

World record: New Zealand overtakes the UK's title for the most rainbow Parliament

18 Oct, 2020 12:32 PM

(Preston, N., 2020)



New Green Party MP Elizabeth Kerekere campaigned on issues facing the rainbow community. Photo / Supplied



By: **Nikki Preston**

Herald reporter based in Hamilton

Nikki.Preston@nzme.co.nz

VOTE 2020



New Zealand now holds the title of the most rainbow Parliament in the world.

Yesterday's preliminary results show there is likely to be 12 openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer members of the 120 members sitting in the next Parliament - boosting the rainbow representation from seven last year after Labour swept in after yesterday's election.

Overall rainbow representation will be at 10 per cent - providing the Green Party is successful holding on to its preliminary 11 seats - bypassing the UK which holds the

current title of the most rainbow Parliament with a 7 per cent representation.



Grant Robertson enjoyed election night at Labour's HQ in Wellington's Wharewaka. Photo / Katie Harris

In the UK there are 45 openly rainbow members in the 650-member House of Commons.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertise with NZME.

Meanwhile the openly rainbow MPs in New Zealand's recently elected Parliament include Labour's incumbents Grant Robertson, Louisa Wall, Meka Whaitiri, Tamati Coffey and Kiri Allan and newcomers Ayesha Verrall, Shanan Halbert and Glen Bennett.

They will be joined by openly LGBTQIA+ Green Party member and spokeswoman for Rainbow issues Jan Logie, Chloe Swarbrick, Elizabeth Kerekere and Ricardo Menendez. About 40 per cent of the Green Party MPs are also from the rainbow community.



Jacinda Ardern and Louisa Wall at the Big Gay Out in Point Chevalier in Auckland in February.

However, if the special votes result in the Green Party losing seats then Kerekere and Menendez who are current ranked 9 and 10 respectively could lose their seats, therefore lowering the LGBTQIA+ representation to a minimum of nine members.

Neither Act or National Party currently have any openly gay MPs in their parties.

Inside Out managing director Tabby Besley said it was a wonderful to see New Zealand holding the international title and was great to have the rainbow community's voices and issues

considered by people with lived experience.

Related articles

Fashion designers 'honoured' to dress Jacinda Ardern for election night

18 Oct, 2020 03:04 PM
Quick Read

NEW ZEALAND

Ardern says 'mandate exists for Labour'; Govt to form in 3 weeks

18 Oct, 2020 02:31 PM
Quick Read

NEW ZEALAND | Politics

New MP Kieran McAnulty dedicates victory to his gran

18 Oct, 2020 02:31 PM
Quick Read

'A funeral': What happened at National's yacht club function?

18 Oct, 2020 03:34 PM
Quick Read

"To have that number across both Labour and Greens is really awesome ..."



Kiri Allan won the East Coast electorate for Labour last night.

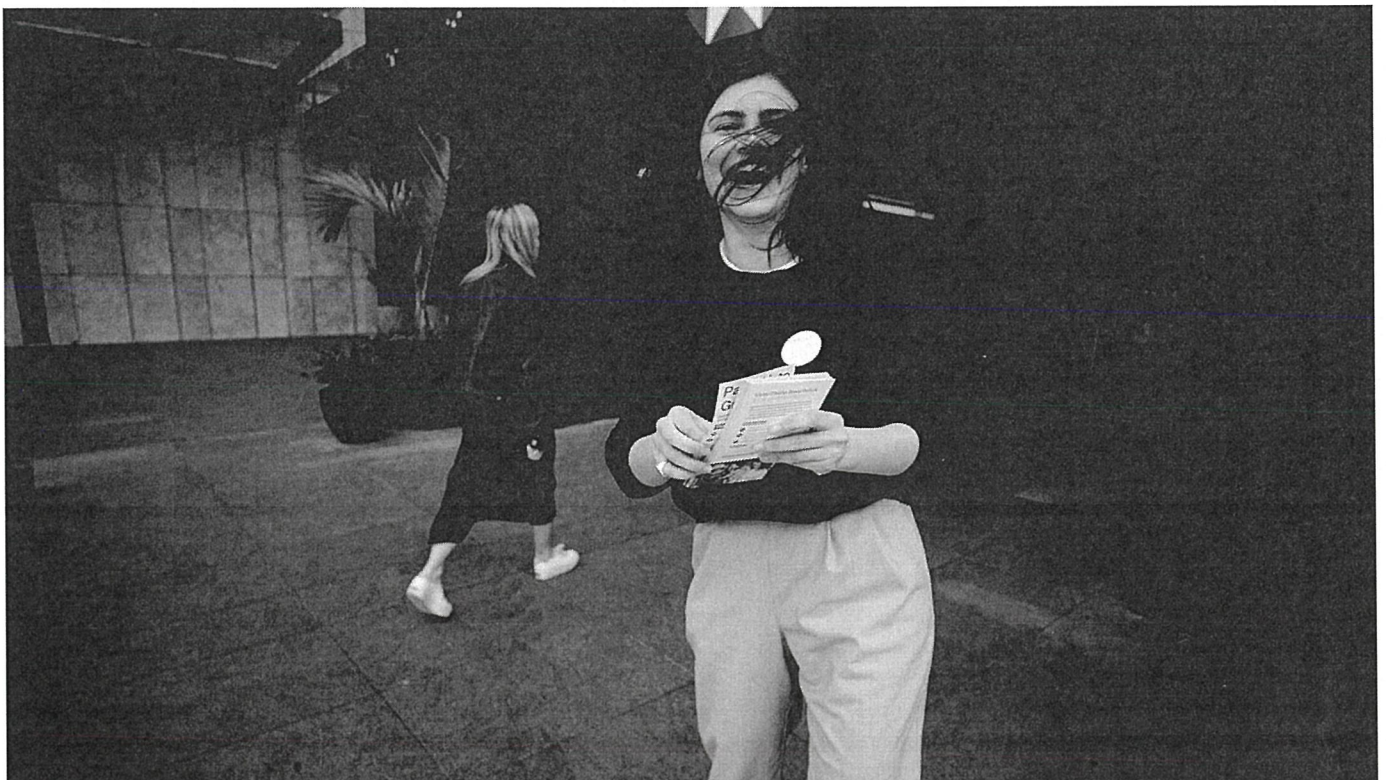
She said not only did they have a rainbow member who held a really prominent position in Labour Grant Robertson, but there was also the new addition to the Greens with Elizabeth Kerekere who had been campaigning on rainbow issues.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertise with NZME.

"I think for our communities a lot of us know she will be waving the flag as one of her main priorities whereas I guess many MPs might have other portfolios or some people may not want their rainbow identity to be the main thing they talk about because they are just doing their job like other people. At least with her position we know she's not going to be shy around raising these issues so that is quite exciting.

Besley said things were relatively slow-moving for the rainbow community over the last term and they would like to see policies such as the ban on conversion therapy actioned swiftly.



In a shock result, Chloe Swarbrick took Auckland Central in the polls last night. Photo / Dean Purcell

University of Waikato senior lecturer in psychology and president of the Professional Association for Transgender Health Aotearoa Dr Jaimie Veale hoped a larger representation of the rainbow community in Parliament would result in more progress as believed there had not been enough during the past two terms.

Veale also wanted to see some recognition on rainbow people's rights such as health equities and make it easier for transgender people to have legal gender recognition which had stalled under a NZ First minister.

"Thinking of the transgender - we are hopeful that the current make-up of Parliament will be more responsive to our needs now."