NZPA, 2008

Full wrap of parties' election policies

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This package outlines in brief the law and order, health, tax, savings and superannuation, economic, welfare, education, Treaty of Waitangi, transport, climate change, environment, immigration and foreign, defence and trade policies of parties currently holding seats in Parliament.

Where policies are yet to be released, or are to be updated, this has been noted.

LAW AND ORDER

ACT: boost police numbers; impose life sentences after three serious crimes; abolish parole; allow private prisons; outsource "basic fraud/theft" cases to private security services; boost law and order spending by $1 billion for promises.

GREENS: Increase funding for restorative justice, Victim Support and victim counselling; automatically deduct reparations from offenders' pay; increase range of community sentences; increase inmate rehabilitation programmes; moratorium on new prisons.

LABOUR: Make gang membership an aggravating factor at sentencing; increase police ability to snoop on gangs; tougher proceeds of crime laws; consider complete ban on gang membership.

MAORI PARTY: More restorative justice programmes; more literacy and numeracy in prisons; better use of existing policing resources; less use of imprisonment.

NATIONAL: Full sentences for repeat serious

imprisonable offences; tighten bail laws; $50 levy on all offenders to go to victims; extend sentences for worst youth offenders and send less seriou offenders to boot camps; force prisoners into work schemes; boost drug treatment in prisons.

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NZ FIRST: Ban gang membership; increase police numbers; increase serious violent offender sentences; toughen parole; military-type training for youth offenders; DNA samples from everyone arrested; create paedophile register.

PROGRESSIVES: More early intervention programmes for young offenders; raise drinking age back to 20; support initiatives that will boost employment and keep people out of crime; increase early intervention programmes for troubled families.

UNITED FUTURE: deploy more police to crime hotspots; investigate separating traffic police; more funding for early intervention programmes; tougher parole for sexual and violent crimes; more drug treatment and literacy programmes in prisons.

HEALTH

ACT: Cut taxes so people can afford health insurance; $500 million one-off boost to elective surgery; find $250 million in savings to also be used to slash surgery waiting lists; use private hospitals more; reduce bureaucracy.

GREENS: Increase health prevention and promotion to 10 percent of total budget; free annual wellness check for all New Zealanders; increase nurse numbers; increase health professionals' pay; increase funding for electives; establish complementary health unit within ministry.

LABOUR: 100 extra medical training places by 2011; tougher rest-home audits; free annual health checks for high-needs intellectually disabled; continue prioritising the fight against cancer, obesity, alcohol and tobacco; streamline administration; introduce cheaper doctors visits as economy allows; continue to prioritise shorter waiting times for heart, cancer and orthopaedic patients.

warrant of fitness health checks; more funding for health workforce training; look for administrative savings; more mobile dental buses for rural communities.

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NATIONAL: More surgical theatres to boost elective operations; a 30 percent rebate on health insurance for seniors; no cuts to current budgeted health funding; continuation of universal cheaper doctors' visits and prescriptions; more operations and procedures to be done at community clinics; bonding and loan write-offs for doctors in hard-to-staff areas.

NZ FIRST: Increase public health spending to 10 percent of GDP; commission of inquiry into health system; review number of DHBs; extend free doctors visits to all primary-age children; increase funding for school dental service; increase elective surgery funding.

PROGRESSIVE: Restore comprehensive free health system; promote more funding for dental health care as a first priority; student loan write offs of 20 percent a year for three years for doctor graduates who work in public health system.

UNITED FUTURE: Free yearly "Warrant of Fitness" doctors' visit; use private sector to reduce surgical waiting times; national strategy for insulating all homes to at least 1977 standards; tax concessions for private health insurance; fund Plunketline.

TAX

ACT: Immediately abolish top tax rate of 39c in dollar; move over 10 years to tax rate of 15 percent over $20,000 and 12.5 percent below that, 15 percent business tax and 10 percent GST.

GREENS: Introduce $10,000 tax-free threshold; levy taxes on polluters; introduce capital gains tax on all investments except the family home.

LABOUR: Further personal tax cuts in April 2010 and April 2011, which when combined with October 1 cuts will deliver between $22 and $55 a week for workers earning between $20,000 and $80,000 a year. Keep 15c in the dollar research and development tax credits.

MAORI PARTY: Tax-free threshold up to $25,000

less than $100,000; remove GST from food.

NATIONAL: independent earner rebate of $10 from April 2009, rising to $15 in 2010 for childless workers earning between $24,000 and $50,000. With independent earner rebate taxpayers earning between $24,000 and $50,000 would be $28.85 to $46.54 better off in three years, while those on those incomes who do not get the rebate would be between $13.07 and $46.54 better off.

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NZ FIRST: Introduce $5200 tax-free threshold; raise personal tax thresholds over time; reduce GST to 10 percent over three years; drop tax rate on "new export" income to 20 percent; more research and development tax incentives.

PROGRESSIVE: Keep business research and development tax credits.

UNITED FUTURE: Income up to $12,000 taxed at 10 percent, income between $12,001 and $38,000 taxed at 20 percent and income above $38,000 taxed at 30 percent; push for income splitting for parents with dependent children; abolish gift duty; support research and development tax credits.

SAVINGS AND SUPERANNUATION

ACT: Axe KiwiSaver and phase out current government superannuation; introduce new government subsidised private savings scheme with higher taxes for those who do not join; use government super contributions to pay for any benefits in person or children's lives.

GREENS: Keep KiwiSaver and universal superannuation.

LABOUR: Keep KiwiSaver and universal superannuation at 66 percent of average wage.

MAORI PARTY: Keep KiwiSaver and universal superannuation.

NATIONAL: Reduce minimum employee KiwiSaver contribution from 4 percent to 2 percent and reduce employer contribution from 4 percent to 2 percent, cap government employee subsidy at 2 percent; keep universal superannuation at 66 percent of average wage.

NZ FIRST: Boost superannuation from 66 to 68 percent of net average wage; eventually individualise super accounts; support KiwiSav direct NZ Superannuation Fund to invest more in local infrastructure.

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PROGRESSIVE: Support KiwiSaver and guarantee universal superannuation at current level of 66 percent of average wage.

UNITED FUTURE: Support KiwiSaver and seek to have more of its funds reinvested in New Zealand; increase superannuation by calculating it based on forecast of inflation rather than retrospectively.

ECONOMY

ACT: Peg government spending to inflation; sell state assets' reintroduce competition to ACC; scrap minimum wage and Employment Court and repeal Employment Relations Act (ERA), replacing them with common law; appoint regulatory reform minister to review all regulations.

GREENS: Raise minimum wage to $15-per-hour; improve protections for casual workers; give Reserve Bank more monetary policy tools; continue Buy Kiwi-made campaign and introduce country of origin labelling; restrict land sales to foreigners; introduce measures to limit house price inflation.

LABOUR: Support retail deposit guarantee, investigating wholesale guarantee; remove any obstacles preventing NZ Super Fund from investing more in New Zealand; bring forward infrastructure spending to boost economy if recession worsens; retain state assets; new minimum standards for redundancy; widen strike provisions; guaranteed adjustments to minimum wage to at least match the higher or inflation or average wage.

MAORI PARTY: Raise minimum wage to $15-per-hour; create Maori community development bank; simplify employment law and stop growth in red tape; develop index to measure social cultural and environmental costs of economic policies.

investment from 23 percent to 40 percent; reform Resource Management Act; introduce competition to ACC; provide $3.7 billion six-year infrastructure boost including $1.5 billion fibre broadband plan; introduce 90-day probation period for new workers; allow employees to cash in fourth week of annual leave; allow non-union groups to collectively bargain.

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NZ FIRST: Rewrite the Reserve Bank Act taking into account factors such as the exchange rate; boost trade support for exporters; conduct inquiry into compliance costs; encourage import substitution; support the Buy Kiwi-made campaign; increase ACC levies and payouts; no state asset sales.

PROGRESSIVE: Guarantee retention of Kiwibank; keep state assets; boost apprenticeships and worker protections; push for equal pay for women; push for shorter working week; further increases in minimum wage; support increased research and development.

UNITED FUTURE: Regular reviews of business regulations; review grievance procedures of ERA; introduce competition to ACC; refocus Ministry of Economic Development on supporting exporters; make tourism a strategic economic priority.

WELFARE

ACT: Axe unemployed and sickness benefits and replace with private insurance; end domestic purposes benefit for those under-18; 40-hour a week training or work for dole for all remaining beneficiaries including solo parents with children older than five.

GREENS: Raise benefit levels and fix them at a set percentage of the average wage; abolish benefit stand-down periods; introduce universal child benefit; build at least 3000 new state houses in each of the next three years.

LABOUR: Remove unemployment benefit means test for 13 weeks after a person loses job; lift benefit abatement threshold from $80 to $140 a week by 2012; introduce retraining allowance for long-term workers wanting to upskill through fulltime training; provide more work assistance

training for those wishing to return to the workforce.

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MAORI PARTY: Borrow to raise benefit and superannuation levels; extend Working for Families in-work payment to beneficiaries; investigate universal child benefit; cap state housing rents; subsidised government jobs for unemployed; devolve funding to Maori welfare groups.

NATIONAL: Boost accomodations supplement and allow Working for Families payments to continue for 16 weeks after being made redundant; tougher work requirements for domestic purpose beneficiaries; raise benefit abatement threshold; tougher assessments for sickness beneficiaries.

NZ FIRST: Reintroduce "community wage" work for the dole scheme; increased checks on sickness beneficiaries; legislate to require greater parental responsibility from beneficiaries; ease transition to work by reviewing abatement levels; increase funding to Women's Refuge.

PROGRESSIVE: Push for $200 winter power rebate for those on low incomes to be funded from state-owned power company profits.

UNITED FUTURE: Make sickness beneficiaries seek treatment; make long-term unemployed undertake training or subsidised work; run more training programmes for older New Zealanders; provide more support for businesses that hire migrants.

EDUCATION

ACT: Scrap Education Ministry and replace it with new Education Authority; allow state funding to public or private school of parents' choice; deregulate schools but require them to be licensed by education authority; move curriculum "back to basics".

GREENS: Commission of Inquiry into education system; increase schools operations grant by 10 percent; increase teacher-pupil ratios to 1:20; incorporate environmental education in schools; ensure schools have proper special needs funding; remove compulsory uniform rules.

LABOUR: Introduce "Schools Plus" under which all 16 and 17-year-olds must either be in school, training or work-based training; continue to reduce teacher-student ratios.

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MAORI PARTY: Reduce teacher-pupil ratios; more funding for high-needs students; single national qualifications system; compulsory free ECE for four-year-olds and extend 20-hours-free to playcentre and Kohanga Reo.

NATIONAL: Overhaul NCEA; introduce national literacy and numeracy standards; extend 20-hours early childhood education subsidy to playcentres and kohanga reos; teach more trades in schools and set up five "trade academies"; ensure all 16- and 17-year-olds are in school, work or approved training courses.

NEW ZEALAND FIRST: increase schools operations grant; reformulate decile funding formula to give more to decile 3-10 schools, but reduce class sizes for lower decile schools; introduce "values" education; review NCEA; limit foreign fee-paying students.

PROGRESSIVE: More resources to low decile areas; more teachers; more support for special needs students; make more sporting activities available to school children; extend 20-hours free early childhood care to 25 hours.

UNITED FUTURE: Increase access to Reading Recovery programmes and reduce teacher-pupil ratios at primary level; support establishment of year seven-10 "middle schools"; streamline and promote better understanding of NCEA; Raise leaving age and offer more subjects such as trades.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

ACT: 2008 policy yet to be released.

GREENS: (2005) Phased write-off of student debt for each year a graduate works in New Zealand; universal student allowance; cap and progressively reduce student fees until study is free; ensure tertiary institutions are properly funded.

LABOUR: Universal student allowance; continued restrictions on fee growth; increase

workforce is participating in some form of training by 2011.

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MAORI PARTY: Lower fees; universal student allowance; higher student loan repayment threshold; more funding for industry training.

NATIONAL: Keep interest-free student loans and offer 10 percent early repayment bonus.

NZ FIRST: Phase in universal student allowance; increase funding for courses where there are shortages; voluntary-bonding to reduce fees for medical students; more scholarships to keep brightest students; incentives for graduates to move to regions with skill shortages.

PROGRESSIVE: Support universal student allowances; more phasing for student loan repayments; push for more apprenticeships and industry training courses.

UNITED FUTURE: Zero fees; universal student allowance; better teacher training and performance monitoring; Unemployed people under 25 must be engaged in training; raise student loan repayment threshold to $25,000.

TREATY OF WAITANGI

ACT: One law for all; Treaty claims to be settled quickly -- fair, full and final; abolish the Maori seats; repeal seabed and foreshore legislation.

GREENS: Acknowledge the Treaty as a constitutional document; more resources for claims process; entrenchment of the Maori seats; no historic claims deadline without Maori support; promote public awareness of Treaty.

LABOUR: 2020 target for settling claims; keep Maori seats and Maori electoral option; boost funding for Maori community housing and widen access to loans through Welcome Home Loan scheme; provide more apprenticeships for Maori; continue to fund Maori Television; promote Maori language.

MAORI PARTY: Entrench Maori seats; more resources for Treaty settlements; establish constitutional commission to draft arrangements giving effect to Treaty; establish parliamentary commissioner for the Treaty; push for separate

state boards; automatically enroll Maori voters on Maori roll when they turn 18.

NATIONAL: Complete historical Treaty clainSHARE
by 2014; provide more resources for the Waitangi Tribunal to speed process; scrap Maori seats after claims completed.

NZ FIRST: Replace Waitangi Tribunal with Waitangi Commission with greater ministerial oversight; five-year deadline to settle all historic claims; provide better funding for the claims process; promote Maori language, history and culture in schools.

PROGRESSIVE: Support Maori employment initiatives; redress imbalance in school achievement; promote Maori language; pursue social programmes that address Maori inequality in the areas of income, housing and health.

UNITED FUTURE: Settle all historic grievances by 2014; Work with Maori to phase out Maori seats by 2014; ensure tribes have good governance structures ahead of settlements.

TRANSPORT

ACT: Introduce road-user charges; reduce petrol taxes; encourage both new private roads and public-private partnerships; encourage competition on routes; limit people's rights to object to developments under RMA.

GREENS: Move majority of transport funding over five years to public transport, rail and coastal shipping; fund 100 percent of public transport projects; end tax exemption on diesel; develop fuel efficiency standards for all vehicles; make emissions testing part of Warrant of Fitness checks; develop nationwide network of cycleways.

LABOUR: Continue programme of roading funding; continue to boost funding for cycling networks and rail for passenger transport, freight and shipping.

MAORI PARTY: 2008 policy yet to be released.

NATIONAL: Increase borrowing to spend an extra $3.7 billion on infrastructure over the next six years; complete the Waikato expressway

within six years; encourage private-public partnerships and tolls on major new roads; cut resource consent red tape for major roads.

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NZFIRST: Upgrade key highways; change RMA to speed up roading consents; fund new roads that fall outside current funding criteria through issue of infrastructure bonds; put in place cycling network in urban areas.

PROGRESSIVE: Support the continued development of both public transport and the roading network.

UNITED FUTURE: Support tolling and public-private partnerships for high-cost roads; extra taxes on gas-guzzling vehicles; complete Auckland and Wellington roading networks, including Transmission Gully; continue upgrading public transport.

CLIMATE CHANGE

ACT: Withdraw from Kyoto Protocol climate treaty; repeal emissions trading scheme (ETS); hold off policies that could damage the economy until they are adopted by major polluting countries.

GREENS: Make companies that import fossil fuels and agricultural sectors that exceed 1990 emissions buy and transfer carbon credits to government; use Kyoto forest credits to promote forestry; set compulsory levels of renewable energy for power retailers; more subsidies and regulation for energy efficiency; $1 billion 15-year home insulation scheme.

LABOUR: Phase in ETS; target of 90 percent renewable energy by 2025; boost funding for energy efficiency projects; support $1 billion 15-year home insulation scheme; invest in KiwiRail to reduce commercial transport emissions; increase research into sustainable technology.

MAORI PARTY: Develop more renewable energy; make major polluters pay for emissions, but minimise effects on households.

NATIONAL: Legislate a target of a 50 percent reduction in carbon emissions compared to 1990 levels by 2050; amend the Government's ETS within nine months of office; incentivise biofuel

charges; exempt electric cars from road user charges; $1000 grants for solar and heat pump water heating.

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NZFIRST: Support ETS; advance work on additional regulations, research and technology to meet Kyoto obligations; promote energy efficiency; ensure wider public consultation on climate change policies.

PROGRESSIVE: Support phased ETS; support research into non-polluting technologies; support funding for more insulation for low-income homes; support vehicle efficiency labelling.

UNITED FUTURE: Modify ETS to reduce costs on householders; increase public home-insulation funding; give all homes for sale an energy efficiency rating; support environmentally sustainable biofuels; support renewable energy research; carbon credits to forest owners but they must also carry costs if they convert land.

ENVIRONMENT

ACT: Scale back RMA to areas not covered by common law and replace it in most cases with case-by-case regulations; refocus it on achieving a balance between benefits and costs.

GREENS: Develop strict national environmental standards to control pollution in lakes and rivers; maintain GE-free environment; increase funding for pest control; tighten biodiversity; make legal aid available for Environment Court cases; ensure better RMA enforcement by councils; create research fund for sustainable land management.

LABOUR: Develop national policy statement on water and continue initiatives to reduce agricultural water pollution; continue to fund clean-up of existing polluted waterways; continue to expand conservation estate; continue to support effective biosecurity.

MAORI PARTY: Keep NZ GE-free.

NATIONAL: Expand the Environmental Risk Management Authority into an environmental protection agency with regulatory functions under the Resource Management Act; create a new national park in Northland's Waipoua forest; encourage the Conservation Department to work

NZFIRST: More funding for pest control; use community wage scheme for conservation work; support consultative debate on mining on conservation land; develop national policies on water and air quality.

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PROGRESSIVE: Review RMA to see if it can be improved; push for international ban on all whaling; reduce allowable fishing bycatches of endangered sea life; push for increased funding for the Department of Conservation; continue initiatives to minimise water pollution from farming.

UNITED FUTURE: Remove environment minister's power to block developments that have already been through Environment Court; allow court to retain expert consultants to reduce costs for groups taking cases; promote planting along all waterways; encourage forestation of non-viable farming land.

IMMIGRATION

ACT: Increase flow of skilled migrants; make it easier for migrants to transfer qualifications; five-year probation period in which immigrants can be deported for imprisonable offence.

LABOUR: Continue to support skilled immigration, but assess that against unemployment rate and reduce number of work permits issued if there is evidence jobless New Zealanders are taking up jobs in areas of labour shortage.

MAORI PARTY: 2008 policy not yet released.

NATIONAL: initiate a one-stop-shop approach to servicing the needs of returning New Zealanders; Streamline employer accreditation policies to recruit overseas; cut red tape around hiring seasonal workers; make it easier for people with tertiary qualifications to seek work.

GREENS: Increase refugee quota from 750 to 1000 by 2010; increase resources for resettlement programmes, including English language and job assistance; review migrant numbers regularly taking into account social and environmental factors; keep population below 5.7 million.

NZ FIRST: "Drastically reduce" inflow of

are in good health and have a job; limit refugee family reunification category to spouses and include them in annual 750 quota; implement better settlement programmes; reject refugees with serious criminal convictions.

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PROGRESSIVE: Prioritise skilled immigrants that meet New Zealand's economic needs; boost resettlement and English language programmes for migrants.

UNITED FUTURE: Maintain or increase skilled immigration; provide better support and settlement programmes; develop 10-year population strategy; create incentives to promote migration to the regions; more funding for immigration service.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

ACT: Repeal nuclear ban; lease additional frigate merge Defence Ministry and Defence Force; incentives to boost number of reserves and rebuild Defence Force to 30,000 personnel; support welfare for veterans; cut remaining tariffs and push for trade deal with United States.

GREENS: ensure trade deals uphold human rights, labour principles and the Kyoto climate treaty; boost aid to 7 percent of Gross National Income; support cancellation of foreign debt; support peacekeeping work, but only with UN mandate; close Waihopai spy base; restrict range of SIS investigations to espionage, sabotage and terrorism.

LABOUR: Expand NZ's role in international conflict resolution; work with other countries to co-ordinate financial regulation; continue to upgrade defence equipment; boost military staff numbers by 12 percent between 2005 and 2015; continue to seek high quality free trade deals.

MAORI PARTY: 2008 policy not released yet.

NATIONAL: Review NZ's oversees posts to ensure focus is on key markets; maintain aid spending; hold an extensive review into Defence Force capability and then decide future spending; no change to nuclear-free policy.

NZ FIRST: Keep anti-nuclear policy; ensure Security Intelligence Service is subject to greater

Defence Force funding to 2 percent of GDP; boost pay to retain staff; expand SAS; pursue increased trade but only cut tariffs at rate of competitors

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PROGRESSIVE: Keep NZ nuclear free; boost aid to 0.7 percent of GNP; focus Defence Force on peacekeeping; boost maritime surveillance; boost international disaster response capacity.

UNITED FUTURE: Keep NZ nuclear free; lift foreign aid to 0.7 percent of gross national income; establish Peace Corps for overseas volunteer work; multi-party accord on defence force funding; focus defence force on peacekeeping; pursue trade agreements.

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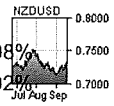
NZ MARKET SNAPSHOT FINDATA

FOREX COMMODS INDICES

Sym	Price	Change	
USD	0.7325	0.0006	0.08%
AUD	0.9140	0.0002	0.02%
EUR	0.6107	0.0004	0.07%
GBP	0.5417	0.0005	0.09%
HKD	5.7150	0.0087	0.15%
JPY	81.7130	0.0760	0.09%



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