

Definition: **New Zealand** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 an independent dominion within the Commonwealth, occupying two main islands (the North Island and the South Island), Stewart Island, the Chatham Islands, and a number of minor islands in the SE Pacific: original Māori inhabitants ceded sovereignty to the British government in 1840; became a dominion in 1907; a major world exporter of dairy products, wool, and meat. Official languages: English and Māori. Religion: Christian majority, nonreligious and Māori minorities. Currency: New Zealand dollar. Capital: Wellington. Pop: 4 365 113 (2013 est). Area: 270 534 sq km (104 454 sq miles)



Image from: [Aerial photo of Auckland Maximum Security Prison... in Encyclopedia of Prisons and Correctional Facilities](#)

Summary Article: **New Zealand**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Country in the southwest Pacific Ocean, southeast of Australia, comprising two main islands, North Island and South Island, and other small islands.

Government New Zealand is a multiparty liberal democracy with a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary executive. As in the UK, the constitution is the gradual product of legislation, much of it passed by the UK Parliament in London. The governor general represents the British monarch as formal head of state and appoints the prime minister, who chooses the cabinet. All ministers are drawn from and collectively responsible to the single-chamber legislature, the House of Representatives. This has 120 members elected by universal suffrage using, since 1996, a mixed-member proportional representation system, with 64 representing single-member constituencies, 49 from party-list seats, and 7 representing the Maori community. Each voter gets two votes: one for the local candidate and one for a political party (for the list seats). The house has a maximum life of three years and is subject to dissolution within that period.

History New Zealand was occupied by the Polynesian Maori from about AD 850. The Dutch explorer Abel Tasman reached it in 1642, sighting the Southern Alps, but the Maori would not let him land. British influence began with the voyages of Captain James Cook, who, in search of the Southern Continent, explored the coasts in 1769–70, 1773, and 1777.

Early European settlement The first semi-permanent European inhabitants of New Zealand were whalers and sealers. In 1771 a plan for the colonization of the country was put forward by Benjamin Franklin and the hydrographer Alexander Dalrymple, but colonization began only after the loss of Britain's American colonies had brought the penal settlement of New South Wales into contact with New Zealand. British missionaries began to arrive from 1815, and in 1826 the New Zealand Company was founded in London to encourage settlement.

Contact with European society threatened the Maori with political and economic collapse, and in 1830 Samuel Marsden, the colonial chaplain, having been moved by pleas from visiting Maoris, suggested to the governor of New South Wales the desirability of appointing a British representative in New Zealand, backed by naval visits in order to control a growing European community that was incapable of

adjusting itself to change without such control. The British government sent a resident, James Busby, to the Bay of Islands, under the authority of the government of New South Wales, but Busby's attempt in 1835 to encourage the Maori to adopt a settled form of government under British protection proved unsuccessful.

New Zealand becomes a colony The man whose influence in New Zealand was profound and enduring in this period was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who relaunched the New Zealand Company in 1839, after its initial failure. Wakefield's efforts, despite official and missionary antagonism, to inaugurate systematic colonization marked the start of a new era in British overseas settlement. Enlisting the support of politicians, religious leaders, businessmen, and others, he eventually succeeded in making New Zealand a British colony in the full sense of the term.

In 1839 the government sent out Captain William Hobson, a naval officer, to negotiate with the Maori chiefs for the recognition of British authority, and the result was the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), the deliberately ambiguous text of which seemed to offer British control of the unruly European settlers in exchange for a nominal Maori recognition of British sovereignty (see Waitangi, Treaty of). In reality the treaty (and the absence of unified Maori opposition to it) provided the basis for British colonial expansion in New Zealand.

Hobson was, in effect, the first British governor of New Zealand, and under him British law and government were established in the North Island, where the Maori were most numerous. The headquarters of the northern settlement was moved from the Bay of Islands to Auckland, which in 1841 became the seat of government. Around the same time, large-scale sheep farming began to be developed.

It was, nonetheless, the organized colonization schemes of the New Zealand Company that ultimately had the most influence on the character and the plan of the new colony. Under the company's aegis the town of Wellington was founded, while new colonies were established all round the coast by bodies of settlers who gave them the names of their places of origin, for example, Dunedin (the old name of Edinburgh) in Otago harbour, founded by the Free Church of Scotland in 1848, and Christchurch, founded by the Canterbury Association in 1850.

Maori discontent, engendered mainly by the encroachment of European settlers onto lands they believed had been safeguarded by the Treaty of Waitangi, resulted in war in the North Island in 1845, but the British government recalled Hobson's vacillating successor as governor, Robert Fitzroy, and sent out George Grey, governor of South Australia, who soon compelled the Bay of Islands tribes to sue for peace (1847).

Towards self-government This was the period of Lord Durham's celebrated report on Canada, recommending the management of internal Canadian affairs by a cabinet responsible to the Canadian electorate (see Durham Report), and in relation to New Zealand the British government agreed to the view of the New Zealand Company that New Zealand should have representative institutions. An act to that effect was passed in 1846, though Grey was opposed to its proposed division of the country into European and Maori districts, it being evident to him that the Maori would never agree to a government in which they had no share. As a result, the act was suspended pending a new act of 1852. In the meantime, in 1851, New Zealand separated administratively from New South Wales, becoming a separate colony.

Though Grey had thus delayed self-government in New Zealand for six years it is still doubtful whether the colony was really ready for it in 1852. The New Zealand Constitution Act of 1852 was a liberal measure for its time and, subject to subsequent amendments, is still the basis of the constitution of New Zealand. The act did not go so far as to provide for responsible government. A motion seeking ministerial responsibility was moved in the local assembly by Wakefield, himself now a colonist, and this being almost unanimously passed, the British government acquiesced (1856).

Thus within less than two decades of the setting up of British authority in New Zealand in 1840, that authority (with only one important reservation) had been transferred to the colonists so far as their domestic affairs were concerned.

Renewed land wars Land wars between the Maoris and the colonial settlers broke out again in 1860, with little intermission until 1870. The real cause of the outbreak of 1860 was that the tribes and their chiefs felt that their traditions and whole way of life were jeopardized by the colonists, who had now so firmly established themselves that, in the South Island, most of the land had been transferred to the crown for nominal sums, while even in the North Island where Maori settlements were much larger, the crown owned 17,600 sq km / 6,794 sq mi. The Maoris realized that they had no share or voice in the constitution; one response was the Maori King movement, a belated attempt to create a Maori state, but mutual suspicion between the Maori and European settlers made any hope of success for this movement impossible.

The failure of several campaigns against determined and resourceful Maori forces and the withdrawal of British troops in the late 1860s forced the colonial government to moderate its policy of land settlement. However, Maori losses were considerably heavier than those of the colonists, which were only a few hundred, and by the end of the war the Maori were totally demoralized.

Eventually the idea of racial partnership was to evolve, fostered by prominent Maoris and European leaders. This process was hastened by an act providing for the election of four Maori members to the House of Representatives and by the passing of the Native Schools Act.

Development in the later 19th century Meanwhile gold had been discovered in Otago, in the valleys of the west coast of South Island (1861–65), and the resulting gold rushes led to much irregular development, largely enhanced by the ambitious plans of Julius Vogel, a gold-seeking immigrant who had become colonial treasurer and, in that capacity, introduced his famous public-works budget of 1870. Under his schemes 100,000 immigrants were brought into the country; railways were built to open up new lands; and new industries, including woollen mills, foundries, and paper mills, were introduced.

Liberal reforms George Grey was Radical prime minister 1877–84, and was largely responsible for the conciliation of the Maori and the introduction of male suffrage. The Conservatives held power 1879–90 and were succeeded by a Liberal government that ruled with trade union support. In 1891 New Zealand took part in the Australasian Federal Convention in Sydney, but rejected idea of joining an Australian Commonwealth. The Liberal government introduced women's suffrage in 1893, the first country in the world to do so. In 1894 there was a financial crisis, when the government came to the aid of the Bank of New Zealand by guaranteeing an issue of new shares up to £2,000,000.

The ensuing years of the Liberal government saw considerable legislative activity in the sphere of fiscal and social reform; thus the Land and Income Tax Act enabled large estates to be compulsorily acquired for settlement, and during 1894–98 a factory act, a shops and offices act, an act for compulsory

arbitration in industrial disputes, and an old age pensions act were passed, all liberal measures that represented an important change in the progress of New Zealand towards political maturity, and were forerunners of its social-security legislation of the 20th century.

This liberal programme owed its success partly to the work of John Balance (prime minister 1891–93) and still more to the notable premiership of Richard John Seddon (prime minister 1893–1906). Seddon was in power to the end of his life and maintained the attitude characteristic of the earlier liberal reforms.

Massey and the small farmers Seddon was not, however, prepared to agree to more socialistic demands from the small farmers. The influence of the small farmers increased with each election, and Seddon's successor, Sir Joseph Ward (Liberal prime minister, 1906–12), had no success with them.

After 1912 the Reform (formerly Conservative) Party regained power. William Massey, premier of the Reform government (1912–25), who had been a working farmer all his life, enjoyed the confidence of the farming community. The development of New Zealand's farming had gathered momentum, and the New Zealand farmers believed themselves to be the real masters of the country. They demanded the right to purchase their freeholds on reasonable terms, and Massey conceded this right. In contrast, Massey made strenuous efforts to control the militant trade unions and the newly formed Federation of Labour, including the violent suppression of the 1912 Waihi miners' strike.

The imperial connection New Zealand supported Britain in the Boer War of 1899–1902. At the outset Seddon, with the practically unanimous support of the representatives, offered a New Zealand contingent, and some 7,000 officers and men were sent to South Africa. Throughout his 13 years of office Seddon, of all the dominion statesmen, was the strongest supporter of Joseph Chamberlain's imperial dreams of closer union, and at the Colonial Conference (1902) he even suggested that each of the self-governing colonies (as they then were styled) should maintain a body of troops especially for imperial service. In 1907 New Zealand achieved dominion status within the British Empire.

In World War I an expeditionary force of 10,000 men sailed for the Middle East and formed part of the Anzac forces. In all 117,000 men volunteered or were called up for foreign service, and 7,000 for home service.

During the later stages of the war there was labour unrest, and the New Zealand Labour Party was established in 1916. The most important long-term effect of the war in New Zealand was a ripening of national self-consciousness, coupled with a fuller appreciation of the difficulties and responsibilities of Britain.

New Zealand after World War I Both Massey and Ward took part in the peace conference and duly signed the treaties. New Zealand became a member of the League of Nations and accepted a mandate from the League to administer the former German colony of Western Samoa, giving up a previous desire for outright annexation. After the war the interdependence of Britain's and New Zealand's economies remained New Zealand's major preoccupation, for its previous prosperity had declined and the restoration of pre-1914 prosperity seemed as remote as ever.

The Reform government of Joseph Coates, formed after Massey's death (1925), was not in favour of further borrowing from London, but in 1928 Joseph Ward's United Party (the successor of the Liberal Party from 1927) was returned to office on a platform of land settlement and railroad development to be financed by loans, and £30,000,000 was borrowed in the next few years. By the end of 1933 New

Zealand was on the road to recovery, mainly through the expansion of the wool market, but the dairy industry was still at a low ebb.

In 1931 the Statute of Westminster affirmed equality of status between Britain and the dominions, effectively granting independence to New Zealand. In the same year the Reform Party and the United Party entered into a coalition, and merged as the National Party in 1936.

The first Labour government In 1935 New Zealand elected its first Labour government, under Michael Joseph Savage (prime minister 1935–40), Labour securing 55 members in a house of 80. New Zealand's economic anxieties were further increased in 1935 when the UK government decided to tax imported mutton and lamb for the benefit of British producers. In this crisis the country followed the path of economic nationalism.

The Labour government's first important measure of credit policy was to change the Reserve Bank, established in 1934, into a central bank to carry out the monetary policy of the government. By 1938 New Zealand felt that its prosperity had been restored. This was accomplished during an era of socialist administration, when high wages were paid and an ambitious programme of public works set afoot as a system of relief for unemployment, pensions were increased, a big housing programme was begun, and the 44-hour week had been introduced.

But this newly won prosperity rested on an insecure foundation; the country continued to import more than it could pay for. UK government credits of £5,000,000 for defence and an export credit of £4,000,000 to finance imports were granted as a result of the mission of Walter Nash, the New Zealand finance minister.

Defence issues and World War II Conscious of its interests in the Pacific, New Zealand actively supported the construction of the British naval base in Singapore, and Prime Minister Massey had protested when construction was suspended by the British Labour government of 1924. The New Zealand government contributed £1,000,000 when work was resumed.

With a Labour government coming to power in New Zealand in 1935 there was, for the first time, a pronounced difference of views on foreign policy between the UK and New Zealand, but at the Imperial Conference of 1937, however, New Zealand agreed to coordinate its defence policy with the UK's, and as World War II approached the New Zealand government became stronger in its resolve to stand by the UK.

The UK's declaration of war on Germany was regarded as binding on New Zealand, and when war came New Zealanders stood loyally with the UK. The New Zealand government agreed to send and maintain a force of one division. The New Zealand Division served, with a distinction noted by allies and opponents alike, in Greece, North Africa, and Italy, and New Zealand detachments with the British air force and navy served in the Pacific.

Formal independence, 1947 It was not until the end of 1947 that at long last New Zealand adopted the principal sections (2–6) of the Statute of Westminster and passed a further act asking the British government to legislate to relieve New Zealand of restrictions remaining, under an amending act of 1857, on its powers to amend its own constitution. This request was promptly granted by the passage of the New Zealand Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1949, repealing the New Zealand Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1857, and making it lawful for the parliament of New Zealand 'to alter, suspend or repeal, at any time, all or any of the provisions of the New Zealand Constitution Act, 1852'. In this way

independence was formally accepted by the New Zealand legislature.

Holland's premiership, 1949–57 Michael Joseph Savage had been succeeded as Labour premier in 1940 by Peter Fraser, but after 14 years in office the Labour government was defeated by the National Party, whose leader, Sidney Holland, became prime minister in December 1949.

Holland was soon faced with formidable trouble in the dockers' dispute, which first began in June 1950, and eventually led to a long strike accompanied by serious disturbances. The creation of a new independent waterside workers' union proved a decisive setback to the left, and the prime minister's hard attitude led eventually to the settlement of a protracted coal strike. Holland's policies were endorsed by a majority of the electorate at the general election in September 1951.

Meanwhile the country had taken a full part in the United Nations intervention in the Korean War, 1,500 volunteering for service on the first day and 5,982 registering altogether for the special artillery force that was sent to Korea. An economic crisis in 1952 caused a temporary halt in New Zealand's post-war expansion. The conclusion of the Anzus pact between Australia, New Zealand, and the USA was subject to some criticism in the UK (which was excluded), but was defended by the prime minister as a necessary measure of insurance for the countries concerned. In 1954 New Zealand joined the South East Asia Treaty Organization. Wider in scope than the Anzus pact, it did not, however, replace that pact. The nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt in 1956 was condemned by both government and opposition in New Zealand. The government subsequently supported the UK's military intervention in Egypt, though not warned of it in advance. In September 1957 Holland retired from the leadership of the National Party and was succeeded as prime minister by Keith Holyoake, his deputy.

The governments of Nash and Holyoake, 1957–72 At the general election in November 1957 the National Party was defeated and the Labour Party returned to power with the Labour leader Walter Nash as prime minister. Labour remained in power until 1960, and its term of office was marked by further social legislation.

The National Party under Holyoake came back to office in 1960 and remained until 1972. From 1960 to 1963 New Zealand's relations with the UK were dominated by the UK's application to join the European Economic Community (EEC; the precursor of the European Community and the European Union). Many New Zealanders feared that UK membership would mean economic ruin for New Zealand, and the rejection of the British application was generally welcomed, but the UK's eventual entry 10 years later was accompanied by special arrangements for the marketing of New Zealand butter and cheese designed to safeguard its economy. New Zealand was nevertheless obliged to seek closer trading relations with Australia.

In March 1972 Holyoake retired and was succeeded by his deputy, John Marshall.

Kirk and Rowling's Labour government, 1972–75 The National Party was defeated in the 1972 general election and a Labour government was formed under Norman Kirk. It immediately withdrew the contingent of New Zealand troops that had been fighting in the Vietnam War since 1965.

New Zealand's economy had been thriving because of an international price boom for agricultural products, but prosperity had brought the problem of inflation. Increasing domestic demand and the energy crises of 1973–74 led to a rapid rise in imports and a severe balance-of-payments problem, leading to heavy borrowing from abroad to maintain full employment. New Zealand was also adversely affected by the UK's entry into the European Economic Community in 1973, as it had relied on the UK

as a key export market.

The Labour government was more independent in its foreign affairs than its predecessors. It phased out New Zealand's commitments under the South East Asia Treaty Organization and established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. In 1973 it introduced a visa system, which abolished the automatic right of entry for British citizens, a further indication of the erosion of political links between the two countries. In 1974 New Zealand protested strongly against French testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific, and a New Zealand navy frigate escorted international protest vessels into the French test zone.

After Kirk died in August 1974, his finance minister, Bill Rowling, became prime minister. To counter the growing trade deficit the currency was devalued by 6% in September 1974, and by a further 15% in August 1975. Restrictions were also placed on licensed imports.

Muldoon's National Party government, 1975–84 The National Party, led by Robert Muldoon, won the 1975 general election and Muldoon became prime minister. He sought to revive the economy through large capital projects promoted by the government and tariff protection, but without success. He also introduced wage and price freezes. Muldoon narrowly secured re-election in 1981, but, after introducing controversial labour legislation, the National Party was swept out of office at the 1984 general election by the Labour Party, led by David Lange.

Non-nuclear policy under Lange's Labour government In 1985 the trawler *Rainbow Warrior*, the flagship of the environmental group Greenpeace, which was monitoring nuclear tests in French Polynesia, was mined in Auckland harbour by French secret service agents, killing a Portuguese photographer aboard. The French prime minister eventually admitted responsibility, and New Zealand demanded compensation.

Labour fought and won the August 1987 general election on a non-nuclear military policy, which the opposition National Party also backed. Prime Minister Lange immediately put this new policy into effect, forbidding any vessels carrying nuclear weapons or powered by nuclear energy from entering New Zealand's ports. This put a strain on relations with the USA, which reclassified New Zealand as a 'friendly', rather than an 'allied', country and suspended several military-related provisions of the Anzus pact.

Domestically, Lange's Labour government embarked on a free-market economic programme, involving privatization and reducing trade barriers which helped stimulate economic growth. In August 1989 Lange resigned, citing health reasons, and was replaced by Geoffrey Palmer. In September 1990, faced with a no-confidence vote, Prime Minister Palmer resigned and was replaced by a former Labour foreign-affairs minister, Mike Moore.

The National Party in power under Bolger: 1990–97 Labour lost the October 1990 general election to the National Party, led by Jim Bolger, who became prime minister. He continued with a free-market economic programme, but faced criticism in November 1991 from former premier Robert Muldoon for his right-wing social policies. The 1991 Employment Contracts Act weakened trade union power by outlawing compulsory union membership.

New Zealand's traditional two-party party political system was challenged in December 1991 by the formation of the Alliance Party, comprising the Democratic Party, the New Labour Party (NLP), the Green Party, and the (mainly Maori) New Zealand Self-Government Party. In July 1992 the ban imposed

on visits by US warships was lifted, and in September 1992 a referendum approved a change in the voting system, to make it semiproportional, with effect from 1996.

The Bolger-led National Party narrowly won the 1993 general election with a majority of one seat, after losing some support to the centrist New Zealand First Party (NZFP), which had been formed by Winston Peters after he had been dismissed in 1991 from Bolger's cabinet because of differences over economic policy. Simultaneously, a second referendum reaffirmed the electorate's preference for a semiproportional voting system. In September 1994 the National Party temporarily lost its one-seat majority after a junior minister resigned to form the Right of Centre Party (ROC). However, Prime Minister Bolger remained in power by entering into alliance with the new party.

The New Zealand government objected strongly to France's decision to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific region in 1995. In February 1996 the National Party signed a formal coalition agreement with the United Party, giving the government a parliamentary majority of one.

The September 1996 general election was held against a backcloth of several years of strong economic growth, but nevertheless produced an inconclusive result. But in December 1996 Bolger was able to remain as prime minister, after forming a coalition government with the NZFP, with its leader, Peters, as deputy prime minister.

The National Party's Jenny Shipley is New Zealand's first female prime minister: 1997–99

After losing the support of a majority of his MPs, Bolger was ousted as National Party leader in December 1997, while attending a Commonwealth meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, and was succeeded by the former Transport Minister, Jenny Shipley, who became New Zealand's first woman prime minister.

Shipley pursued a free-market economic policy and despite the Asian economic crisis, New Zealand's economy continued to grow in 2008, but by just 0.7%. In August 1998 a rift between Shipley and her deputy, Winston Peters, led to the NZFP withdrawing from the coalition and the calling of an early general election.

Labour in power under Helen Clark: first term 1999–2002 The November 1999 election resulted in the replacement of Shipley's conservative government by a centre-left minority coalition of the Labour Party and New Zealand Alliance, led by Labour's Helen Clark, with the leader of the Alliance party, Jim Anderton, as deputy prime minister. The new government depended for its majority on the support of the Green Party.

Clark promoted a democratic socialist 'third way' and her government pledged to address the widening gap that had emerged during the 1990s between the rich and the poor of the country, using strategies that included raising the top rates of personal income tax, assisting poor families (many of whom were Maoris), an Employment Relations Act (2000), and a biodiversity conservation strategy. However, it maintained much of the preceding government's free-market economic reforms. Clark also announced her support in September 2000 for a merger of the Australian and New Zealand stock exchange, and for a common currency between the countries.

In August 2000 Dame Silvia Cartwright was named as next governor-general. Her appointment in April 2001 meant that all top political offices in New Zealand were held by women until October 2001, when Shipley was replaced as National Party leader by Bill English.

In March 2001 Clark announced cuts to the country's military forces, disbanding the combat section of the air force, and scaling back the navy. The announcement angered Australia and the USA, who questioned New Zealand's commitment to regional security. A further defence review in May concluded that New Zealand was not directly threatened by any country, and recommended the disbanding of its air-combat division. New Zealand contributed troops to the 2001 US-led war in Afghanistan against the Taliban regime, but not for the 2003 war against Iraq.

In April 2002 the government announced that a Supreme Court sitting in Wellington would replace the UK's Privy Council as the country's final court of appeal. The Privy Council had been the court of appeal for 151 years, but was replaced after fears that the cost of taking an appeal to London, England, was beyond the reach of most members of the public.

Clark's second and third terms: 2002–08 Labour retained power in the July 2002 general election. It won 52 of the 120 seats (up from 49 in 1999), while the National Party took 27 (its worst-ever result). Clark formed a new centre-left coalition government with the Progressive Party. Between 2002–05 New Zealand's economy grew strongly, at an annual rate of nearly 4%. Although at the September 2005 general election, the National Party won back some ground, under the leadership of Don Brash, Clark's Labour party managed to hang on to power, forming a minority coalition with the Progressive Party again, but relying on support also from the centrist United Future New Zealand, populist NZFP, and the Green Party.

In 2006 New Zealand deployed troops in East Timor, as part of an intervention force to deal with violent unrest. In October 2007 the police launched anti-terrorist raids on North Island, as a result of as a result of the activities of Maori extremists.

National Party returns to power in 2008 under John Key The November 2008 general election was held at a time when the economy was moving into recession caused by the global financial crisis. The National Party, led by John Key, polled strongly, winning 58 of the 122 seats, with 46% of the vote, as against 43 for the Labour Party, with 34% of the vote. A 'compassionate conservative' and millionaire former investment banker, Key became prime minister at a challenging time, with the world economy in turmoil. His government relied on support from the indigenous-rights Maori Party, the centrist United Future New Zealand (UFNZ), and the right-wing free-market Association of Consumers and Taxpayers (ACT) New Zealand parties for its parliamentary majority.

In February 2009 Key's government launched a NZ\$480 million programme to help small business and signed compensation agreements with three Maori groups in redress for historic land seizures. In 2010 the minimum wage was increased, personal taxes cut, and indirect taxes on goods and services increased. But the economy suffered the shock in February 2011 of a major earthquake in Christchurch, the second largest city, which claimed 185 lives and caused NZ\$30 billion in damage to buildings and infrastructure.

Key's second and third terms: 2011–16 Key remained as prime minister after the November 2011 general election in which the National Party won 59 of the 121 seats. In this second term, his government ended, in 2013, the country's 10-year-long deployment of New Zealand's troops in Afghanistan. He also sought to privatize state assets, but, in a December 2013 referendum, voters rejected, by a two to one margin, government plans to partially privatize four energy-related state-owned enterprises. Despite this setback, a strong economy enabled Key to secure a third term at the September 2014 general election. The National Party attracted 47% of the vote and won 60 of the 121

seats, while Labour fell back further to 25% of the vote. Key formed a minority government, with agreements from the Maori Party, United Future, and ACT parties to support it on confidence and finance motions.

Key steps down and is replaced by English In December 2016 Key unexpectedly resigned as National Party leader and prime minister as he did not wish to fight a further general election. Bill English, who had been deputy finance minister and economy minister since 2008, replaced Key as prime minister and, for a second time, as National Party leader.

The new prime minister was more socially conservative than his predecessor, but supported the market-centred economic strategy that had underpinned the New Zealand economy's strong performance since the global financial crisis.

Labour–NZFP minority government formed after 2017 elections The September 2017 general election produced an inconclusive outcome. The National Party, led by English, finished first with 56 of the 120 seats and 44% of the vote. But Labour, which had changed its leader to Jacinda Ardern only seven weeks before the election, saw a surge in support to finish second, with 37% of the vote (up 12%) and 46 seats. The New Zealand First Party (NZFP), led by Winston Peters, won 9 seats with 7% of the vote, and the Greens 8 seats with 6% of the vote.

Following several weeks of negotiations with the National and Labour parties, the NZFP decided to form a minority coalition government with Labour, with outside support on key votes to be provided by the Greens. Peters became deputy prime minister and the 37-year-old Ardern became prime minister.

Ardern's priorities for government were to increase the minimum wage and combat homelessness, but Labour had also pledged not to introduce new taxes.

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Demographic trends It was estimated in 1999 that, by the middle of the 21st century, half the children born in New Zealand would be Maori or Pacific Islanders. Patterns of immigration to New Zealand have been changing, with most now coming from Asia and the Pacific island states rather than from Australia and the UK. At the 2013 census Maoris made up 15% of New Zealand's population and Asians 12%.

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