

# Yes campaign says Scotland can be fairer and more prosperous

## *Yes Scotland hold meeting in Musselburgh*

An independent Scotland has got what it takes – financially and aspirationally – to be a fairer and more prosperous country, Yes Scotland Chief Executive Blair Jenkins said last night.

Speaking at a public meeting in Musselburgh as part of Yes Scotland's nationwide listening tour, he said Scotland could more than afford to build the kind of nation that most people wanted for themselves and future generations.

Mr Jenkins said:- 'The evidence continues to build of the strength and depth of Scotland's economy, not just our natural resources of oil and gas and renewable energy, but also the growing contribution from food and drink, tourism and life sciences.

'Scotland is a wealthy country but it often doesn't feel that way. That's because of the unfair distribution of wealth and opportunity in the UK. Under successive Labour and Conservative governments over the last 30 years the UK has become the fourth most unequal country in the developed world and is well on the way to becoming the most unequal.

'Scotland has suffered more than most other parts of the UK. The consequences can be fatal. Scotland has a lower life expectancy than any other country in western or central Europe. And our shocking health inequalities are largely based on economic inequalities.

'Only this week a major report from Oxfam Scotland shows that the gap between rich and poor continues to widen. This has not happened by accident. This has happened because of Westminster policy. As the report says, inequality has been made worse by the tax and benefits systems.

'I agree with Oxfam Scotland that fundamental change is needed to build a country that ensures prosperity benefits all.'

He said a Yes vote would give Scotland the opportunity to make

that fundamental change – to choose a different path.

He added:- ‘The destruction of the welfare state in the UK is one of the main reasons for voting Yes. Hundreds of thousands of Scots are losing out and tens of thousands are being put into real difficulty. And yet we have the wealth and resources to be a fairer society.

‘We need to grab this unique opportunity that we are being offered on September, 18, 2014.

‘The No campaign will ask you whether you can afford to vote Yes. The answer is most emphatically: “Yes we can.”‘

Mr Jenkins was joined on the platform at Brunton Theatra by Scottish Greens MSP Alison Johnstone, SNP MSP Colin Beattie, Derek Durkin of Trade Unionists for Independence and JeaneFreeman, one of the founders of Women for Independence.

The meeting was chaired by journalist Alan Taylor. People who are currently undecided or are inclined to vote No in next year’s referendum were especially encouraged to attend.

Alison Johnstone said: ‘The powers which remain at Westminster make no sense from a Green perspective. We need a transformation in our society, our economy, and our politics.

‘Communities such as Musselburgh are being held back. We could tackle issues like fuel poverty if we had control over energy, and we could tackle inequality if we had control over tax and welfare.

‘I believe undecided voters who care about creating a better society, one where the public good is paramount and where nuclear weapons are not welcome, will move towards a Yes vote next year. No-one can predict the future but by taking responsibility we’d open up a world of possibilities, and they’d be ours to pursue.’

Jeane Freeman said:- ‘As the case for an independent Scotland is laid out, more and more people, including many women who have been reserving judgement, are starting to see why it makes sense for them and their families.

‘This referendum is about opportunity and having the self-confidence to do what is right for Scotland and the people who live and work here.’