



SHANE JONES: Identifies himself as middle-class but has a background in radical protest.

# Pragmatist Jones could be strong candidate for PM

## Editorial

Ever since Shane Jones announced his candidacy for the Labour Party, the call of "Maori prime minister" has rung out. Sir Graham Latimer was one of the first to climb the belfry. But the ringing started way back with Sir James Carroll, who was acting Prime Minister for several months in 1909 and 1911. Since then many others — among them Sir Apirana Ngata — Winston Peters and John Tamihere, have been touted as possible contenders for the job.

It is hard to deny Jones' pedigree. An alumni of St Stephens College and Victoria University, he holds a Masters in Public Administration from Harvard. He has chaired the Sealord Group, Te Ohu Kaimoana and the Waitangi Fisheries Commission, which have begun the process of returning financial assets to Maori. He identifies himself as middle-class but has a background in radical protest as a member of Te Kawariki, the Far North protest group, with Hone Harawira in the 1980s.

In 1999, John Tamihere found himself in a similar situation to Jones. Lauded as a potential Maori prime minister, he had the necessary charisma and pragmatism but fell from grace through his political gaffs.

Jones shares many of Tamihere's characteristics; he is educated, charismatic and pragmatic. While others may tag him as a Maori politician, he sees himself as Maori and a politician — an important distinction.

Jones' proven track record in business could stand him in good stead with the business community too; something that has always been a chink in Helen Clark's armour.

Against Jones is the fact that prime ministers are rarely parliamentary spring chickens. Both Helen Clark and Jim Bolger took 18 years from entering Parliament to becoming prime minister. Jenny Shipley and Mike Moore spent a decade in the House before leading the country (although Don Brash very nearly made it in after three years).

AUT's Dr Paul Moon says the

search for a Maori prime minister is a romantic notion dreamed up outside the political parties and away from the realities of political life. He says these realities require parties to choose a leader with broad voter appeal and he doubts whether a Maori candidate would fit that bill.

The changing demographics mean that New Zealand will have an increasingly diverse population in the future. Perhaps this will impact on our choice of leader although America's diversity has not been reflected in the Oval office.

Women once faced similar barriers to becoming prime minister. Dr Moon contends that women rose to the position because women make up more than half the population, whereas Maori make up only 15 per cent.

Yet ultimately Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark became Prime Minister because they were the strongest candidates to lead their parties, not because of their gender. A strong leader (with a practical background in business) who happens to be

Maori will be a strong candidate also.

Jones has said his experiences helping Matiu Rata with Mana Motuhake made it clear that big changes could only happen in big parties. He has made a pragmatic choice to go with a party where he can make an impact.

Jones' background of education, business acumen and pragmatism suggest strong leadership possibilities in the future — but then so did Tamihere.

In 1988, Te Kawariki's Shane Jones observed Maori sovereignty or control over resources remained an elusive goal. Less than 20 years later the same Shane Jones oversaw Te Ohu Kaimoana's \$67 million pay out to Ngapuhi. Something that today appears to be a long way off, may not be all that far fetched.

But he will become prime minister only if he's the strongest candidate for the job, not to fulfil a box-ticking requirement, something the pragmatist Jones will no doubt agree with.

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## Letters to the Editor

### Depth needed

I came across your newspaper in a downtown cafe. My companion and I had never heard of it before. What does your name actually mean?

Anyway, it seems rather refreshing for a local rag. But for those of us who travel, your international content seems rather threadbare. Does the world beyond Rangitoto exist for you guys?

The article about the German electoral stalemate was a good insight into life under MMP. But for me, the most interesting article was the one about the racist Fiji coupsters.

Surely this must be one of the most important issues around and I haven't seen much about it in the mainstream. If Fiji has yet another coup, what is going to happen in the region?

But what is all the crap about Hooters Girls? What a boring half page waste of advertising space!

Give us something with a bit more depth, please!

Martin Spring  
Devonport

### Well done

After many gruelling nights locked in the Te Waha Nui production room, working furiously to meet our deadlines last year, I

am delighted to see the high standard of the paper being upheld by the new team. Good work everyone.

Russell Page-Wood  
Former Te Waha Nui member

### Road Toll

It was interesting to read your articles about boy racers (TWN, June 2005). Police don't know how to stop a record number of people dying on Hawke's Bay roads. They say the usual factors — speed, no seat belts, driver error — are involved in the 35 deaths so far this year.

Enforcement does not seem to be working.

In September, Hastings police fined more than 190 people for not wearing a seat belt. Then on Saturday (October 15) they had to inform another family their 18-year-old son had been killed. He appeared to have fallen asleep at the wheel but a seat-belt may have saved his life.

We are bucking the national trend which sees less people dying on the roads. What is it about Hawke's Bay?

The one group labelled as part of the problem, boy racers, certainly appear to think this way. It's common to hear complaints about both the enforcement and educational/shock advertising campaigns designed to make people think this way.

CARTOON: RUFUS McEWAN



If they're not working then why don't we ask people what might work.

Boy racing pin-up boy Ricky Moulder doesn't seem to have a clue (*Sunday Star Times*, October 16) but others of his age and with similar feelings towards cars might.

Jonathan Dow  
Haumoana  
Hawke's Bay

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### For the record

- Tagata Pasifika's executive producer is Stephen Stehlin, not Stalin. *TWN*, No. 10, page 2.
- Dr Wayne Hope is associate professor of communication studies at AUT, not professor. *TWN*, No. 10, page 3.
- The Alliance "acrimoniously split" in 2002, not the Green Party. *TWN*, No. 10, page 3.
- Avele College is in Samoa, not Fiji. The error occurred during subediting. *TWN*, No. 10, page 23.