

EMBARGOED TILL 7.00 PM

7 August 2017

Joint Statement

The controversy that has arisen as a result of the speech by co-leader Metiria Turei at the AGM during the launch of the Incomes Package, along with subsequent developments, has put each Green Party candidate in a difficult personal situation.

The Green caucus reached a position on 25 July that this was a matter of personal conscience, and that individual candidates are free to express their views. The principle of honest politics is a central tenet of Green kaupapa – the basis of stable and responsible government.

We do not believe that lying to a public agency – WINZ, IRD or any other – can ever be condoned. Public trust in the good faith of both government agencies and individual citizens is essential to the integrity and cohesion of a society. It is critical that neither be undermined through any action by any person. There are public remedial procedures for an agency's breach of faith. The guardian of individual ethics remains with the individual.

Moral theory justifies civil disobedience on occasion – when an unjust law threatens the integrity of society. This is limited to breach of the most fundamental human rights, such as torture, apartheid or genocide. It does not stretch to the adequacy of an income benefit.

We are aware that some of the policies of the National Government of the 1990s caused serious hardship to individuals. We are aware that similar hardship was caused to individuals by Labour Government policies in the 1980s.

New Zealand society must ensure that all its people are properly fed and clothed and housed. But we must acknowledge that decisions taken by policy-makers, past and present, are taken with the interests of the country at heart and to the best of their abilities.

The timing by Metiria of her admissions, and her continuing justification of her actions, we see as incompatible with the standards of leadership of the Green Party.

The Green Party needs a new co-leader to accompany James Shaw into the Election, so that it can be true to its central principle of honest politics and responsible government. Trust matters in politics now, more than ever.

As long as Metiria remains co-leader of the Party, we are unable to support the Green campaign for the 2017 Election, and will be obliged to withdraw as candidates, from the list and in our electorates.

David Clendon, MP (Musterer, Green Caucus, 2015-17)

Kennedy Graham, MP (Musterer, Green Caucus, 2009-11)