

NZ First to hold balance of power after election

Written by Adrian Beaumont, Honorary Associate, School of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Melbourne

With all [election night votes](#) counted at yesterday's New Zealand election, the conservative National won 46.0% (down 1.0 from 2014), Labour 35.8% (up 10.7 from an abysmal 2014 result), the anti-immigrant populist NZ First 7.5% (down 1.2) and the Greens 5.9% (down 4.9). These results are not final; special votes [will be added on 7 October](#), and these special votes have favoured the left in past elections.

Seats are awarded in proportion to the vote share of qualified parties (those parties that receive at least 5% of the vote or win a single-member electorate). On the preliminary results, National won 58 of the 120 seats (down 2 from 2014), Labour 45 (up 13), NZ First 9 (down 2) and the Greens 7 (down 7).

The right-wing ACT party held its only single-member electorate, but did not qualify for additional seats. The Maori Party and United Future have been kicked out of Parliament after failing to win an electorate seat. Overall, 4.3% voted for parties that did not qualify, and these votes were effectively wasted.

On the preliminary results, National and ACT have 59 of the 120 seats, and Labour and the Greens 52. The left parties are likely to gain a seat from National when results are finalised, but NZ First's 9 seats will be crucial in the next Parliament. It is the first time NZ First has had a [balance-of-power role since](#) the 2005-08 term, when they supported Labour.

Two weeks ago, Labour was ahead of National in the polls, and a Labour/Greens government looked plausible. However, [final polls conducted last week](#) had National recovering to a large lead over Labour, and the results have confirmed these polls. If National wins over NZ First leader Winston Peters, they will have governed for four consecutive terms.

In [Thursday's article](#), I explained that I thought the biggest reason for National's surge back was the waning of Labour leader Jacinda Ardern's popularity as a vote motivator, while the strong NZ economy was a big positive for National.

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While Labour's vote improved 10.7 points from 2014, this was from a woeful 25.1% at that election. In addition, the Greens lost almost 5 points, so the overall left vote was up 5.8 points on 2014. For a Labour/Greens government to be plausible, Labour needed to lift its vote into the 40's. Given the polling two weeks ago, the results are disappointing for Labour.

After nine years in government, a 45% vote share for National is very good for them. I expect National's current 46.0% to decline slightly once all votes are counted.

While additional votes remain to be counted, the polls appear to have overestimated Labour and the Greens and underestimated NZ First. NZ polls still predominantly use live phone polling, and this may be skewed towards politically correct parties.

German election results

I will update this article tomorrow morning with the results of today's German election. Polls close at 6pm local time (2am Monday Melbourne time).

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