

Current political issues

Breakfast meeting slides – Nov 7 2018



THE HUGO GROUP

Labour Party conference

- High confidence in second term
 - UMR polling shows National much weaker than Colmar-Brunton
- Finances strong – 2017 campaign funds underspent
 - Aggressive fundraising strategy to build reserves, attract new members – Labour is ‘cool’ again
- Strong interest from wanna-be Labour candidates
- Some tension between regional and urban membership
 - Choice of Whanganui for next year’s conference may reflect
- Special ed announcement intended to influence teachers’ industrial action



PM to China in December

- Almost confirmed
- May be announced post-APEC
- Likely in the week of Dec 11
- Important signal as NZ asserts foreign policy 'independence'
 - Which is less open to China than the Key administration



Chief Justice appointment

- Dame Sian Elias retiring March 2019
- Appointment by end of 2018
- Possible front-runners:
 - Supreme Court judge, Sir Mark O'Regan;
 - the president of the Court of Appeal, Justice Stephen Kos
 - appeal court judge, Justice Helen Winkelmann
- Key consideration to weigh: judicial brilliance vs administrative/leadership flair



Hydrogen – no doubt it's on the agenda

- Key Ministers highly motivated to seek opportunities involving establishment of hydrogen
 - Production
 - Transport network
- Ardern, Parker, Woods, Shaw very keen – Think Big-style intervention?
- Robertson – sceptical, questions on timing
- Jones – yes, but also wants gas
- “Green hydrogen” from renewables expensive compared to other production methods
 - But carbon prices may level that playing field
 - Creates a political story to counter oil & gas ban negativity and ‘just transition’ rhetoric
 - Allows at least some existing gas infrastructure to be repurposed



Draft tourism strategy

- “We’re from the government and we’re here to help”
- Sustainability
 - Tension between Greens/NZ First on tourism infrastructure
 - Exemplar: Punakaiki Rocks facilities
- Key observations:
 - Importance of domestic tourism to open up new destinations for international tourists
 - Potential for climate change to lead to declining international arrivals
 - Link to ProdCom’s local govt funding inquiry



National Party

- Simon Bridges will not last
- But no one is hastening to replace him
- More urgent for the party is replacing the party president
 - But no clear candidate has emerged there
- Public is less engaged on National's dirty laundry than political insiders
- But the JLR saga is septic
 - Particularly with younger and women voters

