

## The case for a pre-Christmas mini-Budget

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The PREFU has served to underline the fiscal balancing act that the next govt will have to undertake. Put together with the National Party's desire to show early momentum – and the trouble it's having on the campaign trail on the credibility of its tax package forecasting – the conditions for a pre-Christmas mini-Budget look propitious.

## Two vital weeks of the campaign

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The next fortnight is arguably the most important of the election campaign. Early voting starts on Oct 2 and as many as two-thirds of voters will have cast their ballots by the time election day rolls around on Oct 14. All efforts after Oct 2 are subject to the law of diminishing returns.

## How they're travelling

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Christopher Luxon looks increasingly confident on the campaign trail, although still flat-footed in media performances. Chris Hipkins looks tired. Voter interest in match-ups between Grant Robertson and Nicola Willis suggest there is substantial interest in policy in an election where neither major party leader is engaging voters' imaginations.

## The minor parties

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Act has looked a bit panicked after losing several candidates whose social media histories caught up with them and as National appears to be clawing back support from Act as election day approaches. His comments about a "confidence-only" deal may have been overblown in the media, but he was forced to add nuance quickly. Winston Peters's campaign looks as if it will deliver NZ First 5% of the party vote, but the party is not clearly needed to form a govt at this stage.

## A chill wind through Wellington

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With both major parties promising to carve savings out of the back office bureaucracy, Wellington is a rather nervous place at present. Nicola Willis explicitly name-checked MBIE, MfE, and Ministry for Culture and Heritage for pruning in the last week. Grant Robertson agrees re MBIE.

## Nats on tech and ag

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National will make irrigation and water storage schemes easier to consent with a new National Environmental Standard, and will pursue an NES for horticultural land. It announced plans for new tech sector visas and pledged to reform tax rules that discourage the use of share options in startups.

## GDP and balance of payments next week

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The PREFU paints a flat outlook for the economy over the next 18 months, with interest rates elevated to late 2024. Next week's GDP and balance of payments statistics releases will give further colour on economic conditions.

## Mini-Budget before Christmas?

All poll trends point to a National-led govt of some stripe. Once formed, Christopher Luxon is making it clear that he will try to build early momentum.

We have noted in earlier editions that Parliament is likely to sit until Christmas Eve both to repeal some key Labour legislation but also to allow a new govt to put runs on the board.

Failure to start new initiatives early enough, let alone complete them, is seen as one of the signal failings of the current govt. A Luxon-led administration will regard establishing momentum as among its top early priorities.

It will also be needing to make unpopular decisions, particularly on govt spending.

This week's PREFU, with its forecasts of a return to Budget surplus in 2027 predicated on no new spending allowances in that and future years, is both ammunition and tripwire for the incoming govt.

That is especially so, given National's commitment to a tax relief plan that is politically popular but has even National-backing fiscal conservatives worried.

It is not strictly credible for National to call its tax package "self-funding".

That is not only because it is probably a billion dollars short, thanks to optimistic estimates of its foreign home buyer levy and a \$500m shortfall in forecast ETS revenues.

It is also because the tax package inevitably sits within the govt's wider finances. The picture from the PREFU shows that very substantial spending reductions will be required if National's promise not to raise taxes or increase borrowing is to be achieved.

A new govt also only gets a short window to make highly unpopular decisions.

On that basis, the case for a mini-Budget that seeks to begin the process of spending reforms and lay out the new administration's approach to economic management looks compelling.

A "reset" prior to Christmas would be intended to bolster business confidence by demonstrating commitment to action.

## Tax plan headache

It may also be one way for National to deal with the headache that the PREFU has created. The party has promised to produce a "fiscal plan" before early voting starts on Oct 2.

However, it is struggling to defend the credibility of elements of its tax package.

While this is probably more of a 'beltway' issue than

one that is changing voters' minds, that does not change the real challenge that an incoming National-led govt would have to deliver the tax package and balance the books.

It may therefore prefer to present a fiscal plan that includes commitment to an immediate "stocktake" on coming into govt, when it will have full access to official advice.

Nicola Willis said this week that National could have cuts announced by Christmas. She also said she was open to a Treasurer-Finance Minister style arrangement with Act if that is what forming a govt came down to.

The biggest impediment to any such plan? A weak final showing at the polls for National that requires involvement of NZ First in its governing arrangements.

That would almost inevitably create delay in govt formation and more convoluted policy negotiations than a National/Act combination.

## The campaign's most crucial phase

With early voting starting on Monday, Oct 2, the next fortnight shapes up as the most crucial in the election campaign.

That is because NZers have taken to early voting, with more than two-thirds of all votes cast before polling day in 2020.

For Labour, the challenge is to stop its downward trend and to try to peg National back to less than 40% support, which would make forming a coherent govt more difficult.

For National, the goal is to get above 40% so that it can reliably dictate terms to Act and, if necessary, NZ First. While the two TV network polls this week suggest the tide is running National's way, it is not yet running strongly.

Act's David Seymour seems to have lost some of his equilibrium, raising the prospect of a "confidence-only" agreement with National, only to have to make clears some hours later that a "full-noise coalition" is the party's preference.

For NZ First, polling in Northland once again suggests Shane Jones is unelectable, but the party does appear likely to cross the 5% party vote threshold.

Whether it would be needed for a governing arrangement is less clear. Speculation about whether NZ First would, if push came to shove, side with Labour is irrelevant unless Labour improves from current desultory support levels.

The Greens, meanwhile, are heading for one of their best ever performances at a general election, thanks mainly to demoralised Labour voters deserting the party at this election.

There is a lot of chat about National perhaps wanting to do a deal with the Greens. We regard any governing arrangement as fanciful. The Greens are fundamentally a party of the left.

However, there is potential for National to woo the Greens in with policy concessions in the way that the John Key gov't did in 2011. There is considerable regard for James Shaw's capacity to cross political divides, and National will face major challenges settling its approach to climate change policy.

## Campaign trends

Labour appears to have tried to reset its campaign with a large early ad buy. National is holding fire – its considerably larger war chest (\$2.3m in donations over \$20k compared to \$600,000 for Labour) is apparently being held in reserve for the final stretch.

National is using the same team of advisers as it did through the Key years, crafting a campaign that plays to Christopher Luxon's CEO/presidential style. Luxon is understood to be in nightly training for next Tuesday's first televised leaders' debate. This will be a pivotal event. While it is unlikely to change the broad poll trends favouring National, a poor performance from Luxon could stunt National's momentum.

Media analytics also show interest is strong in matchups between Grant Robertson and Nicola Willis.

Senior Labour figures are grinning and bearing what they appear to accept is an almost unwinnable election, but Chris Hipkins has looked tired and lacklustre on the campaign trail. His acknowledgement of a "mood for change" says it all.

Where Luxon appears to be mastering retail politics – his "10 second conversation" game with voters is working well for him – Labour is reduced to the same tactics as National was using in 2020, such as planting supporters in public places to create the impression of enthusiasm on campaign walkabouts.

NZ First's campaign is a little quixotic, particularly its social media ads, featuring Winston Peters riding horse in "not my first rodeo" and reciting a very long and elliptical poem.

## Debates calendar

- Sept 19 – Hipkins vs. Luxon – 1 News
- Sept 21 – minor parties – Newshub

- Sept 27 – Hipkins vs. Luxon – Newshub
- Oct 3 – Hipkins vs. Luxon – The Press/Staff
- Oct 12 – Hipkins vs. Luxon – 1 News.

## Govt departments most at risk

While David Seymour will not get to dictate fiscal policy, he is talking a flinty game about the extent of Act's ambitions for shrinking the public service.

Asked at a debate in Queenstown on Thursday whether he favoured the immediate redundancy of some 15,000 public servants to reduce headcount, he replied: "Yes."

However, with both National and Labour reluctant to affect "frontline" services, the early focus for cuts to gov't agency spending will most likely be in the Wellington head offices of policy agencies.

Senior figures in both National and Labour willingly cite MBIE as an agency that has become very large and appears ripe for some restructuring, although detail is lacking.

National is also likely targeting the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, with all three explicitly singled out by Nicola Willis this week.

The Department of Internal Affairs, particularly its three waters unit, looks vulnerable also.

The next week or so Labour wants to change tack to focus on where these cuts will fall.

The strategy is to get National to walk back enough of these promises that the plan no longer looks credible.

National's trade spokesman Todd McClay is in the gun for not having the trade and tax treaty implications of the plan locked down before they were announced. While McClay sought advice on the trade implications of the tax neither he, nor revenue spokesman Andrew Bayly, sought advice on the tax treaty implications until after the policy was announced.

McClay is on thin ice. He was the biggest loser of Luxon's first reshuffle as National leader back in 2021, dropping out of the top 20. He worked hard and clawed his way back to number 12, but there's no guarantee he'll stay there, particularly given Luxon needs to find seats for Act ministers. Bayly is also well ranked at 15.

Both should be worried. Their portfolios, particularly

### Nats on irrigation

National's primary sector policy announcement included a commitment to write a new National Environmental Standard to encourage irrigation schemes and water storage.

An NES is also promised to allow expansion of horticultural land and crop rotation without requiring resource consents, subject only to nitrogen limits.

agriculture and revenue would be good prizes for Act post-election. Revenue is a good way of giving Act something financial without palming off the actual finance portfolio, and Act has been making a play in rural electorates and recruited Andrew Hoggard, former federated farmer's president as its agriculture spokesman, ranking him 5th on the list.

## Labour's fiscal hole

Labour is facing relatively little scrutiny on its fiscal plans, perhaps because they are not regarded as being likely to be implemented.

However, the Treasury warned that its PREFU forecasts do not include the full cost of the likes of Auckland Light Rail (\$14b), the new Waitemata crossing (up to \$44b), or Let's Get Wellington Moving and the Lake Onslow project.

With the fiscals already looking bogged down, Labour will come under pressure to explain whether it can afford to load these billions of dollars worth of projects onto the books.

Note also that Official Information Act releases show that David Parker, as the newly installed Transport Minister replacing Michael Wood, gained Cabinet approval for the proposed second Auckland harbour crossing plans without formal official advice.

Parker instead provided Cabinet with an oral briefing before the plan was signed off for public announcement.

## Public Finance Act Review

Grant Robertson launched, with little fanfare, a review of the three-decade old Public Finance Act this year, testing whether it was fit for purpose.

The review was sparked by concerns raised by the Auditor-General and Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment last year that the PFA was not adequately linking spending to outcomes and allowing real scrutiny of whether the public was getting value for money.

These concerns on the Auditor-Generals' side related to issues with the Provincial Growth Fund, the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund, and the Climate Emergency Response Fund.

Treasury papers show officials saying that the PFA gives the executive a fair bit of flexibility thanks to Parliament appropriating large sums of money to vague spending lines, rather than specific initiatives.

Officials warned this leads to a lack of scrutiny and too little focus on measuring spending against what that spending achieves.

But this criticism is balanced on the other side with the complaint that the PFA's rigid accountability rules prevent agencies from cooperating and specific spending rules often don't give agencies and ministers the flexibility they need when dealing with the day-to-day business of governing.

It also says the PFA is silent on things like managing large, costly risks like climate change, or incorporating the views of Māori.

The review was revealed in budget documents and has been under way this year. It could all be moot if an incoming National government decides to scotch it.

## Courting India

Whoever wins the election, there will be intense focus on improving economic relations with India.

Chris Hipkins promised to beat Christopher Luxon's promise to visit India within his first year of being elected, pledging instead to visit India within 100 days of forming a govt.

Hipkins has an outstanding invitation to visit from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Luxon is consistently nominating India as his primary trade goal, given its capacity offer opportunities on a scale similar to China's, even if a free trade agreement proves unobtainable.

So far, India is not reciprocating the affection, arguing NZ should focus on building the bilateral relationship without a trade agreement.

MFAT Deputy Secretary Trade and Economic Vangelis Vitalis told a select committee this year that India's attitude to dairy made a deal like that secured by Australia agreement "impossible".

## Nats tech policy

National announced a small number of targeted tech policies, pledging to deal with the tax disincentives created by employee share option plans in cash-constrained startups.

The proposal came from the StartUp Advisers Council and National didn't announce pick-up on other recent recommendations, including improving ease of startup, VC and PE investment by KiwiSaver providers.

National also announced three new categories of tech-focused visas: for high quality international graduates; highly paid offshore tech sector exports; and a "digital nomad" visa. 🇳🇿

## PREFU – calm before the storm?

The pre-election economic and fiscal update is on one level a benign document indicating that the NZ economy is, like many others, in what James Shaw this week called the “**clean up the mess afterwards phase of the covid recovery**”.

The Treasury is able to forecast a skinny Budget surplus a year later than previously planned, in June 2027.

However, to get that result requires that govts either abandon new spending allowances, raise new revenue, or borrow more.

Assuming a National-led coalition – and also according to Labour – spending restraint will get us there, which nobody seriously believes.

The PREFU does envisage spending allowances for the next three budgets, at \$3.5b, \$3.25b and \$3b respectively, but has nothing for 2027.

Roughly half of each of those allowances is already committed via Labour’s new “multi-year” approach to funding. This leaves unallocated \$1.2b, \$1.9b, and \$1.6b – precious little for National to play with.

The outlook for the economy is solid enough, in the sense that an average annual growth rate of 2.6% is forecast across the next four years.

However, private consumption is plummeting. Total aggregate private demand only holds up because net immigration is peaking at 100,000 a year. Whether it falls back to an assumed average of 40,000 remains to be seen.

If it doesn’t, it is likely to be more inflationary than would otherwise be the case and may start to stretch housing and rental markets. The impact of this migration surge is also apparent in a substantial revision to the path for house prices, which are now assumed to have plateaued in about April and will quietly appreciate from here, the Treasury thinks.

The current account balance still improves, but not as much as previously forecast. Interest rates stay elevated through 2024 and the Treasury sees flat economic conditions through to the end of next year.

Some economists expect contraction in the first half of next year, predicated in part on the expectation that govt spending and staff cuts will dent consumer confidence.

**Balance of payments** data next Wednesday and **GDP data** next Thursday, both for the June quarter, are the next official economic statistics.

## Some international perspective

For all that the domestic narrative is dominated

by an expectation of fiscal policy austerity – with or without tax relief – international credit rating agencies have looked at NZ and decided we still look okay compared to a lot of other jurisdictions.

S&P Global said it expects NZ’s fiscal deficit to narrow over the next three years as covid-19-related temporary spending measures come to an end. It affirmed its **AA+/A-1+ foreign and AAA/A-1+ local-currency sovereign credit ratings**, saying the long-term rating outlook was stable. S&P said it could lower its rating if the fiscal deficit does not narrow or if the current account deficit deteriorates further.

## Economic indicators

The seasonally adjusted **volume of building activity** was \$8.9b in the June 2023 quarter, down 0.1% compared with the March 2023 quarter, according to Stat NZ. The volume of residential building work was down 2% to \$5.8b, while non-residential building work was up 3.7% to \$3.1b.

**New vehicle registrations** remained soft in Aug at 9,808 units, 33.2% lower than Aug 2022, 28.7% lower than the monthly average for 2022 and 22.4% lower than the average of the eight months of 2023. Year to date 2023 registrations were 6.3% lower (6,774 units) compared to 2022 registrations.

Seasonal-adjusted total **retail card spending** rose by 0.7% or \$46m, month on month, in Aug. Spending in the core retail industries – stripping out fuel and vehicles – also rose by 0.6% to \$37m. The FIFA Women’s World Cup was credited as boosting sales.

**Consumer spending** data released by Worldline showed spending on its network reached \$2.93b in Aug, up 5.2% on the previous year.

NZ’s **terms of trade** rose by 0.4% in the June quarter, with export prices proving to be far more resilient than expected. Stats NZ said export prices for goods fell by just 0.6% over the quarter, and import prices fell 1%.

The **average home** increased in value nationally by 0.5% to \$893,639, marking its first quarter of positive growth since the downturn began in late 2021, according to QV data. But values continue to track downward across most of the main urban areas.

**Filled jobs** increased 1.1% (24,946 jobs) for the quarter ended June 2023, according to Stats NZ. The seasonally adjusted increase follows a 1.1% increase (25,456 jobs) in the March 2023 quarter. It was the tenth quarter in a row for a seasonally adjusted increase in filled jobs.

A **Canstar Small Business survey** of more than 700 business owners, conducted through July and Aug, found 55% were optimistic about the future. 🇳🇿

## CORPORATE ROUND-UP

### Primary Sector

The **latest global dairy trade auction rebounded** after seven straight falls in prices with the GDT Index increasing 2.7% to an average of US\$2,888 (NZ\$4,911) per metric tonne. Whole milk powder jumped 5.3% to \$2,702/MT.

**Fonterra** has cut volumes for quantities of product to be offered at auction. The 12-month anhydrous milkfat (AMF) offer quantity is cut by 2.54% or 1,780mt to 68,350mt. The 12-month forecast butter quantity by 2.7% or 1,327mt to 47,550mt. Near term volumes are down because of reduced milk production through NZ's North Island, a result of both cost and weather. Demand, product mix, and weather uncertainty remain in the season ahead, Fonterra said. The co-operative reports its **annual result on Thursday next week**.

**Fonterra's** shareholders will vote on whether to cut the number of directors on its board from 11 down to 9 at this year's AGM.

**Forsyth Barr** estimated there is a gap of nearly 90c per kilogram of milk solids between the current milk price and dairy farmers' break-even point.

**Sealord** announced it would buy the operations of **Independent Fisheries** to make it the country's largest fisheries company. No value was disclosed for the transaction, which still requires ticks from the **Commerce Commission** and the **Overseas Investment Office**.

**AgriZeroNZ** invested \$4.1m pre-seed funding into Hoofprint Biome in North Carolina, which is developing probiotics and natural enzymes to reduce methane and improve cow health.

**Silver Fern Farms'** chief executive **Simon Limmer** will step down in early 2024 to take the helm at **Indevin**, NZ's largest wine exporter, following the announcement by founder **Duncan McFarlane** that he intends to retire.

### Energy and resources

The **Commerce Commission** asked fuel companies to explain why prices at the pump vary so much at different fuel stations in different areas.

The risk of electricity shortages next winter has increased following damage to one of **Contact Energy's** two 100MW fast-start peakers gas turbine peaking units in Stratford, exacerbating the thermal plant availability issues created by the loss of Genesis's Huntly gas-fired plant.

The **Electricity Authority** is considering making parts of its Consumer Care Guidelines mandatory for electricity retailers.

**Transpower** plans to replace 45 joints at 15 locations on an underground electricity cable between its Brownhill and Pakuranga substations in south-east Auckland in a two-to-three-year work programme starting in 2024, estimated to cost more than \$40m.

The govt-backed **Green Investment Fund** announced a \$15m capital commitment to small-scale solar PV developer **Lightyears Solar** to construct network-scale rather than grid-scale solar farms on farmland for dual use.

### Banking, finance and insurance

**BNZ** was ordered by the High Court to keep providing banking services to West Coast religious community Gloriavale and its associated entities under a continuing injunction. BNZ sought to end the banking relationship after an employment court case highlighted the use of child labour.

A **Reserve Bank** and the **Financial Markets Authority** investigation into the board operations of entities they regulate found room for improvement in several areas, including succession planning, conflict of interest management and diversity.

**ASB** was among banks that increased mortgages rates, lifting its one-year and 18-month rates by 20 basis points to 7.45% and 7.15% respectively. It raised its two- and three-year rates by 16 points to 7.05% and 6.85%, respectively.

### Telecommunications, media & entertainment

The **Commerce Commission's** new mobile and broadband customer service rankings said **Skinny** is the league leader ranking well across almost all mobile and broadband areas with its customers experiencing the fewest issues. **One NZ** (previously Vodafone NZ) is ranked low across almost all measures for mobile and broadband, although it did rate well for the speed with which it resolves broadband issues.

**Spark** appointed of **John Macaskill-Smith** as CEO for **Spark Health**.

### Wholesale and retail

**Woolworths (ex-Countdown)** will launch a new loyalty scheme with **BP** as its fuel retailer of choice, replacing its previous OneCard scheme in partnership with AA SmartFuel.

**2 Cheap Cars** issued its second profit upgrade in just over two months saying it now expected net profit for 2024 to be in the range of \$5.2m to \$5.7m – as long as currency stability and an unchanged regulatory environment continues.

**Mulberry Group**, the UK franchisor of the luxury

retail brand, stepped in to buy the NZ and Australian stores from liquidation.

The liquidators of **Redcurrent** failed to sell the business. While the tax department and staff got their full amounts, the 62 unsecured creditors owed \$2.6m received nothing.

Receivers of the retail brand **4 Seasons** are looking at putting the business on the market.

Outdoor clothing retailer **Edmund Hillary Brands NZ** was put into liquidation.

The newly appointed **Grocery Commissioner** issued a code of conduct for regulated supermarket operators and warned he would act ahead of schedule if he found evidence to warrant it.

## Transport

**Air NZ** is facing major schedule changes early next year as its 16 A320/A321neo aircraft will need early maintenance as part of the engine makers' global plan to fix a mechanical issue. Trans-Tasman and Pacific routes will be most affected.

## Manufacturing and construction

**NZ Steel** is going ahead with its \$300m electric arc furnace – part-funded by the govt – after formally approving its viability.

**Fulton Hogan** a reported 27% increase in NPAT for the year to June 30, at \$382m, on total revenues of \$6.65b vs \$5.2b the year before. Proceeds from the sale of land in Auckland previously earmarked for development to **F&P Healthcare**.

## Courts, legal and regulation

Three of property developer **Tony Gapes's** entities have been put in the hands of a liquidator after Australian architecture firm **Buchan Group** won a year-long legal fight. **Gerry Rae Partners' Simon Dalton** was appointed to **Gorge H Development, Stoke Group** and **East Link** by the High Court.

A High Court judge dismissed **Ken Wikeley's** attempt to appeal a decision that ruled NZ is the right place for his dispute to be heard over a supposedly fake coal contract **Eric Watson** created for him.

**KPMG** launched an internal investigation and filed a police report after two alleged drink-spiking incidents at separate monthly staff functions.

## Service industries and healthcare

**Pacific Edge** pushed back against its US Medicare administrator Novitas saying there are “substantial

misunderstandings” regarding the use of its tests, as it made its case for continued coverage.

## Technology and IT

The Dunedin-based **Dodd-Walls Centre**, which develops quantum and photonic technology, has received \$12m in funding from MBIE's **Catalyst Fund** for startup development and to build international research links.

## Tourism

**Auckland International Airport** reported passengers on main domestic routes were roughly the same as last year in July, but that Queenstown was soft, declining 15%, reflecting NZers heading offshore. However, Queenstown international passenger numbers increased 28% on the year prior, reflecting Australian ski holidaymakers.

## Property

Asia-based luxury hotel and resort operator **Rosewood Hotels & Resorts** is taking over the management of **Robertson Lodges' three properties** in NZ.

## Corporate actions

**Andrew Ritchie**, the former chief executive and shareholder of bus operator **Ritchies Transport**, bought 5m shares in **MHM Automation**, taking his stake to 5.6%. 3m shares were purchased in an off-market transaction from **Polar Capital's Colin Neal** at \$1.05 per share. Neal sold 2.4m shares in early April and stepped down as an MHM director on June 30.

**The NZ Super Fund** acquired a 5% shareholding in **Euroclear**, a Brussels-based financial services firm. The fund reported an 11.87% pre-tax return on investment in the last financial year.

## Capital markets

**ERoad** is raising \$50m in new equity through a discounted 2.06-for-one offer to existing shareholders. Its would-be acquirer, a subsidiary of TSX-listed **Constellation Software**, expressed frustration and declined to participate in the deeply discounted offer.

## People

**Lyttelton Port** announced the appointment of **Graeme Sumner** as the new CEO. Sumner resigned last year as CEO at **Airways Corp**.

**One NZ's** chief executive **Jason Paris** was appointed to the board of **Ngāi Tahu Holdings**. 

## LEGISLATION

## That's all, folks

Parliament sat under urgency and extended hours provisions to complete as much of the govt's legislative programmes as possible. The 53rd Parliament has now been dissolved. The 54th Parliament must sit within six weeks of the return of the election writ on Nov 9.

- *Italics denote update from previous edition of Hugovision*
- *A full compendium of the legislation before the House is available on The Hugo Group website, [www.thehugogroup.com](http://www.thehugogroup.com)*

## Bills introduced

**Digital Services Tax Bill** - Introduced Aug 31. The bill would allow the govt to implement a tax of 3% on NZ digital services revenues of large-scale multi-nationals. The tax would apply to large businesses with global digital services revenues of at least €750m per revenue year and at least \$3.5m of NZ digital services revenue per revenue year. It would be available to implement from Jan 1 2025, and would only be used if a govt judged that OECD attempts to write new cross-border tax rules had made too little progress or failed. It is estimated to be capable of generating a bit under \$100m a year in revenue. The bill's introduction on the final sitting day allowed this revenue to be counted for the PREFU.

**Employment Relations (Trial Periods) Amendment Bill** - Introduced Aug 31. Member's bill in the name of James McDowall (Act). Amends the Employment Relations Act to enable businesses that have 20 or more employees to include a 90-day trial period in a new employee's employment agreement.

**Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill** - Introduced Aug 22. Sets up reserves and protected areas restricting activities in the Hauraki Gulf. First reading Aug 28 with all parties in favour and referred to the Environment Committee.

**Ram Raid Offending and Related Measures Amendment Bill** - Introduced Aug 22. Criminalises ram-raiding. First reading on Aug 29 and sent to the justice committee with Greens, Te Paati Māori, Kerekere and Whaitiri opposed.

**Residential Property Managers Bill** - Member's bill in the name of Barbara Edmonds drawn from the ballot on Aug 18. Establishes a regulatory regime for residential property management services. First reading on Aug 29 and sent to the Social Services and Community Committee with Act opposed.

## Bills in progress

**Crimes (Theft by Employer) Amendment Bill** - Introduced on April 6. Member's bill in the name of Ibrahim Omer. First reading Aug 30, sent to the Education

and Workforce Committee with National and Act opposed.

**Electoral (Lowering Voting Age for Local Elections and Polls) Legislation Bill** - Introduced Aug 15. Reduces the voting age in local elections to 16 years of age. First reading on Aug 29, sent to the justice committee with National and Act opposed.

**Fair Digital News Bargaining Bill** - Introduced Aug 17. First reading Aug 30, sent to economic development, science and innovation committee. National and Act opposed.

## Bills passed/defeated/stalled

**Crown Minerals Amendment Bill** - Introduced Nov 22. Committee stage and third reading on Aug 22 with National, Act and Te Paati Māori opposed.

**Education and Training Amendment Bill (No 3)** - Introduced March 23. Committee stage and third reading completed on Aug 15 with National and Act opposed.

**Fuel Industry (Improving Fuel Resilience) Amendment Bill** - Introduced June 1. Remaining stages completed on Aug 22 with Act opposed.

**Land Transport Management (Regulation of Public Transport) Amendment Bill** - Remaining stages completed on Aug 22 with National and Act opposed.

**Land Transport (Road Safety) Amendment Bill** - Introduced May 16. Second reading on Aug 22 and remaining stages Aug 23 with Labour and National in favour.

**Legal Services Amendment Bill** - Introduced Nov 16. Committee stage and third reading completed on Aug 22 with National opposed.

**Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill** - Introduced July 26. Remaining stages completed on Aug 22 with National and Act opposed.

**Resale Right for Visual Artists Bill** - Introduced March 28. Remaining stages completed on Aug 22 with all parties in favour.

**Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Community Participation) Amendment Bill** - Introduced Dec 7. Remaining stages completed on Aug 22 with National and Act opposed.

**Taxation Principles Reporting Bill** - Introduced May 18. Remaining stages completed on Aug 22 with National and Act opposed.

**Water Services Economic Efficiency and Consumer Protection Bill** - Introduced Dec 8. Second reading and remaining stages completed on Aug 22 with Labour and the Greens in favour.

**Water Services Legislation Bill** - Introduced Dec 8. Second reading, committee stage and third reading on Aug 22 with just Labour in favour. 

