

CODE - IN= Interviewer, L.R.= Larry Ross, A,B,C,etc= other people interviewed,  
C.K.= Chris King.

- IN. The borough council where members are split down the middle on whether going nuclear free is a useful if symbolic gesture or a pointless waste of time. New Zealand shares the view that the very survival of mankind is threatened by the existence of nuclear weapons and the continuing arms race. New Zealand's official policy is cold comfort to the peace protesters, too much urging, not enough action. They want New Zealand to adopt neutrality, to opt out of an arms race that has already put enough might in the nuclear arsenals to blow us up many times over.
- A. "I'm against nuclear war, I don't see that there are going to be any winners, and I think it's a situation where we all have to feed into that feeling of being against it, otherwise it's going to happen."
- B. "If we really could get straight to the nations that have them, and put the pressure on them to dismantle that would be far better than trying to make this square mile of people a nuclear weapons free zone."
- C. "It would be the end of mankind, there is no defence against such a strategic nuclear weapon and people have gotta believe it."
- IN. The Canterbury Plains are a long way from the fields of nuclear brinkmanship, can anyone really believe that tiny Rangiora is on the target maps of the super powers? But to a small group here, that's not really the point. They want New Zealand to be nuclear free and Rangiora to be declared a nuclear weapons free zone. Even if no-one in Moscow or Washington could give a fig, they believe it's the only way they can signal a point to the mighty. Rangiora, a borough of 6½ thousand people just twenty minutes of the motorway from Christchurch, one of the dozen areas gearing up for a nuclear vote. There's nothing special about the debate here but if it's true the peace movement is on the move then in Rangiora the arguments are most evenly balanced, a council vote has already split fifty-fifty with the mayor's casting vote going against. Those in favour simply can't accept that Rangiora is safe from the missile.
- D. "Maybe remote yes, for the moment, but then you think about it and it could land tomorrow. I think probably in terms of a symbolic gesture that's very important. I think because of the missiles and the technology that goes along side them that we are as prime, perhaps, to be targets as say somewhere in Europe or anywhere in the world for that matter. So I do think it's a reality and it's a reality we all have to have a say in, in trying to stop, and all we are trying to do is help the borough do what must be right for the citizens."
- IN. This Rangiora peace group formed 4 months ago. It forced a second council on the issue with a door to door petition. They collected 1500 signatures in the borough and 1000 from the district. They say they pulled support from all the political parties. Chris King the chairman, a Rangiora resident of 26 years. His Royal Navy war service left an impression.
- C.K. "Really I think that it was pretty horrific in those days with conventional methods that we were using. I wouldn't want to go through it again. I wouldn't want my sons and grandchildren to go through it and I can see that next time I know it would be completely different. I think that next time it would be so horrible that I really can't contemplate it."
- IN. Rangiora's peace group was sparked along by this man, Larry Ross, a peace protester from Vietnam days, he calls his home a peace workshop. It's a twenty thousand dollar budget organization with 500 donors.
- L.R. "I've toured the country several times lecturing and starting peace groups. Helen Cauldicott has come and electrified the country with her tremendous appeal and showing just how close to the brink of nuclear war we are. Other people have gone out and circulated in city and country areas lecturing. We send out papers through-out the country responding to orders for peace products and information. All this helps stimulate the growth and awareness. Where-ever there is an awareness of the nuclear threat then you've got a potential peace group forming."

- IN. Devonport borough was the first of 40 local bodies to go nuclear free, that was in March 1981. A gesture of opposition to a new naval wharf in the borough. It didn't stop the wharf but that was no set back to other councils. The signs now cover over a million residents. What this means in practice is a call for positive neutrality, withdrawal from ANZUS, an active peace making role to prevent war, and New Zealand a neutral peace maker in the event of war. But that makes no sense to 5 of Rangiora's 10 councillors; they say its an Anti-American response. Defence and security are central government matters not the business of local councils.
- J. "I can't see any reason why we have to make a token gesture to get nuclear free when it means nothing at all when central government can over rule us and do what they like."
- IN. To Lester Pulley, A lifetime resident of the Rangiora district and councillor for 9 years, its also a question of numbers.
- K. "There's less than two thousand people who have signed that petition. Some have told me afterwards that they didn't realise what they were signing. There's a voting power here of around about 5000 voters, eligible voters. Now under two thousand is less than a half and I will not be party to bringing in something like that, the minority want and letting that minority rule the majority."
- IN. Barbara Spur, mother of three children returned from overseas with her scientist husband to settle back home. She represents Rangiora's national Council of Women which is fully backing a nuclear weapon free zone.
- B.S. "I actually went out just for two hours on a Saturday afternoon with another girl and we went to an area which was fairly newly developed with young married couples with small children and I would say we got 90% of those people signed up. They were just so pleased to see us, they said at least we can do something, we can put our name to a petition to express our fears and worries about the future."
- IN. This childrens playgroup has been meeting for eight years. It grew out of a Bible study group for mothers, nowadays it meets once a week a chance for the wives of some of Rangiora's professionals to talk while their children play.
- K. "When you've bought a child into the world, you know, you look forward to them growing up in a world that's comfortable for them. It isn't very nice to look ahead and think you wonder what they are going to live in or if they are going to live at all."
- L. "There is just so much tension, the prospect of war is becoming more and more real to me. If there is a nuclear war is is not just men going off to fight, Its going to be a button and that'll be it, there'll be nothing else. I believe in a God, I cant really believe that he will let us live in a world thats going to end like that, But man's making an awful mess of things in the mean time."
- IN. What about some of the older parts of Rangiora?
- M. "Well I believe that those that went perhaps to areas where there are retired people didn't get this 90% Perhaps 60% of people signed up there and this is what gives us an overall percentage of about 75% of households."
- IN. 18 year Nick Smith is standing for council on an anti-nuclear ticket, a 7th former at Rangiora High and a young Nat since 15. Hes just returned as an exchange student from America where joined the anti-nuclear youth movement. Nick Smith believes in nuclear deterrents but cant accept present levels of production, He wants arms reduction, New Zealand out of ANZUS, and Rangiora nuclear weapon free.

- J.S. "I think its quite obvious Rangiora's not going to be hit by a nuclear weapon or even Christchurch for that matter. But by declaring ourselves a nuclear weapon free zone, we are saying to the community of Rangiora and the world that, Hey we dont think that these things are so good. We think we've got too many of them and we should make some move to reduce the capacity of destruction."
- IN. Rangiora streets show few signs of the nuclear debate but we hoped to canvas some more of the local feeling inside the local RSA club. National RSA policy is for disarmament, ANZUS and a nuclear weapon free pacific. Permission to film at the club was given by the secartary Harry James. He told us that nuclear war is abhorrant to those who know the horrors of war and he thought we would find the majority of members supporting official RSA policy, But the closest we came to testing members opinion was an interview in the car park. Permission to film was withdrawn by an executive meeting of the club. "Just want to really simply as you; Why was it not possible to canvass members views inside the club?"
- L. "Well actually, they wouldnt neccessarily give the opinion of the executive of the RSA and the New Zealand RSA."
- IN. "What is the view of the RSA of the council voting on a nuclear weapons free zone for Rangiora?"
- L. "Well actually, its a non-issue as far as we are concerned: is that right ED? Yes it serves no usefull purpose;
- IN. In a written statement the club says it doesnt favour any local body declaring itself a weapon-free zone. A peace group meeting just two weeks before the message to councillors is that survival is as important as rates. On the question can New Zealand be a member of ANZUS and be a nuclear weapon free, they want weapons right out of New Zealands 12 mile territorial waters.
- M. "I dont think the present New Zealand government wants to make a commitment to nuclear disarmament, they are not in that position to do so and I can see them wanting to play a strong part in ANZUS with convential weapons. I dont think they are prepared to make a commitment against nuclear weapons due to the danger of destroying very good relationships with the United States. We've got to have the ships of our two partners, Australian ships and United States ships visiting us, exercising with our forces and that sort of thing. Now the danger of this sort of 12 mile imaginary fence is that would shut us out. Its virtually saying, we wont accept the hard things, we'd like to help, fair weather friends."
- N. "I try and think we dont really want to be friendly, perhaps if thats the word, with any super power that possess nuclear weapons. Its like being hand-cuffed to a friend walking down the street and he has a grenade in his hand with the pin out. I just wouldnt want to be part of that sort of scene."
- O. "Texas, Truxton, those things are far more likely to be way up in the North Pacific, Vladivostok, Camran Bay Vietnam, now that the Russians are using it. They would be the targets for the United States attention, the Wests attention if you like."
- IN. According to a Christchurch transport board member, these stickers turn the buses into potential peace ambassdors, but some suggest that when super power pressure is on, the signs are worth little more than the weight of thier paper.
- P. "We've all just read or heard on the news of this plane thats been shot down by the Russians, what are the local peace movement people doing about that?"
- L.R. "The Russians made a tremendous miscalcution and they shot down that airliner thinking it was a spy plane. This is the kind of thing that starts wars. Thats a perfect example of why we are in favour of a nuclear free zone, a neutral zone for New Zealand. Lets stop that before it develops into someting big. Lets be a moderating force not simply get on the bandwagon and be ready to go to war as New Zealand has in the past over incidents like this."

- IN. Wellington declared itself a nuclear weapon free zone on the 13th of April of last year. The next day the mayor announced his retirement. Just a day before the government announced the third visit of a nuclear powered warship to the harbour. A council declaration did nothing to stop that visit or another this year of the Texas. The city needed no further reminder that councils dont make defence policy.
- L.R. "They're making a symbolic gesture and they know it. Our society is filled with symbols; we have the cross; we have the flag; we have the mayoral chain; all symbols. Declaring a nuclear weapon free zone is an educational process symbolising the peoples rejection of involvement in nuclear war and looking for other solutions."
- IN. The minister of defence describes peace group proposals as sucker tucker, wishful longings for peace that ignore the difficulties of disarmament.
- Hon, D, Thompson. "I am not sure what the purpose is of those who campaign to get local bodies to declare themselves nuclear weapons free. They always have been and it seems a little ridiculous. But it may be that the campaign is aimed at publicizing the repudiation of nuclear weapons. I guess one of the most important examples I looked to was American protest after the Vietnam war. It forced a strong and powerful nation like America to get out of Vietnam. I believe in the same if people all round the world are saying to their governments, lets not have nuclear weapons, we dont want nuclear war and I'm quite sure the Russian people feel the same way."
- IN. Last time Rangiora bourough voted on a nuclear weapon free zone the council was split fifty-fifty and it looks like the peace group petition has done very little to change that because if councillors vote on the night the way they're thinking now, the vote will still be split fifty-fifty. The mayor will have the casting vote. That means that signs like this will be off limits around borough buildings.
- C.K. "We are hoping that we will be able to educate the councillors that perhaps arent at the moment supporting us and make them change thier minds. This is for the politicians, We dont know what the politicians internationally are doing, They dont tell us. But I'm sure that they are working on it, They're working on it, They're all human beings and none of them want war. So they must be working on it and we will see the answer hopefully without somebody pressing the button in the meantime."
- IN. At the end of the line is the frightening prospect that someday, somewhere, someone will press the button, no-one wants nuclear war but thats where agreement ends. Here in Rangiora and communities throughout New Zealand the question is which will continue to deter, missiles waiting in thier silos, or tiny circular stickers signalling stop.
- SEQUEL Rangiora was not declared a NWFZ at the Sept meeting of the Council. However the Rangiora peace group campaigned for sympathetic counsellors who were elected. When the NWFZ issue is put to the vote again it is expected that the new council will approve.