

# Greens vow to defend DPB

by Claire McMahon

Green MP Sue Bradford is apprehensive about Labour's coalition decision and vows to prevent the new Government from harming those receiving the domestic purposes benefit.

"I am worried we have two right-wing parties as part of the Government now," she says.

"The Green Party will be working very hard over the next three years to try and make sure Labour does not do anything to harm people on the DPB."

This comes after Labour announced on Monday it will receive support on confidence and supply from New Zealand First and United Future.

Work and Income New Zealand statistics show that at June 30 105,647 people aged between 18 and 64 years were receiving a DPB.

Current benefit policy allows solo parents to receive the benefit if they care for a child under 18 and are not living with or receiving support from the other parent or a partner.

ACT's Dr Muriel Newman says the policy gives women the option not to name their child's father on the grounds of violent tendencies or not knowing who the father is.

"People were not naming the father, so the fathers were not getting caught up in the child support net," she says.

Newman says the current benefit provides too many incentives, especially in poorer communities.

"If you put in place too many appealing incentives, numbers increase."

Newman would like to see a

complete revamp of the welfare system.

"Let's change it all, turn the welfare system on its head," she says.

She advocates modernising the welfare system to create a temporary benefit system where people are assessed annually.

"By doing that you would cut out a huge amount of fraud and you will find those people who need to be better looked after."

But this way of thinking has Bradford concerned.

From the Green Party's point of view the idea of women becoming pregnant to go on the DPB is absurd, she says.

"It is a myth — the whole thing of women getting pregnant to go onto the DPB and it makes me angry."

"There can be quite a lot of sadness when you are left pregnant or you are left with babies on your own."

The Greens' desired policy changes to the benefit and social welfare include ending Working for Families' discrimination against beneficiary families.

"There are enough stigmas and blame around it anyway, not to have to be belittled as well," says Bradford.

The party would have no compulsory work testing for solo parents on the DPB. Bradford would also like to see penalties removed such as the \$28 a week drop in income if a woman does not name the child's father.

"We need to remove penalties and lift the DPB so it is actually enough to live on or at least restore the DPB to its pre-1991 levels," she says.

Bradford says the Greens have a relatively small chance of reforming the DPB.



PHOTO: ROSIE COTTER

FUEL ALTERNATIVE: Allan Cannell with one of Stagecoach's five biodiesel-run buses.

# Stagecoach experiments with biodiesel 'future fuel'

by Rosie Cotter

Auckland public transport provider Stagecoach is one of a growing number of companies to experiment with biodiesel fuel.

In a joint project with oil company BP, Stagecoach has been running five buses in its fleet on the fuel since April.

The biodiesel used is a mixture of mineral diesel blended with five per cent animal tallow.

Stagecoach engineering director Allan Cannell says the

trial started with a 20 per cent blend, but found the biodiesel clogged the dispensing pump in cold weather.

The bus company changed to a five per cent blend and has not encountered any problems since.

Former transport minister Pete Hodgson expects to have a mandatory biodiesel sales target in place by 2008.

He says New Zealand has waited long enough and it is time to go mandatory with alternative fuels.

"New Zealand is behind the eight-ball compared to other countries," he says.

Cannell says biodiesel costs the bus company the same as regular diesel.

He says it would consider using it more widely if it became economically beneficial, but at this stage it isn't.

Biodiesel is seen as an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional fuels because it comes from renewable sources such as feedstock and vegetable oils.

# New book slams NZ security policies

by Kirsty Charles

A security issues author has condemned New Zealand intelligence measures and shed light on the global phenomenon of unconventional warfare in a new book.

The book, released this month, calls for a review of security and intelligence measures in New Zealand.

University of Auckland political studies lecturer Dr Paul Buchanan, who became an expert on all things terrorism and security related in the wake of 9/11, has released a series of essays titled *With Distance Comes Perspective*.

The essays cover a range of topics, including New Zealand security and intelligence, domestic and international politics, and a technical analysis of guerrilla warfare and the use of terrorism.

The author addresses the Ahmed Zaoui case and the first part of the book focuses on what Buchanan sees as the failings of New Zealand security and intelligence agencies.

Buchanan says although

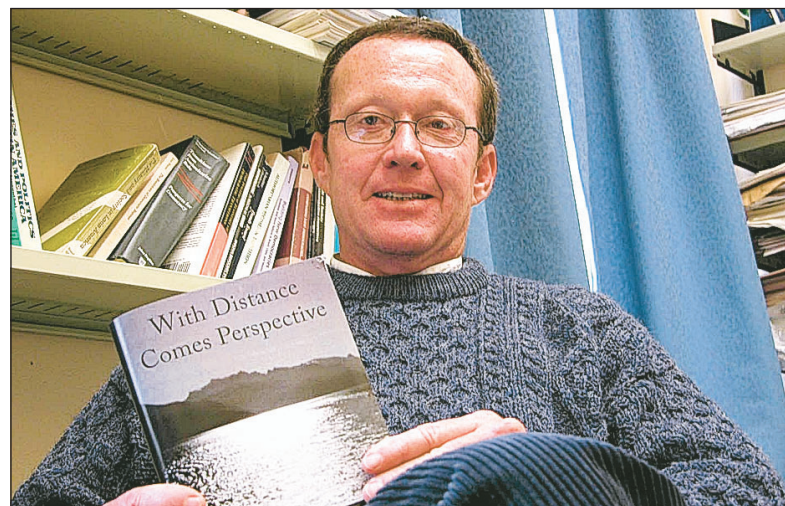


PHOTO: KIRSTY CHARLES

DR PAUL BUCHANAN: "We don't need to be puppets of Australia."

there is little threat of an international act of terrorism in New Zealand, more attention needs to be given to security.

"The biggest holes are in intelligence. The bottom line is that we seem to take the word of our larger intelligence patrons uncritically."

"We have to understand that when you're downstream in the intelligence flow, whatever you get has been spun, filtered and manipulated, so you're not getting the straight story."

Buchanan says being dependent on other countries for New Zealand's intelligence is a luxury the country cannot afford in the wake of 9/11.

New Zealand needs an "independent intelligence driven capability" that responds strictly and exclusively to New Zealand's national interests, which often differ from other countries'.

"We don't need to be seen as the puppets of the Australians, or the lapdogs of the Yanks."

"That will damage our image and reputation in the global arena because New Zealand has a strong reputation of independence and autonomy when it comes to its foreign affairs."

Buchanan says the close relationship between the External Assessments Bureau, which makes policy on the country's foreign defence capability, and the Government is problematic.

He says the Prime Minister is ultimately in charge of the bureau, which leads to decisions being made about security that favour government interests.

He adds that while internal espionage issues are important, the bulk of the New Zealand's security resources focus on them to the detriment of external espionage.

New Zealand, Buchanan says, is complacent in matters of security and what security concerns we do have are misdirected.

"Worrying about fundamentalist Islamic terrorists living and running around in Christchurch or some other place — I think we're starting to lose the plot there."

He says it's more likely for

anti-GE people here to do something irregular than jihadists.

Formerly of the US Defence Department, Buchanan says his "outsider looking in" approach gives him an alternative perspective on New Zealand's system.

"I'm an old Pentagon guy and I trained intelligence guys. I don't have a lefty axe to grind."

"I'm not coming from a New Zealand partisan perspective; it's coming from an aghast former American perspective."

Buchanan also reflects on the recent years of US politics and discusses the "certain dysfunction and certain ignorance" in the way it is behaving.

Buchanan says terrorism will be the preferred tactic used by opponents of large Western powers and that the world is going to see more small irregular conflicts punctuated by terrorism in the future.

"Because it's a psychological weapon, it's a way of getting around the conventional force."

"It's the ultimate in manoeuvre warfare. Hit a soft target and disappear and leave everybody dumbstruck and confused about what actually happened."