

The Privilege of Age  
By  
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One of the privileges of growing older is having so much to reflect on. In that time, we've crafted a rich tapestry of memories and experiences we can retrieve at our leisure.

Reliving those moments can be pleasing, sad, or life-affirming; it provides us with a whole menu of emotions. The point is that the older we become, the more experiences we can draw from. At age 15, we have a fast-food meal; at age 60, we enjoy a banquet.

It's somewhat ironic that for many of us, as we age, the past may become less significant than the future.

Often, it's not our futures that concern us—it's that of those who will outlive us, inheriting the world we've crafted for our children, grandchildren, and their descendants.

The question is, what kind of world will that be? And the question I ask myself, as a member of the government, is what do I need to do to help steer us toward a bright, prosperous, and sustainable future?

The answer lies in being part of a government that has a viable plan to move this country forward. The economy is the driving force behind that.

So, let's examine the economy.

The future of this remarkable nation is unequivocally linked to the health of its economy; reliable, sustained economic growth is essential for enhancing living standards, developing infrastructure, and strengthening social welfare systems. While growth is underway (green shoots are appearing, as the Prime Minister so colourfully puts it), achieving a truly sustainable and inclusive economic environment is not merely an option—it's an imperative.

Economic growth is non-negotiable for New Zealand for several compelling reasons. First and foremost, it creates jobs. A vibrant economy typically results in lower unemployment rates, granting Kiwis financial security and opportunities for career advancement. As the skilled workforce grows, New Zealand must maintain its competitive edge globally by attracting foreign investment and talent. Initiatives that promote innovation in emerging sectors, such as technology and agtech, are essential to solidifying this position.

Moreover, economic growth is vital for enhancing public services. Increased tax revenues can and should be reinvested into healthcare, education, and infrastructure—critical components for improving overall quality of life. A strong economy allows for better funding of schools, hospitals, and transportation systems, fostering a healthier, more educated, and mobile population.

However, it's crucial to look beyond surface-level indicators. Despite growth figures, many Kiwis continue to face the harsh realities of rising living costs, particularly in housing and essential services. This stark reality underscores that growth isn't just about statistics; it's about ensuring that all New Zealanders benefit from this economic resurgence.

In summary, New Zealand's current economic growth presents a promising yet challenging path ahead. The future is intricately tied to the nation's ability to foster sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economic practices. This strategy requires a multifaceted commitment to innovation, sustainability, social equity, and adaptive responses to a fluctuating global environment.

New Zealand must embrace a holistic vision that transcends mere economic metrics as it charts its course. The objective should be to cultivate a thriving economy that elevates the well-being of all people, preserves the stunning natural environment, and firmly establishes New Zealand as a leader in responsible and sustainable growth on the global stage. While

challenges exist, the potential rewards for a prosperous future are there, provided New Zealand navigates the path ahead with resolve and unity.  
We owe that to our future generations—it is the privilege and responsibility of Age.