested and they say it is 30% something else they legally cannot tell you. You've got to go, 70:30 I may as well take it, you might die! The reality is unless it is 100% not what you are taking there is a very low likelihood you will not take it. Also there needs to be an appropriate framework for someone going in there, because personally I don't see the value in not helping them, not having a mental health person there and not having numbers available and giving them details of how to get out. So I would support it if it was very clear that you were trying to mitigate the harm. At the same time I understand that we need to provide a safe avenue for people that take drugs anyway. I don't know if you remember, but I spoke at our convention last year about that. The party was against it but young NZ First managed to get to a position where they are willing to support it if it can meet those requirements of mitigating harm.

How do you plan to vote in the cannabis referendum?

I'll get to how I will vote in a minute, but I think if you are running or in a position of power you should never be your position to tell someone how to vote, especially on a moral position like this that is such a big social change.

I'm leaning yes vote and again caveats for that would be so long as the tax revenue goes towards the appropriate areas such as mental health and social welfare, and if there is a clear framework so that we are not having high people on the roads, or teacher teaching kids at school while high and things like that. So as long as the outcomes of legalisation are better than the outcomes of prohibition then I am fully supportive.

NZ First has always believed that big social issues like this should always be a referendum. That's why we voted yes on the bill.

How would you want to support the mental health sector?

The main thing is being proactive and not reactive. We have a reactive system where if something goes wrong it is up to you and the people around you to react to it. As Desmond Tutu said we need to go upstream and stop people from falling in, rather than pulling them out.

Social stigma is an important one, we need to normalise how we talk about it. From what I understand the past 10 or 20 years things have changed for the better in terms of being able to talk about it. What it comes down to is normalising it in families and schools, and even people in

power, politicians should be open about when they are having a hard time. They are the first steps, and then if we want to get into big changes, the mental health sector, while it needs to have aspects of medical care in there, needs to be community based healthcare, like peer supporting, therapists, and psychiatrists, things like that.

The next question relates to defunding of the police. Do you support having dedicated mental health response teams to fill the gaps of where we have police reacting to mental health crises?

Either that or a lot more mental health and suicide training for police. The reality is the first person that shows up to a suicide situation is responsible and needs to be trained. If it is going to be police they need to be trained. I wouldn't mind a group that is a first responder, because if you are in distress and something is going on at home you don't want to be worried about being taken down to the station.

Do you think the police are ever in an appropriate place to do that given the fact they are the police and what that generally represents?

The police in NZ are not the police in the US, our police care about our community. I think the majority of police want to help, the problem is I don't think they are trained to help. I think it would be wrong to say they are inappropriate to respond when there is more training that could be available.

Do you support the defunding of police and prisons?

Big no. Definitely not. If anything the reforms we are going to need to implement to better police and prisons is going to cost more. So if we want to have a system that is built around rehabilitation rather than a punitive system, that is going to cost money. If we are going to upskill police to be better responders, that is going to cost money. I'm personally not a fan of crying foul about police brutality and demanding justice by the same organisations that are demanding defunding. How are you going to punish a police officer if you don't have a justice system or a jail. Any act that is negative to our society should be treated equally before the law, it should receive equal punishment.

How then do we respond to the fact that is not what happens? Like that Maori are much more likely to interact with the police?

I'm not going to deny the fact that there is racial inequality in judicial outcomes. What I want an example of is a police officer that has been given special treatment.

I guess that is not necessarily the question at hand, it's about how the NZ police system affects people, around the institution and it's racism amongst other things.

Oh yeah, I'm not going to disagree with that. There is very clear racial inequality. I guess the sad fact about it is we all can sort of see that if you were Maori and I was Pakeha and we were caught doing the same thing it is more likely I would be let off. I think that the discussion has got to be constructive, it can't be destructive.

Do believe then that we can reform the system?

I have always been a fan of incorporating tikanga into the system.

Do you think that is enough?

Well, what else would we do? Defunding them, is that the alternative?

Rebuilding?

Well then that's what reformation of it would do, it is rebuilding. Philosophically it is the same thing, it would still be a coercive state force and an implementation of justice, but the question is how do we include all members of the community in the process? We are just two sides of the same train.

Would you support the parallel justice system proposed by Moana Jackson?

No, definitely not. NZ First is 100% against separatism. That's what it is. Granted I am still an advocate of incorporating Maori into the justice system. I've always hated the fact that for a lot of people it is a judgement and not a rehabilitation process. We need to be putting people at the centre, and i honestly can't say what exactly incorporating tikanga would look like in our justice system, but to have two separate parallel systems, you can dress it up as nicely as you want but it is what it is.

The follow up question that I have is around prisoners being able to vote.

NZ First supports the fact that is three years, personally I am a little bit iffy on the point. But I can see the principle in allowing them to vote if their term is three years or less because they are going to come out as a free person into a society that is making decisions on your behalf, so you should have a say in who they are.

How have you engaged with the black lives matter movement?

I think the conversation I have engaged with, and it has been an important conversation, aside from some of the negative aspects of it and I'm not going to go there. The important thing is getting kiwis talking about how we will support our black communities, our people of colour. I can speak on behalf of them as I am not a person of colour, I think we need to be having an honest conversation about racial inequalities and what we are going to do.

What do you think the path forward is for dealing with racial inequalities?

One thing I am so grateful for is that I grew up in a town where the Maori aspect of New Zealand was taught to us. I agree in some places I meet people our age that still don't have much of an understanding about where our country comes from and who Maori are. The key there is before we can make any big social change we need to make sure that everyone understands our past and then we can move onto fixing the future.

Do you support the teaching of Te Reo in all schools?

Yup. I mean it's already a curriculum subject.

I mean the compulsory teaching.

Yeah, so I wouldn't be 100% sure there. The way I see it we have three official languages in New Zealand, English, Maori, and sign language. I don't see why we are not encouraging the teaching of all of these. My father's deaf, and it is pretty hard to communicate there, so I can see the value of learning sign language. I have always been upset that I never learnt Maori because it is such a good tool. If you are trying to connect with Maori and find a way to incorporate them into our systems and political institutions, the way to do it is to speak the language.

How will you respond to climate change?

So something you might not know is that the Zero Carbon was in the coalition agreement because of NZ First. Labour and Greens didn't put it in there, we put it in there. NZ First knows that if you have a healthy environment you have a healthy economy. So I support that 100%.

When it comes to climate change, I don't think taxing middle and lower income families because they can't afford an electric car is a viable alternative. What I do think is important is negating the harm that is going to happen. The reality is it is coming, I don't want to sound alarmist, but we need to make sure we mitigate this harm. So like disincentivizing building near beaches and fault lines and all that. The way we need to go about it is a more practical approach. NZ First supports the transition from fossil fuels to renewables, but you can't just cold turkey, cut jobs for 1000 people in Taranaki because it suits your political agenda. It needs to be a moderate transition.

Do you think that the Zero Carbon Bill wants extra incentives on .. or places protections ...

Obviously it is not the be all and end all of climate change. Just because we signed the Bill it doesn't mean the problem goes away. There are so many more problems with the way we approach climate change, like our ETS scheme shouldn't be available to foreign buyers.

Do you think it will impact agriculture?

It will, and that's an important reason why NZ First needs to be involved in the process, because Greens and Labour wanted to throw that cost on the backbone of our economy straight away. But

we said no, give them three years, give them a period of time to transition away so that we are not just throwing that cost on families.

Do you think it is important that we support farmers through that change?

Yup. The billion trees program, it is an opportunity for farmers to move away from dairy. We should 100% be supporting farmers. Name another party that will support farmers other than National. NZ First is really though the only party that recognises how important farmers are.

Will NZ First centre indigenous and pacifica voices and practices in their response to climate change?

The reality is all nEw Zealanders should be involved in our approach to climate change, Maori and Pacifica are parts of our community and I would expect that they would be involved in the process regardless. Again, it is not up to me to say how that would look, it is up to Maori and Pacifica. Our Pacific neighbours have already had a lot of trouble with climate change, and I think Winston Peters in his portfolio as Foreign Affairs has done a really good job at supporting our Pacific neighbours.

What are your thoughts on the current income taxation? Would you support adding additional tax brackets?

I can't speak for NZ First, but I can tell you that for example the Greens policy, sure I can see the value of the 42% tax rate, but not for people with \$150k, that's doctors, that's people that work day in day out to support our community. Getting taxed 42%, how is that fair? I would say 42% but not for lower-upper earners, as they are the drivers of the economy.

How will you support the LGBTQIA+ community?

The way to support them is by including them in conversations, normalising their involvement, normalising that they are a part of our society. That comes down to a healthy callout culture, and finding constructive ways to enlighten people as to why it is important to have LGBTQIA+ involved in conversations. Personally I would hope to represent LGBTQIA+ particularly those that are conservative. I hope to be a voice for them as best I can.

What kind of things do you think need to change in New Zealand?

I think our smokefree goals are important and I want to push to support these because if you care about New Zealanders you care about stopping smoking. So that comes down to ensuring alternatives to smoking are more preferable to smoking itself. So that's something I don't really support from labour, that is trying to ban vaping, because I know personally it has been a helpful tool for me to try and quit. At the same time ensuring our cigarette tax is going into the health system, because at the moment it is not. We are taking millions, billions off low income earners and not even putting it back into them. So that would be number three.

Number two would be more accessible health care. So it used to be you would go to your GP and it would be 100% covered. All that cost would be incurred by the government. Whereas now, you go to student health and if you've got a community services card it's \$10, if not it's \$25. If I go out of region and I go to an emergency GP it is \$100. It's outrageous! Just because I'm on holiday in my own country I shouldn't be paying \$100 to get health care. That comes down to the ministry of health giving a set amount of money to each clinic for each patient, and then you pay the rest. So I want full coverage, so everyone doesn't need to worry about how much it will cost. If we had a better mental health system that would be the first step, because you know you could go to your doctor and say where do I get help and they would be able to tell you even if they weren't the proper person to get help with. So making healthcare accessible to all is going to be so beneficial to the rest of New Zealand.

Number one is that dollar for dollar repayment scheme for student debt because it does so many things. It incentivises New Zealanders to stay here and contribute to the economy, it gets rid of student debt. On the same hand it allows us to get the money back from the money that we have invested. That would be my top priority.

Thoughts on having a written constitution?

So, wait and see. We have our party conference in two weeks. NZ First has always wanted a constitution, but it is what it looks like that is the main thing. Personally I want a referendum on a New Zealand constitution, because the treaty is not valid. A treaty requires two sovereign states and the treaty didn't include all the tribes of Aotearoa, it included 7 tribes of the North Island, it didn't include other tribes. So technically it was impossible to cede sovereignty, because there was no sovereignty to cede. I think we need to enshrine the rights of New Zealanders in a way that is protected.

Would you support enshrining the treaty then?

I think anyone would be foolish not to support the inclusion of Maori in Aotearoa and not support the values of the treaty in a constitution. There would be aspects of the treaty you would include, but to enshrine it as it is now you've got two documents that conflict that you would enshrine. I think it is a slippery slope.

What about enshrining Te Tiriti for example?

Yeah, if you enshrined one then that would be a better alternative to both. I think whatever constitution that we have would have to include aspects of the treaty, it would have to include aspects of our bill of rights.

I'm a real fan, and I think a lot of young NZ Firsters are keen as well.

Do you support having a supreme constitution?

It's a tough one, because there are positives to having a constitution and a judicial body that is above the legislature, but it seems to be working alright in New Zealand. I guess the only problem

is if you have a prime minister, for example John Key, that can send us to Iraq on a whim. But at the same time Jacinda might have not been able to put everyone into lockdown. So I'm 50/50 on whether we need it supreme.

Do you support the introduction of a right to a healthy environment in NZBORA?

You would have to tell me what that looks like. Everyone supports a healthy environment, but a right to a healthy environment? That to me is almost as dangerous as the hate speech laws that the Greens want. What would happen then? You could take a mining company to court under the bill of rights? What would that look like?

I think New Zealanders are smart about the environment and are pushing that change, the problem is some New Zealanders have a very different view on the reality of climate change.