

**Barton Deakin Brief: New Zealand 2023 Election Results**

**16 October 2023**

The 2023 New Zealand general election was held on Saturday 14 October.

New Zealand's general election delivered a decisive win for the centre-right National Party, ending six years of Labour-led government.

About Christopher Luxon

National Party leader Christopher Luxon will become New Zealand's 42nd Prime Minister. The former Chief Executive Officer of Air New Zealand has been in Parliament for just one term, making him New Zealand's shortest-serving MP to become Prime Minister.



Christopher Luxon was born in Christchurch and raised in Howick, Auckland. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Commerce from the University of Canterbury.

Prior to entering Parliament, Mr Luxon worked for Unilever in various international roles, including as CEO of Unilever Canada. In 2011, he joined Air New Zealand and became its CEO in 2013, a position he held until he entered Parliament.

In his maiden speech to Parliament, Mr Luxon said his personal and professional life were guided by National Party values of freedom and choice, rights and responsibilities, limited yet better government, competitive enterprise, and equal opportunity in citizenship.

National will need to work with other parties to secure a Parliamentary majority, a common outcome as New Zealand parliaments are elected under a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system. See [here](#) for an explanation of New Zealand's MMP voting system.

Results (projected)

National's vote settled just below 39%. Labour suffered an historic defeat, dropping from over 50% of the vote in 2020 to just under 27% in 2023.

The Labour Party lost 27 electorate seats, including both marginal seats won from National in 2020 and a number of previously safe Labour seats. In Auckland, a series of suburban Labour seats including Mt Roskill and Te Atatu fell to National. The seat of Mt Albert, formerly held by Prime Ministers Jacinda Ardern and Helen Clark, is held by a majority of just 106 votes. In Wellington,



Wellington Central and Rongotai were won by the Greens. The Māori seats of Te Tai Tonga, Te Tai Hauauro and Hauraki-Waikato were won by Te Pāti Māori.

The scale of Labour's defeat has been attributed, variously, to high inflation and rising interest rates, the aftermath of Covid-19, a relatively timid policy agenda, challenges with delivering policies and a series of high profile ministerial scandals.

#### Preliminary Count

Party	Party Vote	Total Seats
<b>National</b>	38.95%	50
<b>Labour</b>	26.9%	34
<b>Green Party</b>	10.77%	14
<b>ACT</b>	8.98%	11
<b>NZ First</b>	6.46%	8
<b>Te Pāti Māori</b>	2.61%	4
Other	5.29%	0

2 The [preliminary count](#) shows National and ACT with 61 seats out of 121, which would see the two political parties governing without the support of New Zealand First, though only by a one seat majority.

Parliamentary numbers are, however, expected to shift in the final count.

Historically, special votes (those cast from overseas, or outside a voter's electorate, which this election accounted for 20% of all votes cast) have resulted in a shift of one or two seats from the right to the left.

Depending on some close races in the Māori seats, Te Pāti Māori's "overhang" (additional seats added to New Zealand's Parliament when a party wins more electorate seats than the total it is entitled to from its share of the party vote) may grow or disappear, which may change the total needed for National and its support parties to command a majority.

In addition, National is expecting a 'bonus seat' with a by-election in the safe National seat of Port Waikato on November 25, triggered by the death of ACT candidate Neil Christensen, which will add an additional seat to Parliament under New Zealand electoral law.

National and ACT may be just short of a majority, and so may need to come to an arrangement with New Zealand First.



Formal coalition negotiations will have to wait for official results on 3 November 2023. If negotiations take place over two weeks, ministerial roles can then be announced, with the next New Zealand Government potentially in place by mid-November.

Until this time, caretaker provisions will ensure that any decisions that need to be taken do not bind the incoming government, and should be made in consultation, until a new government is sworn.

Outgoing Prime Minister Chris Hipkins is expected to stay on as Labour leader for a period to ease the party's transition into opposition and allow for an orderly leadership election in due course. Under the Labour Party's constitution, Mr Hipkins would need to win a leadership endorsement vote to remain leader.

### National's and partner party priorities

National has committed to an ambitious [100-day plan](#), which includes the following initiatives:

#### Economy

- Remove the Auckland Regional Fuel Tax
- Remove the Reserve Bank's dual mandate
- Restore 90-day employment trial periods for all businesses
- Repeal Labour's Fair Pay Agreements legislation
- Cancel Labour's planned fuel tax increases
- Stop work on the income insurance scheme
- Instruct public sector Chief Executives to start identifying back-office savings and report their spending on consultants

#### Health

- Extend free breast cancer screening for women aged up to 74

#### Environment

- Repeal Labour's Three Waters legislation
- Repeal Labour's Resource Management Act ("RMA") 2.0 laws
- Repeal the Clean Car Discount ('ute tax')
- Stop work on the Lake Onslow scheme

#### Justice

- Ban gang patches, stop gang members from gathering in public, and stop known gang offenders from communicating with one another
- Give police greater powers to search gang members for firearms and make gang membership an aggravating factor at sentencing
- Stop taxpayer funding for cultural reports which can be used for weakening sentences for offenders
- Extend the eligibility for remand prisoners to access rehabilitation programmes



- Crackdown on serious youth offending
- Encourage more virtual participation in court proceedings

### Social

- Ban cell phones in schools
- Require primary and intermediate schools to prepare to teach an hour a day each of reading, writing and maths
- Stop blanket speed limit reductions
- Introduce a fast-track consenting regime
- Establish a Priority One category on the social housing waitlist to more quickly move families out of emergency housing and into permanent homes

ACT's [priorities](#) include:

- A referendum redefining the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, as a bottom line in coalition negotiations
  - Christopher Luxon described such a referendum as "divisive and not helpful" and said he won't support it.
- Reduce government spending including reducing the number of public servants by 15,000, opposing co-governance with Māori
- Binging back charter schools
- Repealing the Zero Carbon Act

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New Zealand First's [priorities](#) include:

- Increasing investment in the regions
- Increasing Pharmac's budget by \$1 billion (publicly subsidised medicine)
- Opposing co-governance with Māori
- Repealing the Therapeutic Products Act
- Holding "credible, fully independent Inquiry" into New Zealand's Covid-19 response

To view the results from the New Zealand Electoral Commission, click [here](#).

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