
Terra Nova e-news

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ELECTIONS ON SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2014

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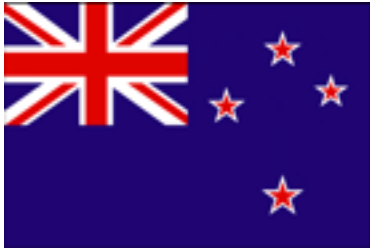
Party, Leader, Seats and Party Principles



New Zealand national politics feature a pervasive party system. Usually, all members of Parliament's unicameral House of Representatives belong to a political party. Independent MPs occur relatively rarely. While two primary parties do indeed dominate the political landscape, the country now more closely resembles a multi-party state, where smaller groups can reasonably expect to play a role in government. As of August 2011, eight parties have representatives in Parliament.

Political parties in New Zealand evolved towards the end of the nineteenth century out of interest groups and personal cliques. Most historians regard the Liberal Party, which began its rule in 1891, as the first real party in New Zealand politics. During the long period of Liberal Party control the party's more conservative opponents founded the Reform Party, forming the original duopoly in the New Zealand parliament.





Over the years, a number of "third parties" or so-called "minor parties" developed, notably the Social Credit Party, the New Zealand Party, the Values Party, and the Alliance. However, the "first past the post" electoral system meant that regardless of how many votes a party gained nation-wide, it could not win a seat without a plurality in a particular electorate (voting district). Under such conditions, these parties mostly performed poorly in terms of making an impact in Parliament.

With the introduction of the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system for the 1996 elections, however, it became much easier for smaller parties to enter parliament; but more difficult to gain election as a non-party independent. Since the change to MMP, about one third of the seats in Parliament have been held by MPs representing parties other than Labour and National. In the years before MMP, by contrast, there were sometimes no such MPs at all.



Political parties in New Zealand can be either registered or unregistered. Registered parties must have five-hundred paying members, each eligible to vote in general elections.

If a party registers, it may submit a party list, enabling it to receive party votes in New Zealand's MMP electoral system. Unregistered parties can only nominate candidates for individual electorates.



Registered political parties are also able to spend up to \$1 million during the campaign for the party vote. All political parties are able to spend \$20,000 per electorate seat.

Parties elected to the New Zealand House of Representatives (Parliament) in 2011

The order in which political parties appear in the following list corresponds to the number of MPs they currently have. Note that political parties within the House declare their existence to the Speaker, and do not need to be registered outside of the House.

National Party - John Key - 59 seats



A centre-right, socially conservative party with some non-conservative elements: e.g., support of same-sex marriage. The largest party in Parliament, it has traditionally been Labour's main opponent. It supports a mixed economy market, and lower taxation particularly as a stimulus for private enterprise.

Labour Party - David Cunliffe - 34 seats



A centre-left, socially progressive party. It is the oldest existent party in New Zealand and has been traditionally National's main opponent. It is currently the second largest party in Parliament. It supports a mixed economy market, with

taxation levied to fund particularly its social programmes.

Green Party - Metiria Turei and Russel Norman - 14 seats



As a Green party it supports social justice, grassroots democracy, nonviolence, and environmentalism. GPANZ has a left-wing environmentalist manifesto, and also promotes highly progressive social policies.

New Zealand First - Winston Peters - 8 seats



A centrist, populist, and nationalist party. Its primary goals are reducing immigration, reducing Treaty of Waitangi payments, increasing sentences for crime, and buying back former state assets.

Māori Party - Tariana Turia and Pita Sharples - 3 seats



A party based around New Zealand's indigenous Māori minority. It crystallised in 2004 around Tariana Turia, a former minister of the Labour Party. It promotes what it sees as "the rights and interests of Māori". The party has a confidence and supply arrangement with the National-led government.

ACT - Jamie Whyte - 1 seat



A classically liberal party that promotes free market economics, low taxation, reduced government expenditure, and increased punishments for crime. It sees itself as promoting "accountability and transparency in government". The party has a confidence and supply arrangement with the National-led government.

Mana Party - Hone Harawira - 1 seat



A party based around New Zealand's indigenous Māori minority. Its manifesto indicates a wish to bring "courage and honesty to political endeavour" and to "guarantee a measure of people power and accountability from its MPs". The Mana Party supports left-wing social policies.

United Future - Peter Dunne - 1 seat



A moderately centrist party formerly with a strong Christian background: it describes itself as based around "common sense". It has a particular focus on policies concerning the family and social issues. The party has a confidence and supply arrangement with the National-led government.

Registered parties outside of Parliament

Parties listed in alphabetical order:



1Law4All Party

A party aimed at overturning the Treaty of Waitangi

Alliance - Victor Billot and Kay Murray



A left-wing party supporting the welfare state, free education, environmental protection, and Māori interests. The Progressive Party formed as a splinter group from the Alliance when Jim Anderton, former Alliance leader, left.

Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party - Julian Crawford



A party which (as its name suggests) supports the legalisation of cannabis. This remains the core of its platform, although it also comments on other issues that it considers related.

Ban 1080 Party - Bill Wallace and Mike Downard



A party which opposes the use of 1080 poison.

Civilian Party - Ben Uffindell



A joke party which arose from a popular New Zealand satirical website.



Conservative Party of New Zealand - Colin Craig

A socially conservative party advocating stricter law and order policies, repealing of the ETS and binding referenda.



Focus NZ - Joe Carr and Ken Rintoul

A party aimed at representing rural New Zealand.

NZ Democrats - Stephnie de Ruyter

A party based around the idea of Social Credit. The party formerly formed part of the Alliance (see above); previously, as the Social Credit Party, was one of the older surviving parties in New Zealand.



Internet Party - Laila Harré

A party advocating for less surveillance, copyright reform and cheap internet



NZ Independent Coalition - Brendan Horan

A party emphasising local electorate representation

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