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# Mr John Taylor

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Presentation also available on Forum website - [www.knowledgewave.org.nz](http://www.knowledgewave.org.nz)

## **What should be the defining characteristics of New Zealand in 2020?**

It is a privilege to begin this record-breaking relay, eventually to hand the baton on to some younger, faster finishers and the great range of potential in this auditorium this morning.

I represent an older generation, who were in many ways a lucky generation, but where has that good fortune taken us today?

- born in 1940's
- well educated, a little personal cost
- sky was the limit
- from post war austerity to 60's and 70's prosperity
- to strong polarities emerging in 80's and 90's
- widening of gaps, a losing of our way
- focus on individual gain rather than community well-being
- too many becoming disenfranchised, especially among our fast growing population of Maori and Pacific islanders

Now too much of our population gaining C, D, E grades of complacency, dependency and envy out of their life and educational experiences.

What is needed to build a more dynamic, independent and inclusive New Zealand in 2020?

This must be seen against some global cynicism concerning NZ's place in the world as reflected by a former politician – *we are only a branch office economy now.*

Despite the reality behind part of that, I cannot accept that as a basis for our future thinking.

Further, we live in what has traditionally been a very egalitarian society – we must now redefine what that means in terms of lifting everyone's sights and expectations. Currently that hitherto laudable ideal acts a negative gravitational force – very fertile ground for the tall poppy syndrome holding NZ back.

Here are my 6 of the best, for which NZ will be renowned world wide in 2020.

- 1 A new, more respected and more responsive system of government, replacing our outmoded Westminster derivative, which has fallen into disrepute, and puts far too much focus on a few leaders rather than many

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Which would

- attract the best talent

- encourage robust, non-personalised debate – eg on the battle between commonsense and political correctness
- listen as well as lead, via occasional referenda, to build a more aware discriminating national electorate – and psyche

## 2 A well articulated, distinctive and dynamic economy

Which would

- maintain a balance between our traditional primary export industries, especially foodstuffs for an over-populating world
- and the more creative, entrepreneurial, IT, biotech, film -making, tourism, education and other similar export ventures for which NZ is becoming well known – a number represented here today.

## 3. This would be maintained by a high quality, world class education system

Which would

- encourage diversity and differentiation
- recognise different abilities and not try to make everyone the same

- be more decentralised but would still have a common core including, literacy, numeracy, history, science, technology as well as education in character, citizenship and leadership training for all
  - would be compulsory to age 18 – we rush our youngsters out of education and into life far too quickly.
4. We also need to demand the ongoing development of a world class media, with real social responsibility and the highest of critical standards – good to see a few exceptions now leading the way!

Which would

- not accept the the banal, the meretricious and the cynical as the front page norm
- accentuate the positive rather than the put down in the New Zealand psyche

I do not think our media reflects our NZ society deep down – if it does then we are indeed in trouble.

5 A rich, diverse, and inclusive community- based society

Which would

- refocus on strong family and civic values
- value independence
- care for its weakest members
- celebrate achievement across a wide range of activities, especially the academic, the artistic and the entrepreneurial – sport in NZ will always look after itself!
- . include a well debated, well understood and progressive immigration policy
- learn to regard all people as persons and characters in their own right, not as a member of a particular race, colour or creed – at the funeral of Cardinal Basil Hume, Roman Catholic Archbishop, Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks described him as a hero in the Old Testament tradition – where a hero was “one who turns strangers into friends.”

NZ is going to need such heroes in all communities as our demographics change dramatically over the next 20 years.

6 A powerful, shared uniting vision of what it is to be a New Zealander.

A vision built on respect for our unique natural environment

On our traditions of friendliness and hospitality

Our pioneering, number 8 wire, “can do” past.

Our indomitable ANZAC spirit ....

All a great foundation for our future national directions

moving on to embrace the reality that “she’ll be right” is no longer good enough – merely encouraging the sloppy and casual.

That it will take far more cleverness of thought and action, far more open sharing of different views, (as happened at our table last night!) and far more quality and purpose throughout all communities in New Zealand to achieve that elusive goal. I would add, all interlaced with rich veins of kiwi humour and enthusiasm. - from Stewart Island pub to Northland Marae!

As in the cheese ad, good things take time, but I strongly sense that this Forum will unleash the passion, the talent and that deep down, authentic , heroic leadership which will give Team NZ’s bow a huge lift well before 2020.