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Te Pai
Ora o
Aotearoa



Whakamanawa Political Panel takeaways

We invited all political parties to take part in our political panel at Whakamanawa. We had four politicians accept this invitation: Marama Davidson (Greens), Willow-Jean Prime (Labour), Daniel Eb (Opportunity) and Elliot Ikilei (New Zealand First). Here are some key takeaways from their discussion.

Key policies for our sector



Willow-Jean: We have got a lot more work to do and better is possible. This means that we need to address the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care, because it was vividly clear that things had to change. An apology is only as good as the action that follows. Survivors have been clear: they want an independent redress system. So today I wish to announce that Labour has listened to survivors of abuse in care, and we will commit to the Royal Commission's recommendation to establish an independent redress system.

She also announced policies that would direct Oranga Tamariki to meet national care standards, to reinstate and strengthen Section 7AA, to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into New Zealand law, to implement a long-term plan to recruit, train and retain social workers and to implement a 10-year devolution plan.



Marama: Aotearoa has always had enough to ensure that every whānau and every mokopuna can live a life of dignity, and can live with everything that they need. You have stated clearly today that for decades and decades of work, things have not changed and, in fact, have become worse. And that is because the economic system which rigs it towards the wealthy has remained the same. And in fact, the gap between the wealthy and everyone else has instead increased over those past four decades... The Greens, consistently and with evidence, are the party to step up and challenge the very economic system that keeps communities in poverty, that keeps children in poverty.



Elliot: I'm chomping at the bit to be able to give you things that are in our manifesto, but we haven't released it yet. So, what I will give you is what we have on hand right now... So, what do we do? We look at things such as the cost of living at the source. We want to break up the gentailers, the power system. We want to break up the duopoly. It's wonderful that these other parties have finally come on board with us. So, the idea is that \$100 in our supermarket trolley was so bad compared to what it was five years, 10 years ago... We want to break that. We want to bring it in. We want to deal quite strongly with that area... We also want to look at Kiwi Kids Grant. That means that for the first three kids, that we can invest \$5,000 into each one of those kids. That is our support for a New Zealand generation that is going to be in love with New Zealand.



Daniel: At the Opportunity party, the core of what our kaupapa is, is system change. And so, when we see problems out in our community, our reflex is to say, what are the root causes and let's do what we can to fix those root causes... We'll be introducing a citizen's income, which is a universal base income that ensures that every New Zealander has access to the essentials they need and a land tax that brings house prices down. If enacted in full, that tax reset policy would lift 50,000 New Zealand families out of poverty.

He also discussed a 10-year cross-party plan for health to lift a health spent to 9% of GDP and a new impact company structure aimed a rangatahi that want to balance profits with people and the environment.

Consensus



Marama: Consensus comes from the people and communities. That's where the mandate and the consensus need to be built, not with politicians. The people need to be directing and demanding that we prioritise children in everything we do.



Daniel: I think we have to acknowledge that consensus is kind of broken. I agree with that ultimately, the will of the people is the voice that must be listened to. But at the same time, we need a political system that is capable of deep, profound collaboration. And we've fundamentally lost that, I think, over the last 20 or so years.



Willow-Jean: I really want to acknowledge the work that the sector has done to bring forward things like the generational plan and to get parties to commit to things like that will help us achieve cross-party. How do we keep things in and not have things thrown out again in the next term of government? I think we have to shift societal attitudes so that they will not accept things like boot camps, that have failed and led us down the path of harm again. That will come from the work you do and society understanding that we should be supporting evidence-based.

Devolution



Willow-Jean: Our devolution plan is a 10-year plan to devolve care and protection and authority to communities, to Māori and that will go a long way to addressing the issue that we have with more children coming into care and more children coming into the youth justice system. It will change the underlying drivers and issues.



Marama: Last month we announced Te Waonui a Tāne. It's our marae resilience policy that I'm particularly proud of... The only role of government (in this) would be to transfer the funds over and support and facilitate setting up the sort of regional type of commissioning bodies according to what Māori think is best. And Māori can make decisions on how to fund marae as the essential infrastructure that they always have been. We are showing here an actual policy that upholds Article 2, Mana Motuhake.



Daniel: I think politicians have misunderstood what their job is. Their job is to set the funding milestones, articulate the vision of where we want to go, and then step away and make the experts actually handle delivery. Instead, we've got a political class that is poking its fingers in.

Sector underfunding



Elliot: Now, in terms of your two-thirds funding, if it's going to be that way, I would actually just contextualise your work to engage in the two-thirds of work. You've got to protect your own people, otherwise they're burned out hard and fast.

Boot camps



Willow-Jean: We have committed to scrapping the boot camps and that funding should be invested into programmes that work. We want to work with communities, Māori, and other organisations to identify those that are working and support those and give others opportunities as well.



Elliot: Yeah, empirically speaking, boot camps actually do work. The empirical data of New Zealand and outside, those are actually quite clear... What didn't work was the fact that [the rangatahi] came back to the same family, same friend, same gang, same cliques. That's what didn't work.

Final thoughts



Marama: The Greens have consistently had plans to ensure that people can access health and support, income support, price support, power support. We know that there's enough in Aotearoa. We will continue to make sure that we address the economic transformation. We have a powerful opportunity not only to get rid of this government, but to put in place one that prioritises people and Te Taiao.



Willow-Jean: We have to address the past, and that's what we will be doing in terms of the Royal Commission's response that is needed, the independent redress system, working on those recommendations. We also need to address the harm that is still happening today and into our future to remove that. It's what survivors wanted, that is the devolution plan, and supporting you, the sector, who are doing that work with workforce and acknowledging that youth work.



Daniel: We can no longer put off the quite challenging, confronting structural reform in our society any longer... But to do that, we have to fix politics. Our politics is fundamentally tribal, and there's inability to build consensus. We are a centrist party. We can work with both sides. We believe we can be a circuit breaker for the current system.



Elliot: New Zealand First is about putting New Zealand first, and we're about putting New Zealanders first. And we don't care what skin colour you are. And one of the big things that is different from us, from the Greens, from the Labour Party, is that we don't look upon Māori as a form of grievance in order to have a victim mindset. I worked at an institute where we were 94% Pasifika, Māori... When [the rangatahi] came in, what we said was, boy, you are going to excel because you are excellent, not because of your skin colour, not because of your whakapapa, because of you.

