

resulting in multiple building products, opening up many job opportunities.

One attendee had a very impressive plan for the Whakatāne district's future. Each stage of his plan (involving forestry initially) was interlocked into other spin-offs and flow-on benefits.

I will take Mr Minten's advice and read up on the Forest Industry Transformation Plan developed by Labour, which has been shelved by National.

Whakatāne District Council is focused on developing "community wellbeing", which was introduced to councils in 2002 to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future.

We need to encourage, promote industries in our district to create employment that lifts us out of deprivation.

I do understand Te Rāhui boat harbour project intention is to create jobs. I think the contamination remediation cost will far exceed their budget, and the risk to the environment and community is too great.

Could the land be capped, and a sports facility/training centre/events centre become an alternative project?

Recently, several Beacon correspondents have made some good suggestions.

Could the Provincial Growth Fund grant and Harbour Fund contribution be retained but transferred to a different project that does not require any excavation?

Catrina Jones

I AM writing in response to Dana Kirkpatrick's Members Only piece in the Beacon July 3.

As part of the protest group Postpone The Tax Cuts, we met with Ms Kirkpatrick on May 3 this year and conveyed to her our concerns about the amount of borrowing that the National-led Coalition government would need to undertake to finance this budget.

We were told to wait until the budget came out and then see if our concerns were valid.

Well, it turns out Finance Minister Nicola Willis will need to borrow \$28.7 billion over the next four years. That's up by \$22 billion from the \$6.5 billion forecast just before Christmas that sent financial experts across the political spectrum calling on the Government to postpone the tax cuts.

The tax cuts themselves will cost Ms Willis \$14.7 billion.

The numbers don't lie; there is no doubt Ms Willis is borrowing to fund the tax cuts, and then some.

And as I write this, I can hear the old guard of National party faithful yelling at the top of their croaky voices, "that's better than Robertson". Bless them.

However, the facts are that Willis will spend \$2.6 billion MORE than Roberston planned to in 2024/2025.

Willis will spend \$194.8 billion in this financial year. Overall, the National led coalition will spend nearly \$7 billion more in 24/25 than in the last financial year.

And that's with the massive job cuts.

In dollar terms, Willis is the biggest spending finance minister in Aotearoa's history.

The budget for all New Zealanders predicts no surplus in the foreseeable future, \$10 billion a year in debt servicing, higher unemployment, lower wage growth while prices are expected to rise by 8.5 per cent.

More New Zealanders are expected to leave for better lifestyles while immigration is set to increase with people happy to work for poor wages.

Per capita GDP fell by 2.8 per cent this year and will fall again in 24/25. By 2028, if things go to plan, New Zealanders will be just 4 per cent better off by 2028 than they were at the end of the final Auckland lockdown of 2021.

And at what cost?

Our public services which were rundown to the point of dysfunction under Sir John Key and Sir Bill English and built back up under Dame Jacinda Ardern and Chris Hipkins are once again being run down under the National led coalition. We are already seeing the flow on effects of this with a deeper recession and higher than expected unemployment.

Putting people out of work to deliver a budget for all New Zealanders sounds like something from a Monty Python skit – except it's not funny because this isn't a skit, this is our country going down the gurgler.

Happy landlords may be telling Ms Kirkpatrick that they'll vote for her again, but who else is falling for this?

One of the saving grace's from Ms Willis' budget has to be that the tax cuts for the wealthy were postponed.

Those on over \$180,000 have been put on hold.

Unless we intend to sell off everything that moves, and tax people for using every road in the country, probably including their driveways, the National-led coalition cannot proceed with any further tax cuts that increase our nation's debt.

This has been a budget that robs our grandchildren of any chance of getting ahead living in this country

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