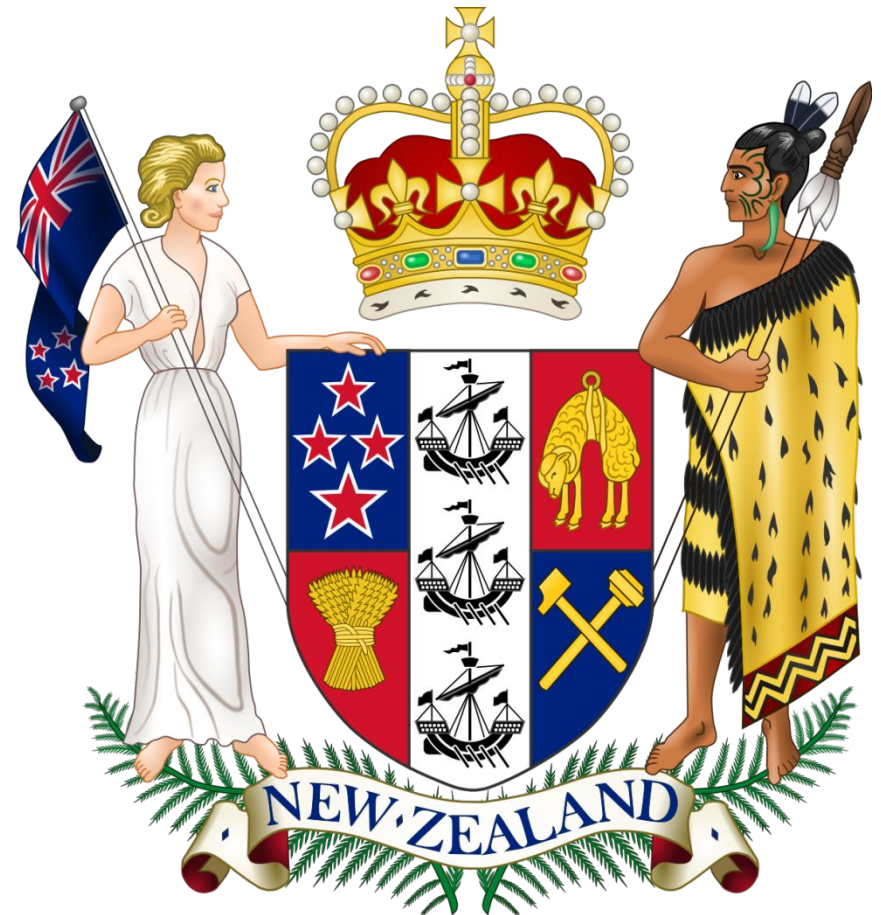


Political system of New Zealand

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- The country has a [multi-party system](#) in which many of its legislative practices derive from the unwritten [conventions](#) of and precedents set by the United Kingdom's [Westminster Parliament](#). However, New Zealand has evolved variations; [minority governments](#) are common and typically dependent on [confidence and supply](#) agreements with other parties. The two dominant [political parties in New Zealand](#) have historically been the [New Zealand Labour Party](#) and the [New Zealand National Party](#) (or its predecessors).



Colonial politics

- After the 1840 [Treaty of Waitangi](#), a colonial Governor and his small staff acted on behalf of the British government based on the British political system.^[29] Whereas Māori systems had dominated prior to 1840 governors attempting to introduce British systems met with mixed success in Māori communities. More isolated Māori were little influenced by the Government. Most influences were felt in and around [Russell](#), the [first capital](#), and [Auckland](#), the second capital.
- The first [voting rights](#) in New Zealand were legislated in 1852 as the New Zealand Constitution Act for the 1853 elections and reflected British practice.^[29] Initially only [property owners](#) could vote, but by the late 1850s 75% of British males over 21 were eligible to vote compared to 20% in England and 12% in Scotland. Around 100 Māori chiefs voted in the 1853 election



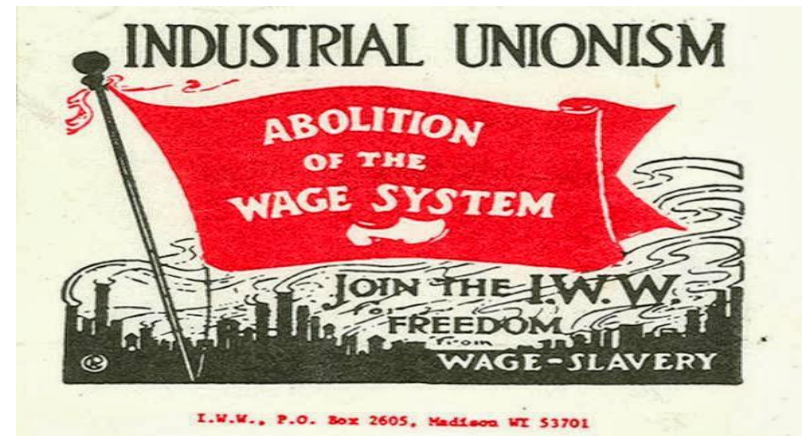
Women in politics

- Women's suffrage was granted after about two decades of campaigning by women such as [Kate Sheppard](#) and [Mary Ann Müller](#) and organisations such as the New Zealand branch of the [Women's Christian Temperance Union](#). On 19 September 1893 the governor, [Lord Glasgow](#), signed a new Electoral Act into law.^[37] As a result, New Zealand became the first self-governing nation in the world in which all women had the right to vote in parliamentary elections.^[19] Women first voted in the [1893 election](#), with a high 85% turnout (compared to 70% of men).









Modern political history

- The right-leaning [National Party](#) and the left-leaning [Labour Party](#) have dominated New Zealand political life since a Labour government came to power in 1935. During fourteen years in office (1935–1949), the Labour Party implemented a broad array of social and economic legislation, including comprehensive [social security](#), a large scale [public works](#) programme, a forty-hour working week, a minimum basic wage, and compulsory [unionism](#). The National Party won control of the government in 1949 and adopted many welfare measures instituted by the Labour Party. Except for two brief periods of Labour governments in 1957-1960 and 1972–1975, National held power until 1984.



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Summary of the 20 September 2014 election result for the New Zealand House of Representatives^[26]

Party	Votes	% of Votes		Seats			
		%	Change	Electorate	List	Total	Change
 National	1,131,501	47.04	-0.28	41	19	60	+1
 Labour	604,534	25.13	-2.35	27	5	32	-2
 Green	257,356	10.70	-0.36	0	14	14	0
 NZ First	208,300	8.66	+2.06	0	11	11	+3
 Māori	31,850	1.32	-0.11	1	1	2	-1
 ACT	16,689	0.69	-0.37	1	0	1	0
 United Future	5,286	0.22	-0.38	1	0	1	0
other parties	150,104	6.24	+2.87	0	0	0	-1 ^[a]
total	2,405,620	100.00		71	50	121	0
 National minority government	1,185,326	49.27	-1.14	44	20	64	0
Opposition parties	1,070,190	44.49	-1.73	27	30	57	0
party informal votes	10,681						
disallowed votes							
total votes cast	2,416,481						

Labour and National political parties

- The Labour Party, which was left-wing and represented workers and trade unions, started in 1916. They became the government in 1935. The next year the Liberal and Reform parties merged to form the National Party. During this time, governments were formed by either of these two parties, as they won almost all the seats in Parliament. Labour usually won urban seats, and National usually won rural seats.



Small parties under MMP

- In 1996 New Zealand had its first election under the MMP (mixed-member proportional) system. Voters get two votes – one for the person they want to represent their local electorate, and one for a political party. The proportion of seats in Parliament is decided based on the party vote. This has made it easier for smaller parties to get into Parliament, and has meant that the party that gets the most votes (typically Labour or National) has had to work with smaller parties to form a government.

