

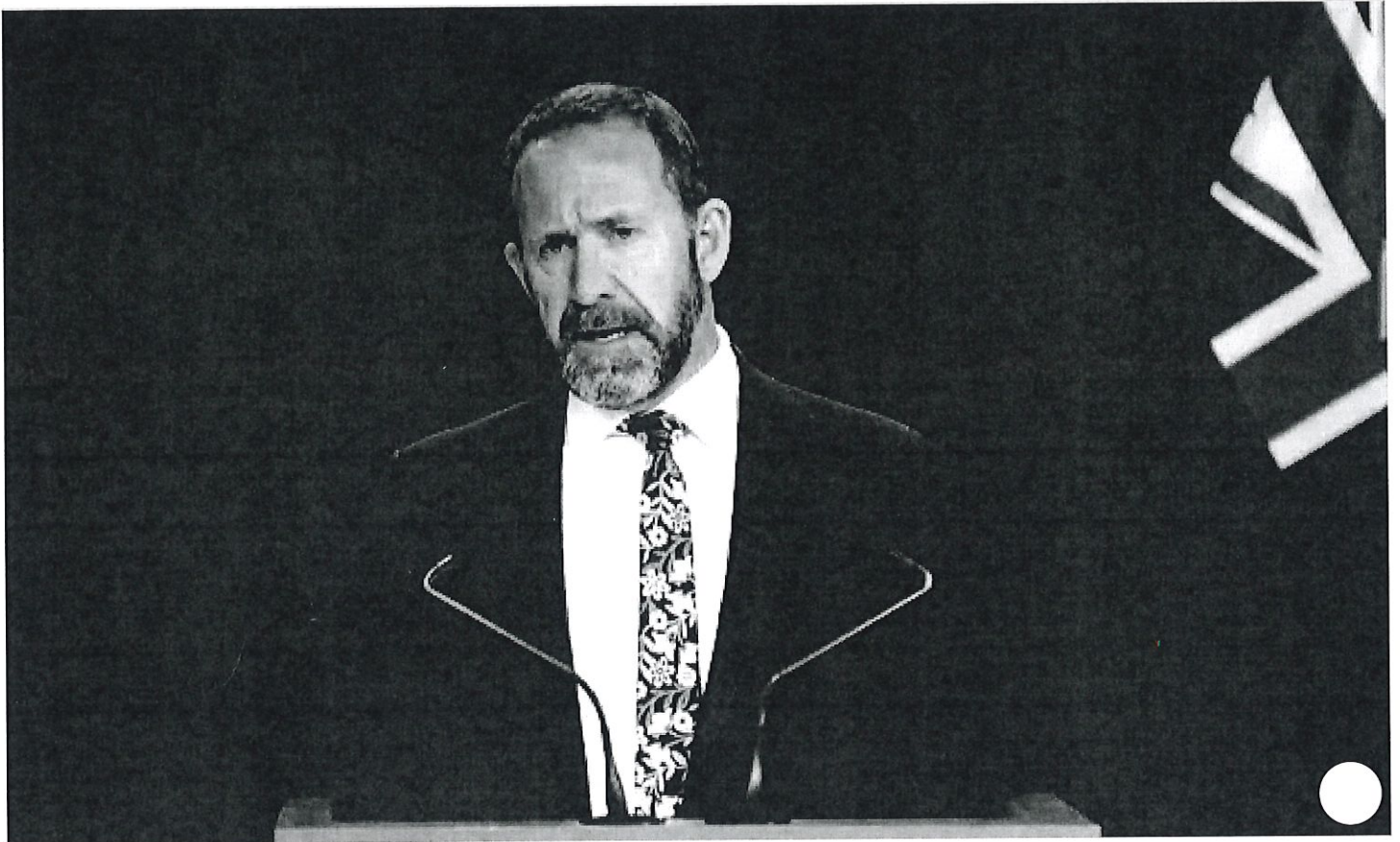
Sign in

Support us →

Ainge Roy, 2019b

News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle

World ► Europe US Americas Asia Australia Middle East Africa Inequality. 2019



## New Zealand

🕒 This article is more than 11 months old

# New Zealand bans foreign political donations amid interference concerns

**Justice minister cites risk of foreign meddling in 2020 election and says further action could be taken**

**Eleanor Ainge Roy in Dunedin and agencies**

EleanorAingeRoy

2019 00.56 GMT



438

New Zealand will ban foreign donations to politicians and tighten disclosure rules for political advertising, the government has said, as concerns over foreign interference intensify ahead of an election next year.

The government said it would introduce legislation on Tuesday banning donations over NZ\$50 (\$32) to political parties and candidates by foreigners.

“The risk of foreign interference in elections is a growing international phenomenon and can take many forms, including donations. New Zealand is not immune from this risk,” justice minister Andrew Little said in an emailed statement.

The new laws also would require the names and addresses of those funding election advertisements in all mediums to be published to reduce the “avalanche of fake news social media ads” that had marred elections overseas, Little said.

---

■ A weeping sore -  
Jacinda Ardern  
must clean up New  
Zealand's political  
donations mess  
*Max Rashbrooke*

New Zealand will hold its next general election in late 2020 and Little said further action could be taken to counter foreign influence based on recommendations from a parliamentary committee that was looking at the issue.

→ Read more

---

Advertisement

Law experts in New Zealand raised concerns that the ban does not go far enough.

“The main concern has recently been the types of donations that do not count as foreign donations,” said public law expert Graeme Edgeler.

“For example, a donation from a company registered in New Zealand is not a foreign donation, even if the company is wholly owned by a company or people outside New Zealand.”

“This bill does nothing to address this concern.”

Professor Anne-Marie Brady, an expert in Chinese influence in western democracies, described the bill as a “good start” on Twitter, but said “more needs to be done to



make our democracy resilient against foreign interference.”

Dr Simon Chapple, from Victoria university’s school of government said the bill would not stop the influence of the Chinese Communist Party in New Zealand politics.

“The concern is that money connected to the People’s Republic of China’s strategic goals is being channelled in a non-transparent fashion into New Zealand politics via people who are residents or citizens of New Zealand, or by New Zealand domiciled companies. Nothing changes for these people. They can legitimately continue to donate.” Chapple said.

New Zealand’s allies in the “Five Eyes” intelligence-sharing community - Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States - have all expressed concern about foreign influence in politics in recent years.

While the New Zealand government did not single out a specific threat on Tuesday, British and US intelligence agencies accuse Russia of meddling in domestic politics and elections of several western countries including the 2016 US presidential election. Russia denies the allegations.

Australia has accused China of similar activities and has cracked down on foreign political donations and lobbying. China also denies the allegations.

In New Zealand, questions about political donations were raised in 2018 after a lawmaker accused the leader of the opposition National party of hiding a NZ\$100,000 donation from a Chinese businessman to avoid declaring it. The National party leader rejected the charge.

New Zealand’s intelligence chief said in April that the agency was concerned about activities by foreign state actors, including attempts to covertly influence politicians and monitor expatriate communities in the South Pacific nation.

A spokesperson for National party leader Simon Bridges said while his party supported the ban, “because it’s the right thing to do”, the government was using the legislation as a distraction from mounting problems.

“This legislation doesn’t need to be rushed, the government just wants to look like it’s doing something after two years of failing to deliver on its promises,” the spokesperson said.

“The government is sidestepping democracy for the sake of looking busy and trying to divert attention from its failures. Passing legislation under urgency without good reason sets a terrible precedent.”

*Reuters contributed to this report*

## Since you're here ...

... joining us from New Zealand, we have a small favour to ask. Millions are flocking to the Guardian for open, independent, quality news every day, and readers in 180 countries around the world now support us financially.

We believe everyone deserves access to information that's grounded in science and truth, and analysis rooted in authority and integrity. That's why we made a different choice: to keep our reporting open for all readers, regardless of where they live or what they can afford to pay. This means more people can be better informed, united, and inspired to take meaningful action.

In these perilous times, an independent, truth-seeking global news organisation like the Guardian is essential. We have no shareholders or billionaire owner, meaning our journalism is free from commercial and political influence - this makes us different. When it's never been more pertinent, our independence allows us to fearlessly investigate, challenge and expose those in power.

Amid the various intersecting crises of 2020 - from Covid-19 to police brutality - the Guardian has not, and will never, sideline the climate emergency. We are determined to uphold our reputation for producing urgent, powerful, high-impact reporting on the environment that's read by around the world.

We've made institutional progress too, working hard to live up to the climate promises we made in 2019. We no longer take advertising from fossil fuel companies, and we're on course to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.

If there were ever a time to join us, it is now. Your funding powers our journalism, it protects our independence, and ensures we can remain open for all. You can support us through these challenging economic times and enable real-world impact.

Every contribution, however big or small, makes a real difference for our future. **Support the Guardian from as little as NZ\$1 - and it only takes a minute. Thank you.**

Support the Guardian →

Remind me in January

VISA



PayPal

Topics

New Zealand

New Zealand politics / Asia Pacific / news

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/03/new-zealand-bans-foreign-political-donations-amid-interference-concerns>





Subscribe →



### UK Daily in The Guardian Editions app

Each day's edition in one simple, elegant app

- A new way to read



### Premium access to The Live app

Live news, as it happens

- Live

Follow a live feed of breaking

## Related stories



### Jacinda Ardern to govern New Zealand for second term after historic victory

18 Oct 2020



### New Zealand euthanasia vote: polls point to 'yes' amid campaign of fear and doubt

15 Oct 2020



### Jacinda Ardern begins New Zealand election tour at parents' house so they can babysit

9 Sep 2020



### Judith Collins named New Zealand National party's new leader

14 Jul 2020

■ ■ We are in a period of great political volatility – the New Zealand election is far from decided

*Bryce Edwards*

26 Jun 2020

115

### New Zealand minister says yes – Trump is racist amid George Floyd protests

5 Jun 2020

### 'I am not Māori': New Zealand MP corrects party deputy leader amid diversity criticism

26 May 2020

New Zealand opposition 'rules out' deal with Winston Peters

## Most popular

### Across The Guardian

### In World News

- 1 Trump faces pressure from Republicans to drop 'corrosive' fight to overturn election
- 2 US vaccine expert predicts life could be back to normal around May
- 3 Actor calls out director for criticizing his 'tiny' apartment during Zoom audition
- 4 **■** Farewell to a good girl
- 5 Sarah Cooper: 'Trump has bigger fish to fry than me'
- 6 'If I'm not in on Friday, I might be dead': chilling facts about UK femicide
- 7 Donald Trump appears to admit Covid is 'running wild' in the US
- 8 **Live** / Liverpool 3-0 Leicester City: Premier League - as it happened
- 9 Pompeii dig reveals 'almost perfect' remains of a master and his slave
- 10 **■** Joe Biden's begging bowl demeans the world's most powerful post

### Most commented

Arteta angry at Pépé over 'unacceptable' red card in Arsenal stalemate at Leeds



### Most shared

Jason Isaacs: 'I'd like to apologise to anyone who met me before I was 30 - I was a drug addict'



Advertisement

Subscribe →



### The Guardian Weekly

A weekly, global magazine from The Guardian, with delivery worldwide. See the world more clearly.



### Digital subscription

The Guardian Editions, Premium Guardian Live app and ad-free theguardian.com.

**World** ► Europe US Americas Asia Australia Middle East Africa Inequality

News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle

### Sign up for the Guardian Today email

All the day's headlines and highlights from the Guardian, direct to you every morning

Email address

Sign up

Contact us

Complaints & corrections

SecureDrop

Work for us

Privacy settings

Privacy policy

Cookie policy

Terms & conditions

Help

Advertise with us

Search UK jobs

All topics

All writers

Digital newspaper archive

Facebook

Twitter

Newsletters

### Support The Guardian

Available for everyone, funded by readers

Contribute →    Subscribe →

Back to top ^