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**INSIDE: A book
for a week-long
lockdown**

**IAN
WARDEN**

Climate doomism is just as harmful as climate denial

It's time to buckle up and do what's necessary, and that means surviving this crisis by sticking together.

**TIM
HOLLO**



"SO, New Zealand looks like the best place to ride out the apocalypse. When are we moving?"

If I had a tonne of coal in the ground for every time someone had said something like this, we'd be several steps back from the brink. And, as this week's IPCC report makes clear, when we're this close to the edge, every tonne counts.

Despite the scientific warnings, the tonnes of coal are still being burned. But the doomism and survivalism too many of us are indulging in makes it harder to stop.

To be clear, if you're not absolutely terrified about the climate crisis, you're not paying attention. It's important that we feel that fear. It's important that we grieve for what we've already lost, and for what we can't save.

I'm not here to tell you to buck up and have hope. I'm here to say that, through the grief and fear, we need to buckle up and make our own hope. Together.

Doomism makes it harder to do that in three ways.

Firstly, it shuts off the possibility of action. By building this narrative that it's time to run for the hills, we're telling ourselves and everyone else that it's too late to stop catastrophe, just plan your escape.

We can't afford that attitude. And, as the scientists have been at pains to point out this week, it's not actually true. Yet.

They've told us that, whatever we do now, we will see far worse fires and droughts, storms and sea-level rise. It's bad, and it will get worse. But if we act with great urgency and determination, we can save a lot, and we can make a huge difference to billions of lives - human and non-human, now and for generations into the future.

I reckon it's worth doing that. Don't you? Second problem: that survivalism thing? It's a silly comforting lie.

Again, we all have these indulgences. It's a very human response. But, let's face it, it's crap. My comforting lie went up in smoke when the Tasmanian temperate rainforests started to burn in 2015. I could no longer ignore reality: in a world of 2- or 3-degree heating, triggering tipping points and leading to 5 degrees, there's nowhere to hide.

The idea that there will be safe places if, as ecosystems collapse, we follow the *Mad Max* road, is nonsense. In that world, no one will be safe. Ever.

There's a reason it's usually privileged people, and often the uber-rich, who talk about survivalism - they're in the position to assume that it's them who'll survive.

It's time that bubble was burst.

Which brings us to the third problem: running for the hills divides us at a time when, more than ever, we desperately need to come together. Division makes survival for anyone far less likely.

The thing about looking for boltholes in New Zealand is that, by definition, there's only room for a select few. Automatically, this divides the world into those who deserve to survive and those who don't.

Who's going to make that choice? You? How will you feel if you get lucky? How will you feel if you don't? How will you protect yourself, if you do? What will you say to those who get left behind?

We're drawn to imaginings of apocalypse informed by pop culture. Marauding bands in souped-up vehicles, all tattoos, cross-bows, and surprisingly intricate hairstyles. Picking a path down empty roads searching for canned food, senses primed, muscles tensed, ready to run from the cannibals with their chiselled cheekbones.

These titillating tales draw on a rich vein of mythology. But they're just that - mythology. They don't reflect or determine reality.

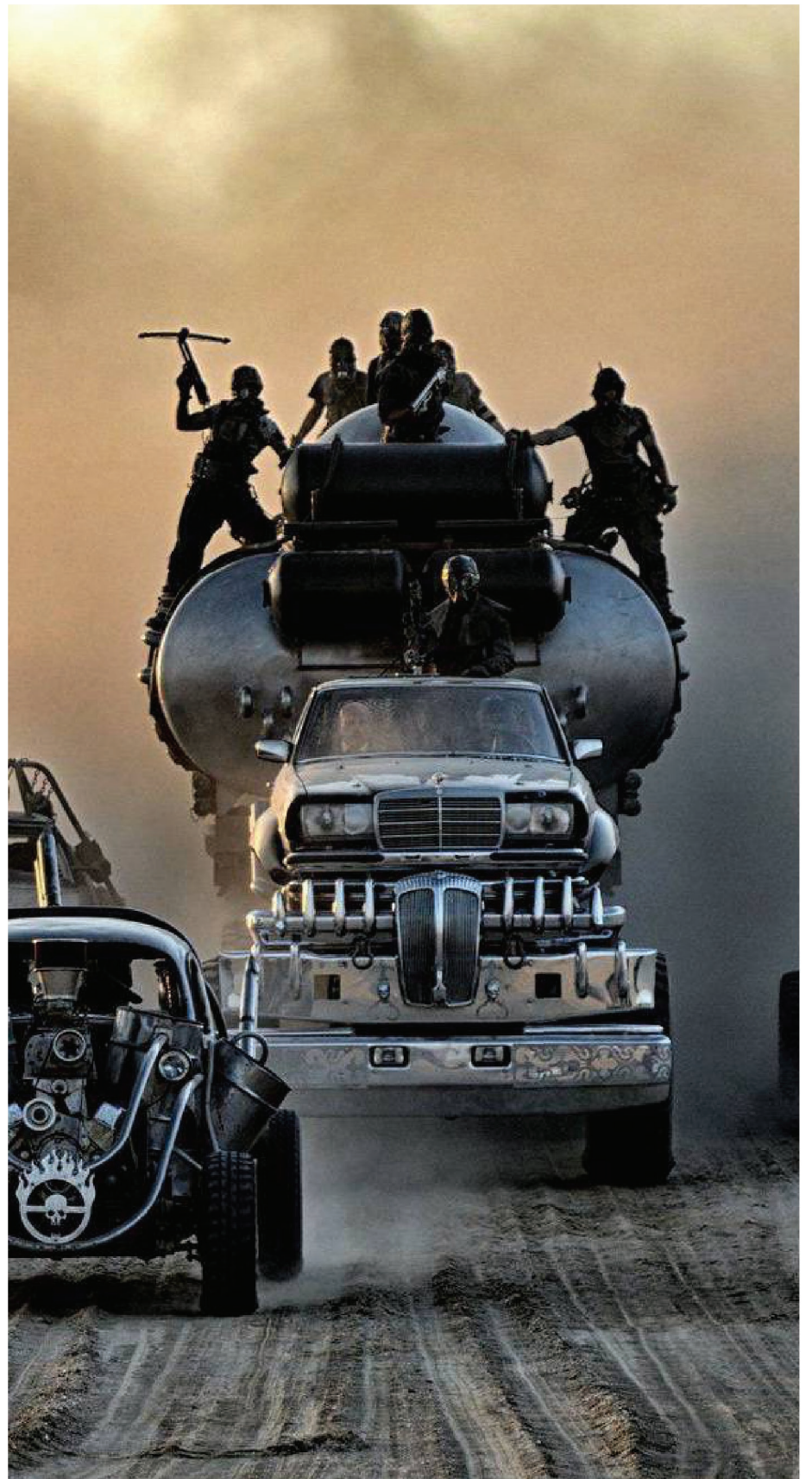
Here's the reality: at times of crisis, we humans reach out to each other in mutual aid. While the instinct of those in power is to raise the drawbridge, slam the gates, and try to set us against each other, the community tends to just get on with the important business of supporting each other.

We see it in people sandbagging each other's homes as floodwaters rise, preparing meals for firefighters, donating clothes and even opening our homes to those in need.

We see it in communities setting up renewable energy co-operatives, holding working bees to insulate each other's homes, and planting microforests to cool the streets, sequester carbon, and bring back wildlife.

We see it in urban farming co-operatives turning gardens and street verges into food production plots - food which then gets distributed around the neighbourhood.

We see it in sharing groups and repairing groups; in protest groups sounding the



Post-apocalyptic fun? A still from 'Mad Max: Fury Road'. Picture: Jasin Boland/Warner Bros.

alarm and local groups bringing communities together to democratically plan ways through what's coming.

Many of the things we must do to reduce our impact on the climate are also things we must do not just to survive, but thrive. They make life better, more fun, more meaningful.

They also put pressure on politics, which desperately needs a shake-up. Because doomism infects our politics really badly.

From the Coalition we hear nonsense about how ending fossil fuels means the sky will fall in. Communities living that new reality show it makes life better.

And from Labor we consistently hear complaints that science-based action is just too hard. You can't win elections with too much ambition, they say. Well, communities

from Gloucester to Gladstone, Indi to Indoo-roopilly, are putting the lie to this, coming together to plan their own transition plans and reinvent politics, because the major parties are failing them.

Around the globe, communities are buckling up and doing what's necessary. Recognising that the only way we survive this is by surviving together. Demanding that governments and corporations either do what it takes or get out of the way. Building a better world from the ashes of the old.

What a time to be alive.

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