

## John Blincoe

**T**HE MEMBER for Nelson might be new to Parliament, but he's not new to politics. His political career dates back to his student days when he served as president of the New Zealand University Students Association for three years.

It was here that he learned the tools of the political trade. Lucky for him that he did. Former conservation minister Philip Woollaston dropped out of the 1990 election with only a month to go leaving Blincoe to fight a very shaky seat. To the surprise of many, Blincoe held it for Labour and has followed Woollaston into the conservation arena as well.

A lawyer by training, he has never practised, preferring to use the law as a tool to help in formulating and writing policy. It is in this field he believes his best contribution can be made.

Describing himself as an "instinctive conservationist", he has been a member of Forest and Bird for longer than he can remember.

He was the founding convener of the Wellington Clean Water Campaign which was set up to solve the sewage disposal problem on the Wellington South Coast. When the council showed little interest in solving the problem he stood on the issue of clean water and was elected in 1986.

Blincoe is a keen tramper and his favourite spot is in the headwaters of the Anatoki River (north of the Cobb valley in North West Nelson). Anybody who enjoys the mountains of New Zealand has got to be a conservationist, he says. "This is how you refresh your spirit."

network and protection of marine ecosystems is a major project Blincoe would like to take on. "We should regard the marine environment the same as the coast," he says, and he would like to implement the ambitious Forest and Bird target of placing ten percent of the coastline into marine reserves by the year 2000.

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shadow ministers say they are not able to give funding promises so the issue remains up in the air.

While he would like to ban mining in national parks, Blincoe doesn't oppose the use of the DoC estate as part of the settlement for Ngai Tahu claims nor a Ngai Tahu management role. "However, a public process must be involved," he says. "Otherwise hostility will result. If you do things by the right process you get good outcomes. The present process is not up to that." He argues that any settlement would involve guaranteed public access and that Ngai Tahu development would be subject to the same regulations as everybody else.

The expansion of the marine reserve

He believes public attitudes are changing and that the target is possible.

The problems facing the conservation estate, however, cannot be solved without a commitment of resources, and it is put to Blincoe that volunteers will not establish marine reserves, deal with the pest problems, survey land under the Protected Natural Area Programme or release DoC from the pressure to find funding through concessions. "We'll have to look really hard at how we can achieve more," he responds. "The level of funding needs to be addressed. Clearly I'd like to have more funds but I'm not allowed to promise to spend more money."

While Labour supports the ban on the export of native woodchips and logs,

Blincoe does not support a ban on the logging of native forest or a ban on the export of value-added forest products. He believes all logging must be carried out sustainably.

Blincoe would like to apply one definition of sustainability to all forest owners including the Crown. "We want as much native forest standing as possible." However he would not guarantee that the present controls on private land would be extended to cover the Crown's indigenous production forests.

To protect more forest, Blincoe would like to extend the national park system. He supports the Forest Heritage Fund and Nga Whenua Rahui, brainchild of the last Labour administration, but cannot promise more funding to extend their work.

**L**ABOUR APPEARS set to make an election issue of energy policy.

"Energy efficiency, as the fifth fuel, (the others are electricity, oil, gas and coal)," states a direction paper on energy released last August, "will become the most important new energy source under a Labour Government".

Energy efficiency is a "rare gem", says Pete Hodgson, which simultaneously offers economic, environmental and social benefits. It must be integrated into industry and not treated as a "bolt on" policy.

Labour gives a commitment not to privatise Electricorp. Hodgson says some energy regulation is necessary and Labour is considering the use of economic instruments such as progressive pricing to facilitate energy efficiency.

The current spate of private sector proposals to build environmentally damaging power stations such as the Ngakawau hydro scheme will not be implemented under Labour, claims Hodgson. Regulation and an efficient energy environment will discourage them.

Hodgson sees "no significant future for stand-alone thermal generation" and believes that the Electricorp production monopoly will be broken by Electricity Supply Authorities building wind farms.

Labour's response to global warming hinges on the success of their energy efficiency policy. Officially the party still pursues the aim of reducing the 1990 level of carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by the year 2000.

The party's direction paper points out that a ten percent reduction in electricity use would result in an eight percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. However energy efficiency would have to be extended to other sectors if the goal is to be achieved.

