

National – not dead yet?

December 2018



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The latest poll

- National – 46% (up 3) - bounceback
- Labour – 43% (down 2) – steady, lacking juice
- Greens – 5% (down 2) – still in Parliament @ 2020
- NZ First – 4% (down 1) – out without Northland
- Maori Party – 1% - the Nats dare to dream
- ACT - 1% - yep



A rogue?

- No reason to think so
- Labour “has had” Nats in the high 30s, but not lately
- Results consistent with jockeying around a mid-40s flatline all year



A nasty surprise

- The left is in shock
- Still a coalition govt majority
 - But hardly resounding
 - And without NZ First
 - Which is a worry for Labour as much as NZ First
- A solid half of the electorate doesn't like this govt
 - It should be worried



Possible explanations



Parade politics?

- Pride vs police
- Santa – the man, the woman, the Maori, the costume
- Feeds into culture wars/anxieties – our own quiet Trump effect

“Nothing turns other voters off like the smug self righteous glitter beard top knot militant vegan electric bike riding 4th wave feminist Trans rights above all else Green supporters, they are a daily advert for exclusion.”

- Martyn Bradbury; 2/12/18



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Possible explanations



Petrol prices/energy policy?

- Pump prices were already falling
- And will fall further
- Retailers extremely politically sensitive
- ComCom almost by definition has to find something to act on
- Against a **backdrop of worry that govt is anti-oil and gas + anti-farmer**



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Possible explanations



Aucklanders feeling less wealthy?

- Is the Sydney/Melbourne real estate dive a portent?
- or are things really quite different in Auckland?
- Public transport investment popular but slow to appear
- LVR changes take the boot off the throat a bit
- CGT is on the agenda for investors



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Other possible explanations

- Karel Sroubek – what a blunder
- Is the kindness agenda seen as naivety/weakness?
 - Draft Living Standards Framework – how useful is it?
- Climate change = higher cost of living/industries closing?
- Tax = a new front opening up with SMEs?
- Geo-political stresses growing/volatile financial markets



Inevitable conclusions

- Jami-Lee Ross lost that round
 - Nats have bounced back – voters don't reward very bad behaviour
 - Colmar-Brunton found 44/24 favoured his expulsion from Parliament
 - Now, a parliamentary inquiry into bullying
 - #metoo reaches workplace harassment more generally?
 - Profound cultural challenge to Parliament and many NZ businesses already under way because of it



NZ First's problem

- Provincial Growth Fund
 - Doing nothing for NZ First
 - Looking too much like a slush fund
 - Jumped the shark with Westland Milk?
 - Where to for 8 Rivers?
 - Jones becoming too loose – viz WTO comments
 - Playing to an audience of one



National's agenda



- Go retail
- Concentrate on the hip-pocket
 - i.e., taxes – petrol/capital gains
- Viz Bridges promising to tear up the UN migration agreement
 - A calculatedly Trumpian gesture



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Jacinda vs Judith

- What if Judith Collins takes over from Simon Bridges?
- Tough, experienced woman vs kind, inexperienced woman
 - A more difficult dynamic for Ardern
 - Especially if these poll results suggest scepticism about the kindness agenda

