

Pre-election jousting begins

August 2019

Attack ads and social media


Under Labour's Car Tax

If you're buying this



+\$1100

You're subsidising this



-\$2000

Source: Ministry of Transport, proposed feebate schedule for used vehicles, 2021.
Funded by the Parliamentary Service.
Authorised by Simon Bridges, Leader of the Opposition, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

Attack ads & social media

- National clearly receiving advice on deployment of highly targeted social media marketing
 - Likely to be at least informed by Topham Guerin
 - UK pro-Brexit and Aussie Libs pollster/digital campaigners
 - Politics as “game theory”
- No signs as yet of ‘fake news’
- Nats unapologetic
 - “when we talk tax, our numbers move”

Maori issues animate a new generation of activists



Maori land issues revive

- A challenging political combination for the govt:
 - Ihumatao – intervention a classic no-win situation
 - Likely to spread – Shelly Bay ripe
 - Oranga Tamariki uplifts stoke smouldering resentments
 - A new generation of activists seeking to win the battles that earlier generations thought were won
 - Is ‘full and final’ ever either?
 - What if it’s not?
 - Pits centrist Labour against Labour left/the constituency least impressed by ‘transformation’ to date
 - Does it create opportunities for creative solutions?
 - Or will it end messily?
- And attracts other, loosely anti-status quo strains of political activism

Climate change



Climate change

- Forestry becoming seen as a threat to rural communities
 - Helps National, weakens NZ First and ‘billion trees’
- National adopting a more cynical approach
 - EV ads
 - Embracing pressure from rural/regional vote
 - Framing the issue as an attack on farms, meat and dairy – staples of NZ diet, wealth and ‘way of life’
- Is Todd Muller snookered as primary sector spokesman, while also promoted?
 - Has Bridges has done a “Twyford” on Muller?

The Greens – a house divided



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The Greens

- James Shaw found some teeth
- Had to show some fight or risk Jack McDonald's withdrawal becoming a flood rather than a one-off
- But split over Ihumatao is obvious
 - Shaw – pragmatic, technocratic, happy to wear a suit, believes this attracts a wider constituency
 - Davidson – idealistic, uninterested in compromise or complexity, principle more important than power

NZ First



NZ First – what if they don't come back?

- 3% in latest Colmar Brunton
 - Could struggle for 5%
- Greens at 6.5%
 - Tend to do worse on election day
 - Split caucus won't help
- Add in National's pursuit of hard-edged electoral tactics
- And Labour's governing weaknesses
- Could National win on its own next year?

Major resource / environmental announcements this month

- August 14: National Policy Statements on:
 - Elite Soils
 - Urban planning
 - Parker, Twyford, O'Connor + mayors
- Late August/early Sept: Essential Freshwater announcements
 - Campaign of targeted announcements on river clean-ups between now and then
 - Community engagement a key element