



John Key readies to push the button on manufacturing

## National's Plan for a Brighter Future

Last month we ran an interview with Minister Pete Hodgson on what a Labour government would do for the manufacturing and engineering sector should they serve another term.

John Key, the Leader of the Opposition, now outlines their approach should they be successful. As noted previously: neither major party has a dedicated ministerial portfolio for manufacturing and engineering. A National government would take a disciplined approach to government spending; stop the massive rise in head office bureaucracy; invest in the infrastructure this country needs to unblock the growth arteries – all supported by an ongoing programme of personal tax cuts and an unwavering focus on improving education standards. John Key MP was commenting at a time when the election date had not been announced and the party was in the early stages of rolling out policy in a planned programme leading up to that date. “We face many challenges. Too many Kiwis are struggling to make ends meet. Crime is intensifying. Many of our young people are leaving

school ill-equipped for the demands of the modern workforce. A record number of people are leaving to live in Australia. “I don't pretend that government alone can solve these challenges. These problems will, in part, be solved by people taking responsibility for their own actions, their own families, and their own communities. “Our economy is underperforming – especially when compared to other developed countries. That's translating into lower wages for workers, poor prospects for businesses, and more challenging financial circumstances for families.” • National, Key says, as part of a five-point plan will take “a disciplined approach to government spending, so that interest rates track down, not up”. “For the past nine years, Labour has indulged in record-breaking spend-ups, while failing to improve the productivity of the services they've been funding. For example, billions

of dollars more have gone into the health system, but waiting times are just as long. “This lack of productive growth puts pressure on inflation and, ultimately, on interest rates. National knows it's your money the government is spending. We will be as careful with your taxes as families are with their household budgets.” • He is committed to “stopping the massive rise in head office bureaucracy which Labour has encouraged”, and will deal with the regulatory and compliance issues smothering commercial activities. “Labour's answer to problems is to employ more and more bureaucrats in Wellington to tell us what we already know. Bureaucrat numbers will be capped and additional public spending will be focused on frontline services like schools and hospitals. “We will also reform the Resource Management Act and the Building Act – making sure there is less bureaucracy involved in everything from growing

Kevin Kevany

a business to building a deck.” • National “will invest in the infrastructure this country needs to unblock the growth arteries”. “New Zealand has languished for too long with second-rate transport networks, broadband services and electricity supply. We are determined to invest in these fundamental building blocks so the Industries and businesses which drive our economy can grow.” On a broader plane, to underpin the specifics, Key is looking to two more significant changes – an ongoing programme of personal tax cuts, plus what he calls “an unwavering focus on improving education standards”. On the tax front: “Labour has begrudgingly, after nine years in office, given in to the pressure and provided some tax reduction. But it's too little too late. “We will allow Kiwis to keep more of their own incomes and to ensure they face good incentives. We will build on Labour's October tax cuts, with further cuts on 1 April 2009 and 2010. “Alongside that, National will keep making the ‘Working for Families’ payments so many families rely on. We acknowledge that Working for Families isn't perfect, but when so many families are struggling, we think it's important they have some certainty about the support they will

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