



REBUILDING THE ECONOMY

Introduction from Chris Luxon

This election is about the economy – and which party has the plan to rebuild it so you can get ahead.

And at this election, only National has the plan to get that job done.

It's only with a strong economy that we can lift wages, create opportunities, and help Kiwis get ahead.

A strong economy is how we end the cost-of-living crisis.

A strong economy is how we can afford to invest in the public services that matter to all of us – like delivering world-class healthcare, education that works for everyone, a police service that keeps our communities safe, and protecting our environment.

Labour's economic approach isn't working because they believe government spending drives prosperity.

I utterly reject that view.

National knows our future will be built on the hard work of Kiwis and businesses in communities up and down this country. It is the government's role to support that, with infrastructure, education, sensible regulation, and disciplined government spending.

That's why at this election, we are delivering the plan to support Kiwis and make it easier to have a go – easier to invest, easier to innovate, easier to employ and easier to take a punt – policies that will grow the pie for us all.





The facts:

1. The Reserve Bank predicts New Zealand is already back in recession.
2. The IMF forecasts New Zealand's economy will grow by just 1 per cent a year over the next two years.
3. Treasury is forecasting flat per-capita GDP until the end of next year.
4. New Zealand has a current account deficit of \$29.8 billion – the largest in the developed world.
5. Government debt has exploded, rising from \$5.4 billion in 2018-19 to a forecast \$100 billion next year.
6. Labour are spending \$1 billion more every single week than when they took office.
7. Inflation is at 6 per cent and has been outside the target band for more than two years.
8. Wages have grown slower than inflation for the past three years.
9. Interest rates are rising, with fortnightly interest costs on a typical mortgage increasing by \$750 in the past two years.
10. Median weekly rent is now \$580, an increase of \$180 or 45 per cent since Labour took office.
11. 58,000 more people are on a Jobseeker unemployment benefit under Labour.
12. 40,000 Kiwi citizens left New Zealand for good in the last year.

State of play

This election is all about the economy.

The cost-of-living crisis is dragging into its third year and families, superannuitants and hard-working Kiwis are feeling hardship in a way they've never experienced before.

People who are doing everything right, who are working hard and being incredibly careful, are struggling.

Labour's economic mismanagement has driven New Zealand's economy into the ground and driven up the cost-of-living.

New Zealand's current account – the difference between what we spend in the world and what we earn in the world – has hit a record-breaking deficit.

Interest rates have risen so fast that a ticking time bomb lies in front of us. In the months ahead, hundreds of thousands of mortgage holders will have to move off a home loan with a 2 or 3 per cent interest rate to a loan with 6 or 7 per cent interest rate – scrambling for the hundreds of extra dollars they will need to make their mortgage payments each fortnight.

Treasury's latest forecasts show the economy isn't working for Kiwis. The economic slowdown is expected to last for another 18 months, as interest rates stay high for longer in an attempt to combat persistently high inflation driven by Labour's addiction to spending.

The return to surplus has been delayed for the third time and projected government debt has blown out by an additional \$13 billion compared to just four months ago.

It is time for the economic mismanagement to stop. National will rebuild the economy to get it working for all New Zealanders.

Only a strong economy can end the cost-of-living crisis, lift incomes, lower mortgage rates, and fund the quality public services we all deserve.

New Zealand has so many of the raw ingredients we need for a growing, wealthy economy.

We have trade ties to the fastest-growing parts of the world, abundant resources, the best food producers on earth, the capacity to generate plenty of affordable renewable electricity, oodles of entrepreneurial spirit, innovation in our blood, a strong intergenerational commitment to our natural capitals, significant growth and productivity opportunities, great employers and small businesses, and smart, hard-working people.

But right now, our country is not converting those ingredients into the opportunities New Zealanders deserve.

We're being held back by wasteful government spending, high taxes and red tape that has made it far too hard to build things, invent things and grow things.

National's job is to turn all this around. And we will.

National will rebuild the economy and get our country back on track.

National's plan to rebuild the economy and get it working for all New Zealanders

- 1. Stop wasteful spending and get the books back in order**
- 2. Deliver tax relief to encourage hard work and ease the cost-of-living crisis**
- 3. Cut red tape to make it easier to invest and grow**
- 4. Build infrastructure for growth like roads, public transport and renewable energy**
- 5. Grow skills and attract talent to boost productivity**
- 6. Strengthen connections to the world by supporting trade and investment**



National's plan to rebuild the economy:

1. Stop wasteful spending

For the last six years, taxpayers have been treated with contempt by this Government.

Labour is spending a billion dollars more every single week compared to when National left office. And the only thing to show for it is a massive increase in both debt levels and the tax take.

**THE GOVT IS SPENDING
\$1 BILLION
MORE EVERY WEEK**

Net Government debt is set to increase from \$5 billion to over \$100 billion.

**GOVT DEBT TO SOAR ABOVE
\$100 BILLION
UP FROM \$5 BILLION IN 2019**

All that extra borrowing and spending has contributed to inflation – pushing the cost of living and interest rates higher than they needed to be and making things even tougher for Kiwis.

Every single dollar the Government spends has to be earned by someone, and National knows you could do a lot with it if you kept more of it.

Under National, taxpayers won't be treated like a bottomless ATM, to be raided at any time, for any reason.

National will respect taxpayers and bring fiscal discipline back to Wellington.

National will:

1. Reduce spending on consultants and contractors by \$400 million per year.
2. Reduce spending on back-office functions in government departments by \$594 million per year (less than 0.5 per cent of total government spending) to fund National's Back Pocket Boost tax relief plan.
3. Target spending on the frontline – and increase funding for frontline Health and Education by at least the rate of inflation every year.
4. Direct public sector agencies to end the culture of relying on contractors to do the regular job of a public servant at a massive premium.
5. Put a stop to costly, bureaucratic restructures and mergers of government entities and agencies.
6. Slash the use of working groups, task forces and reviews to develop policy.
7. Establish Better Public Service Targets, setting out specific measurable targets for the delivery of public services, reporting against these and holding ministers and agencies accountable for delivery.
8. Require Treasury to report on the performance of major spending initiatives alongside the annual budget documents.
9. Deliver taxpayers a "Taxpayer's Receipt" from Inland Revenue, breaking down where the taxes they worked hard to pay have been spent, for example education, health, and welfare.
10. Link pay for public sector chief executives and their deputies to outcomes to encourage high performance and ensure accountability.
11. End the Reserve Bank's dual mandate and refocus it solely on putting the lid back on inflation.
12. End the proposed \$30 billion Auckland Light Rail farce that has cost taxpayers \$155 million over the last six years but delivered zero metres of track.
13. Scrap Labour's proposed \$16 billion Lake Onslow pumped hydro boondoggle.

2. Deliver tax relief

New Zealand should be a country where if you work hard, you can support your family and get ahead. But after years of economic mismanagement by Labour, topped off by two years of record inflation, huge increases in interest rates and a shrinking economy, most Kiwis are going backwards.

The IRD is collecting over \$125 million more in tax every single day compared with just six years ago. That's \$18,500 more tax, on average, for every Kiwi household this year.

National will encourage hard work and ease the cost-of-living crisis by delivering tax relief so Kiwis can keep more of their own money. National's tax relief plan is focused on delivering for the squeezed middle.

National's [Back Pocket Boost](#) tax relief plan will mean a family with young children on the average household income will be up to \$250 a fortnight better off. An average-income household with no kids will be up to \$100 a fortnight better off.

We'll also get rid of a raft of new taxes Labour is planning – like the new fuel taxes that would cost \$8 every time you fill up the car and the income insurance 'Jobs Tax' that would further increase your tax bill.

National will:

14. Shift income tax brackets to compensate for inflation.
15. Expand tax credits to reach more modest income earners.
16. Introduce the FamilyBoost childcare tax credit to help young families with the cost of childcare.
17. Increase Working for Families tax credits for working families from 1 April 2024.
18. Adjust Working for Families abatement rates in 2026.
19. Remove Labour's 'Tenant Tax' by restoring mortgage interest deductibility for rental properties.
20. Remove Labour's capital gains tax by stealth by taking the bright-line test for residential properties back to two years.
21. Scrap the 'Ute Tax'.
22. Abolish the Auckland Regional Fuel Tax.
23. Cancel Labour's planned petrol tax increase and freeze petrol taxes for three years.
24. Stop all work on Labour's planned income insurance 'Jobs Tax'.
25. Axe the 'App Tax' – an unprincipled tax grab that will make your Uber, Airbnb, and food delivery more expensive by removing the long-standing GST exemption for enterprises earning \$60,000 or less.



Family of four Better off by around \$100 a fortnight

Wiremu and Mia both work full-time, earning \$60,000 each, for an average household income of \$120,000. They have two primary school-aged children. Under National's tax plan, they will receive tax relief of \$1600 a year and Independent Earner Tax Credits of \$1040.

Overall, Wiremu and Mia will be better off by a combined **\$2640 per year**.



Young family Better off by around \$250 a fortnight

Jamie and Jess each earn an average fulltime income of \$65,000 and spend \$300 per week on childcare for their 3-year-old child. Under National's tax plan they will receive tax relief of \$1600 a year, Independent Earner Tax Credits of \$1040 and FamilyBoost childcare tax credits worth \$3900.

Overall, Jamie and Jess will be better off by a combined **\$6540 per year**.



Building apprentice Better off by around \$50 a fortnight

Alice is a building apprentice in Christchurch earning \$55,000 per year. Under National's tax plan, Alice will pay \$800 less in income tax and will now also be eligible for the \$520 Independent Earner Income Tax Credit.


In total, Alice will be better off by **\$1320 per year**.



Retired couple Better off by around \$26 a fortnight

Bob and Jacqui are a retired couple living in Whakatāne receiving NZ Superannuation. Since NZ Superannuation payments are linked to average after-tax wages, they will receive a benefit from National's plan to deliver tax relief for the squeezed middle.

Under National, Bob and Jacqui will be better off by a combined **\$680 per year**.



FamilyBoost childcare tax credit

New Zealand should be a country where if you work hard, you can support your family and get ahead. But after years of economic mismanagement by Labour, topped off by two and half years of record inflation, huge increases in interest rates and a shrinking economy, most Kiwis are going backwards.

Families with young children and childcare costs are particularly vulnerable to the cost-of-living crisis as their household budgets are stretched thinner and thinner.

National will introduce FamilyBoost – a childcare tax rebate of up to \$150 per fortnight on the cost of childcare.

This means more than 130,000 lower- and middle-income families could keep up to \$3,900 more of what they earn every year.

Families earning up to \$180,000 will receive a 25 per cent rebate on their early childhood education expenses, up to a maximum of \$150 per fortnight paid directly into their bank account.

To ensure support goes to families who need it most, the maximum weekly rebate will gradually reduce for families earning over \$140,000.

For example:

- Two parents earning \$125,000 between them who are spending \$300 a week on childcare would receive a fortnightly rebate of \$150.
- Two parents earning \$160,000 combined who are spending \$330 per week on childcare would receive a fortnightly rebate of \$75.

3. Cut red tape

A tsunami of well-meaning but poorly designed regulation and red tape has had the cumulative effect of making it too hard to do things, build things, invest in things and grow things in New Zealand.

We need to make it easier for people to get on and make things happen to rebuild New Zealand's economy.

Kiwi businesses thrive when we have a dynamic, competitive economy – and it's the Government's job to get the settings right so that businesses can step up and achieve that.

That means a predictable and consistent regulatory environment, with less red tape.

But more and more businesses are finding that the constant increases in government regulations are a barrier to growth and investment.

Under National, any new regulations will be justified on outcomes – not politics and spin. Old regulations will be constantly re-tested – if they're no longer fit-for-purpose they'll be amended or repealed.

That's hard work – but it matters. No single regulation will kill a business – but the total cost of dozens of outdated rules and unresponsive systems can be substantial. And it drives up prices across the economy.

Our regulatory environment needs to reflect this. Small businesses need room to be agile. Growth should be encouraged, not punished. Innovation and competition should be welcomed, not shunned.

National will cut red tape and complex regulations that are strangling our economy and making it too hard for New Zealanders to get things done.



National will:

26. Repeal Labour's RMA 2.0 changes which will increase bureaucracy, increase legal complexity and remove local decision making.
27. Restore 90-day trials for businesses with more than 20 staff, to allow them to take a chance on someone they might not otherwise hire.
28. Scrap Labour's Fair Pay Agreements regime, which is not about fair pay but rather about the Government imposing mandatory union deals on Kiwi workplaces that remove flexibility for employers and employees at the very time we need to be more agile than ever.
29. Streamline building consents and make construction more efficient by requiring councils to accept video and photo evidence of work done.
30. Define 'minor variation' in the Building Act to avoid consents for negligible product or design changes.
31. Streamline Code Compliance Certificates by requiring them to be issued within five working days after a building passes final inspection.
32. Strengthen competition for building materials with automatic approval for appropriately certified building materials from the US, Europe, the UK and Australia.
33. Widen the National Multi-Use Approval process for new product solutions and building methods to allow approvals by other accredited agencies such as CodeMark or BRANZ.
34. Amend the Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act to reduce red tape for developers to fund infrastructure.
35. Eliminate the need for resource consents for EV charging points to reduce up-front costs.
36. End Labour's war on farmers, with 19 actions to cut red tape and supercharge the rural economy, including replacing one-size-fits-all rules with local decision making.
37. Introduce a no duplication rule – the Government cannot ask farmers for the same information twice. It is up to officials to share supplied information where appropriate within the system.
38. Remove two farming regulations for every new one introduced at either central or local government.
39. Give farmers the tools they need to reduce emissions, such as gene-edited crops, feed, and livestock, by lifting the effective ban on GE and GM technologies.
40. Streamline the approvals process for trials and use of non-GE/GM biotech for emissions reduction and other purposes.

41. Keep agriculture out of the Emissions Trading Scheme and implement a fair and sustainable pricing system for on-farm agricultural emissions by 2030 that reduces emissions without sending production overseas.
42. Allow full recognition of on-farm carbon sequestration on a robust, scientific basis.
43. Allow normal rural activities on Highly Productive Land.
44. Ban foreign farm-to-forest conversions for carbon farming.
45. Remove the need for growers to obtain a resource consent to grow food or rotate crops within a catchment.
46. Remove the need for farmers to obtain a resource consent to build larger-scale water storage schemes on land.
47. Allow KiwiSavers to invest in more than one provider, driving innovation, boosting competition and putting downward pressure on fees.
48. Cut financial red tape that is stifling investment, including significantly reducing the scope of the CCCFA which has restricted access to credit.
49. Repeal the Conduct of Financial Institutions Act, which makes credit more expensive and harder to obtain even for basic services such as overdrafts and mortgages.
50. Develop protocols to allow simplified verification to comply with anti-money laundering requirements.

Ending Labour's war on farmers

National knows how important farming is to New Zealand – it's how we pay our way in the world and afford the public services we all rely on. Rural communities are the backbone of our country, and the primary sector is our biggest export earner.

According to Stats NZ, New Zealand's annual current account deficit – the difference between what we spend and earn in the world – is now sitting at \$29.8 billion. At 7.5 per cent of GDP, that's the largest current account deficit in the developed world.

To rebuild the economy to make it work for all New Zealanders we need to earn more from selling our goods and services to the rest of the world – and that starts with backing our world-class farmers.

National will cut the red tape holding the primary sector back, and work with our farmers not against them to reduce emissions and protect the environment without shutting down farms and sending emissions overseas.

National will:

- Cut Labour's red tape and ensure farming regulations are fit-for-purpose.
- Supercharge the rural economy by doubling the RSE cap, banning foreign farm-to-forest conversions for carbon farming and allowing normal rural activities on Highly Productive Land.
- Get Wellington out of farming by replacing one-size-fits-all rules with local decision making.
- Give farmers the tools they need to reduce emissions, by lifting the effective ban on GE and GM technologies and rewarding farmers for on-farm carbon sequestration.

Kiwi farmers are among the most efficient in the world. National will back our farmers because rebuilding the economy depends on a thriving primary sector.

Read more about our [Primary Sector Growth Plan](#).



4. Build infrastructure for growth

High quality infrastructure drives economic growth, boosts productivity and enhances our way of life. Delivering infrastructure for the future will be at the heart of the next National Government.

New Zealand has a large historical infrastructure deficit. This deficit is directly responsible for severely unaffordable housing, costly congestion, and poor-quality water infrastructure in many parts of the country.

New Zealand faces major challenges in the planning, funding, consenting, delivery and maintenance of infrastructure. National is determined to fix these longstanding problems once and for all to unleash economic growth, lift incomes, and build resilience.

National recognises the crucial role of infrastructure in enhancing our quality of life and unlocking New Zealand's economic potential. We also understand the importance of maintaining fiscal discipline and delivering value for every taxpayer dollar we invest. That's why we are proposing a carefully sequenced, long-term programme of investments to deliver the infrastructure New Zealand needs within the fiscal constraints the country finds itself in.

National will:

51. Establish a National Infrastructure Agency to coordinate government funding, connect domestic and offshore investors with New Zealand infrastructure, and improve funding, procurement and delivery.
52. Develop a 30-year infrastructure pipeline to deliver long-term certainty, enable more effective planning, and reduce project costs.
53. Partner with local governments to create City and Regional deals to create long-term pipelines of projects to increase economic growth and productivity.
54. Deliver 13 new Roads of National Significance, including the initial stages of a long-term vision of four lanes from Whangārei to Tauranga – starting with Whangārei to Port Marsden, Warkworth to Wellsford, Cambridge to Piarere and Tauriko West State Highway 29.
55. Invest in roads to unlock urban housing growth including Southern Links in Hamilton, Petone to Grenada and the Cross Valley Link in Wellington and the Hutt Valley, and the North West Alternative State Highway in Auckland.
56. Deliver a rapid transit network for Auckland, with public transport corridors in the North West, Airport to Botany, and completion of the Eastern Busway.

57. Invest in improvements to increase capacity and reliability on Lower North Island train services for passengers and freight.
58. Deliver upgrades to transport infrastructure in Ashburton, Queenstown, Otago and Southland.
59. Supercharge electric vehicle infrastructure with a comprehensive, nationwide network of 10,000 public EV chargers by 2030.
60. Double New Zealand's supply of clean, renewable electricity by requiring renewable energy project consents to be issued within one year.
61. Eliminate consent requirements for upgrades to electricity transmission and lines infrastructure.
62. Deliver one year consenting for major infrastructure projects.
63. Repeal the ban on oil and gas exploration to reduce New Zealand's reliance on imported coal and ensure gas can be used as a transition fuel as we move towards Net Zero 2050.
64. Unlock land for housing by requiring councils in major towns and cities to zone land for 30 years' worth of housing demand immediately.
65. Provide housing performance incentives for councils, with a \$1 billion fund for Build-for-Growth incentive payments for councils that deliver more new housing, funded by stopping failed programmes like KiwiBuild.
66. Amend the Overseas Investment Act and Income Tax Act to give investors certainty to invest in Build-to-Rent projects.
67. Repeal Three Waters legislation within our first 100 days.
68. Restore council ownership and control of water assets, with strict rules for water quality and investment requirements.
69. Introduce a requirement for water service delivery models to be financially sustainable, so that future generations don't inherit outdated or failing infrastructure.
70. Establish a cyclone and flood recovery ombudsman to ensure faster and fairer disaster recovery.
71. Expedite the consenting process and remove red tape to speed up the cyclone and flood rebuild and prioritise infrastructure that connects communities and regions affected by recent weather events.
72. Unblock the EQC assessment pipeline to reduce delays in determining land values for flood affected properties.

Transport for the future

National's nationwide [Transport for the Future](#) plan will cut congestion, provide more low emission transport options in support of our climate change goals, and create a more productive and resilient transport network that drives economic growth to boost incomes and unlock land for thousands of houses.

National has a strong track record of funding, consenting, and delivering major infrastructure projects such as the Auckland City Rail Link, the Waterview Tunnel, the Waikato Expressway, Transmission Gully, and the recently completed Puhoi to Warkworth motorway.

Roads of National Significance

- Initial stages of National's long-term vision of four lanes from Whangārei to Tauranga, driving growth in the upper North Island economic zone - starting with Whangārei to Port Marsden, Warkworth to Wellsford, Cambridge to Piarere and Tauriko West State Highway 29.
- Projects to tackle congestion and reduce travel times, including Mill Road in Auckland, a second Mt Victoria Tunnel in Wellington, the Hope Bypass in Tasman, and the Woodend Bypass north of Christchurch.
- Roads to unlock urban housing growth including Southern Links in Hamilton, Petone to Grenada and the Cross Valley Link in Wellington and the Hutt Valley, and the North West Alternative State Highway in Auckland.

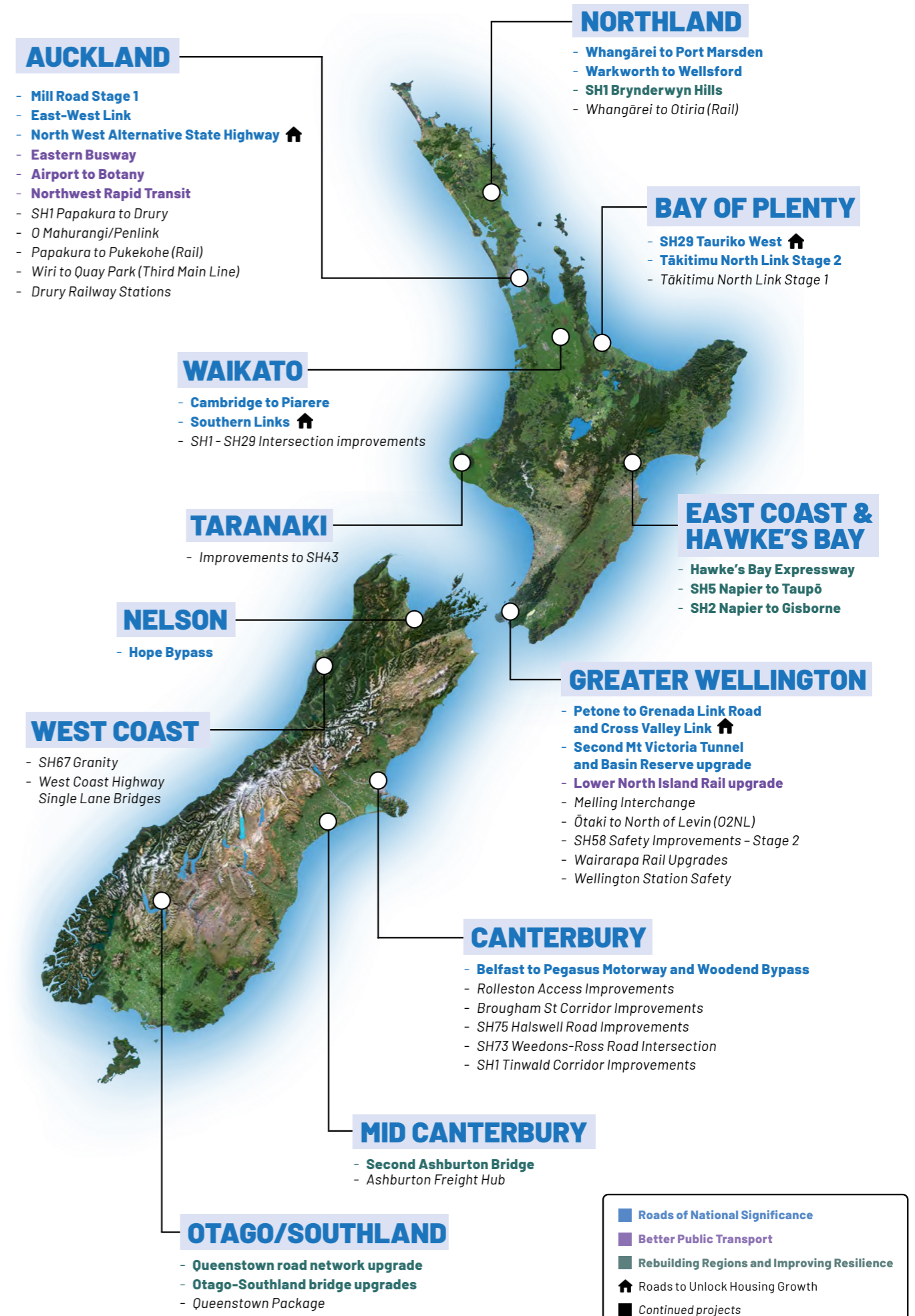
Better Public Transport

- A rapid transit network for Auckland, with public transport corridors in the North West, Airport to Botany, and completion of the Eastern Busway.
- Improvements to increase capacity and reliability on Lower North Island train services for passengers and freight.

Rebuilding regions and improving resilience

- Priority projects to reconstruct transport infrastructure damaged during recent floods and Cyclone Gabrielle, enhancing long-term resilience in flood-affected regions, including the Hawke's Bay Expressway, a new bypass for the Brynderwyn Hills, State Highway 5 from Napier to Taupō, and State Highway 2 from Napier to Gisborne.
- Upgrades to existing transport infrastructure in Ashburton, Queenstown, Otago, and Southland.

TRANSPORT FOR THE FUTURE - PROJECT OVERVIEW



Electrify NZ

As part of our [Electrify NZ](#) plan, the next National Government will cut red tape to drive a surge of investment in renewable electricity generation so New Zealand can double its supply of affordable, clean energy and become a lower emissions economy.

National wants a future where buses and trains are powered by clean electricity, where we go on holiday in cars powered by clean electricity, and where industrial processing plants are powered by clean electricity, not coal. But to do that, we need to double the amount of renewable electricity we produce from New Zealand's abundant natural resources – particularly solar, wind and geothermal. National will make it happen.

Turbo-charge new renewable wind, geothermal, and solar power projects

- Ensure decisions on non-hydro renewable resource consents are made within a year.
- Implement new nationwide rules for solar, wind, geothermal, and biomass for clear, near-automatic consents.
- Extend minimum consent durations for all renewables, including hydro, to 35 years.
- Bring back “remedy and mitigate” options for addressing adverse effects in renewable generation, transmission, and local lines.
- Set a 10-year minimum lapse time for all renewable resource consents for certainty.
- Enforce a one-year limit for re-consenting existing generation assets, including hydro.

Unleash transmission and distribution infrastructure

- Simplify infrastructure building – including poles, lines, transformers and substations – with a National Policy Statement for Distribution.
- Remove consents for upgrades to existing transmission and local lines within certain limits.
- Speed up consent issuance for transmission and local lines, extend durations, and set minimum lapse times.
- Update the Commerce Act and associated regulations for cost recovery of regulated infrastructure.
- Address first mover disadvantage with clawback rules for new connections.
- Change cost recovery rules to increase sharing of new connection costs for specified activities like EV charging stations.
- Establish an information disclosure regime to monitor and ensure reasonable connection costs.





Going for housing growth

New Zealand is desperately short of houses. We are not short of land, but a broken planning and infrastructure funding system has artificially constrained housing growth, contributing to New Zealand's status as one of the least affordable housing markets in the world.

National's [Going for Housing Growth](#) plan will fix New Zealand's housing crisis by unlocking land for housing inside and around our cities, building infrastructure, and making sure communities share in the benefits of growth.

Unlocking land for housing

- Councils in major towns and cities will be required to zone land for 30 years' worth of housing demand immediately.
- Councils will have more flexibility about where houses are built by being able to opt-out of the Medium Density Residential Zone law, however central government will have reserve powers to ensure councils set aside enough land to meet demand targets.

Infrastructure financing tools

- Reform of the Infrastructure Funding and Financing (IFF) Act will reduce red tape for developers to fund infrastructure.
- Combined with targeted rates to fund greenfield developments, this will remove the need for councils to fund greenfield infrastructure from their balance sheets.
- Housing growth will also become a priority for transport funding through NZTA.

Housing performance incentives for councils

- A \$1 billion fund for Build-for-Growth incentive payments for councils that deliver more new housing – funded by stopping failed programmes like KiwiBuild.

5. Grow skills, attract talent

New Zealand needs a skilled workforce to accelerate economic growth.

And that starts with our kids. But unfortunately, our education system is failing too many children.

The state of education in New Zealand has been in decline for the last 30 years. Just 20 per cent of Year 8 students are meeting curriculum expectations for science, 35 per cent for writing, and 45 per cent for maths.

National will make sure schools are teaching the basics brilliantly, so every child has the opportunity to succeed.

We will also invest in higher education so that Kiwis have the skills needed to succeed in the workforce.

And where needed, we will bring in talent from overseas to meet skill shortages and help our industries grow – particularly high-value sectors like technology and innovation. National will adopt a smarter approach to immigration that attracts the best and brightest from around the world to come here to help us grow, create and innovate.

A smarter immigration system focusses on attracting highly talented people with the skills, knowledge and expertise Kiwi firms need to grow.

Smarter immigration isn't about numbers; it's about identifying the gaps in our skill base and making it easier for people who have those skills to come here and contribute. It's about making sure New Zealand remains competitive in the global war for talent to help grow sectors like tech to drive faster economic growth over the coming years.

A working economy needs people working. So National will take a different approach to benefit dependency, with intensive support to help people off welfare and into work.



National will:

73. Ensure Kiwi kids are taught the basics brilliantly, with an hour a day each of reading, writing and maths.
74. Ban cellphones in schools.
75. Implement standardised assessments in schools and require regular reporting to parents.
76. Set minimum requirements for what schools must teach every year in reading, writing, maths and science.
77. Ensure every child learns to read using the proven structured literacy approach by making it a requirement at primary school.
78. Deliver better training and more tools to support teachers.
79. Target 80 per cent of Year 8 children being at or above expected curriculum level in reading, writing, maths and science by 2030.
80. Target a return for New Zealand students to the top 10 in maths, reading and science in the international PISA rankings by 2033.
81. Help young people off welfare and into work, with targeted support to get a job combined with sanctions for those who don't do their bit.
82. Undo the disastrous Te Pūkenga polytechnic mega merger and return control back to the regions.
83. Incentivise more people to study nursing and midwifery, and to stay here with a bonding scheme that will pay their student loan for five years if they commit to working in New Zealand.
84. Establish a relocation support scheme, offering up to 1000 qualified overseas nurses and midwives relocation grants worth up to \$10,000 each to support their move to New Zealand.
85. Introduce an International Graduates Visa – a three-year open work visa for highly educated people who have graduated with a bachelor's degree or higher within the last five years from one of the top 100 universities in the world.
86. Introduce a Global Growth Tech Visa – a residence visa for people with highly specialised skills who have worked at a top global tech company earning at least NZ\$400,000.
87. Investigate changes to the tax treatment of options issued by startups to their staff to make it easier to attract and retain talent in their early years.

Teaching the Basics Brilliantly

National will make sure schools are [teaching the basics brilliantly](#), so every child has the opportunity to succeed.

Just 20 per cent of Year 8 students are meeting curriculum expectations for science, 35 per cent for writing, and 45 per cent for maths, and a recent pilot of NCEA literacy and numeracy standards revealed over half of high school students failed a basic reading, writing and maths test.

Under National, parents will know if their kids are doing well or, more importantly, if they're falling behind. It's not acceptable to allow children to fall behind without anyone noticing or taking action to help them catch up. This means:

An hour a day each on reading, writing and maths

National will require all primary and intermediate schools to spend an hour a day on reading, an hour a day on writing, and an hour a day on maths.

There is currently too much variation between how much time different schools spend teaching the basics. This inconsistency embeds inequalities that disadvantage the most vulnerable children and holds back those who could be extended.

Curriculum update

National will rewrite the curriculum to include clear requirements about the specific knowledge and skills primary and intermediate schools will need to cover for each school year in reading, writing, maths and science.

Under National, the curriculum will set out the non-negotiable set of knowledge and skills children will need to be taught each year.

Standardised assessment and reporting

National will standardise assessment across schools in reading, writing, and maths. School will be required to measure each child's progress against the curriculum at least twice a year using the same robust assessment tool.

National will also require regular reporting, in a consistent format, so parents receive a clear and detailed understanding of how their child's education is progressing, where they might need more help, and where they can be extended.

Support for teachers

National will introduce an exit exam for teaching graduates to demonstrate expertise in reading, writing, maths and science instruction, and require existing teachers to undertake professional development in teaching the basics

Literacy Guarantee

Under a National Government, every child will learn to read using the proven [structured literacy](#) approach in order to turn around declining educational achievement and give all kids the best chance of success in life.

Mountains of evidence shows that structured literacy is the most effective method to equip children with strong reading skills. However, not all schools currently use it. National will ensure every child learns to read using structured literacy by making it a requirement at primary school.



6. Connections with the world

New Zealand is a trading nation.

We are at our best when we are outward looking and backing ourselves to compete on the world stage. And being based in the fast-growing Asia-Pacific region makes us incredibly well positioned to take advantage of global growth in the coming decades.

Trade is at the heart of New Zealand agriculture and a key driver of New Zealand's prosperity. Last year, the primary sector earned more than three-quarters of all goods exports revenue and produced enough food to feed New Zealand eight times over.

Successive governments have tried to improve New Zealand's access to foreign markets, but food remains the most heavily protected and subsidised sector internationally. National will work relentlessly on the global stage to remove barriers to trade and open new markets for our exports.

Tourism has traditionally been one of New Zealand's largest export earners, and the money it earns helps New Zealand pay its bills and afford the public services on which we all rely. National will deliver practical and sensible support to make our beautiful country even more attractive to visitors, so tourism operators can get on with delivering world-class experiences and growing their businesses and the economy.

International education is another sector that used to be a major export earner for New Zealand but is struggling to get back on its feet while competitor countries like Australia and Canada are surging ahead of us. National will revive New Zealand's international education sector as part of our plan to rebuild the economy and get it working for all New Zealanders.



National will:

88. Strengthen New Zealand's international connections, so that Kiwi businesses have access to markets, skills and capital.
89. Prioritise our relationship with India, with an ultimate goal of developing a Free Trade Agreement.
90. Invest more in the relationships with the Gulf Cooperation Council and Pacific Alliance to create the conditions that will allow us to secure high quality free trade agreements.
91. Focus on reducing the effect of non-tariff barriers in other countries to protect export revenue.
92. Repeal the ban on foreign buyers of residential property for homes over \$2 million and replace it with a 15 per cent foreign buyer tax to attract high-net-worth individuals to New Zealand while generating revenue to fund tax relief.
93. Introduce a Digital Nomad Visa – a 12-month visa to attract skilled, highly-mobile people to come to New Zealand while working remotely for an overseas-based company, with the option to apply for a work or residence visa later if they choose to stay.
94. Introduce priority processing at Immigration New Zealand, where visa applicants can pay an additional fee to fast-track their visa application.
95. Boost tourism by creating a new 80 km Great Walk in the South Island at Waiu-toa/ Molesworth.
96. Lift the upper age for working holiday visas from 30 to 35 years and allow people to apply for a second and third work visa if they work in areas with worker shortages.
97. Electrify the New Zealand Cycle Trail to make it more accessible to tourists of all ages and fitness levels, with \$3 million to co-invest with local councils to boost e-bike charging infrastructure.
98. Invest \$5 million over four years to promote regional events to support tourism outside major tourist destinations.
99. Require Department of Conservation to issue concessions for a minimum of five years to give tourism operators certainty to invest in their businesses, so they can enhance New Zealand's tourism offering.
100. Revive international education to boost export revenue, create job opportunities, and strengthen global connections that will drive economic growth in New Zealand.

Boosting tourism

Tourism is one of New Zealand's largest export earners, and the money it earns helps New Zealand pay its bills and afford the public services on which we all rely.

However, the combination of the pandemic and the Labour Government have taken tourism backwards. More than a year since borders re-opened, visitor numbers and tourism jobs have not fully recovered. High inflation, high interest rates and broken immigration settings have punished the tourism and hospitality sectors, pushing many small operators to the brink.

A National Government will create a new Great Walk, broaden the working holiday visa, and invest in promotion and critical infrastructure to boost the recovery of tourism and help rebuild the economy.

National will deliver practical and sensible support to make our beautiful country even more attractive to visitors, so tourism operators – including those in the regions – can get on with delivering world-class experiences and hospitality, growing their businesses and the economy.

National's plan to boost tourism includes creating a new Great Walk in the South Island at Waiu-toa/Molesworth and electrifying the New Zealand Cycle trail with e-bike chargers to make it more accessible to people of all ages and fitness levels.

National will also fix Department of Conservation concessions so businesses operating on the DoC estate have more security in their tenure and therefore confidence about investing in their businesses.

A thriving tourism sector, increasing New Zealand's export income, is key to rebuilding the economy and helping all Kiwis get ahead.

Read more about our plan for [Boosting Tourism](#).



Reviving international education

Before the pandemic, international education was New Zealand's fifth largest export earner, contributing \$3.7 billion to the economy and supporting at least 6,000 jobs. Last year, the sector's contribution to New Zealand's GDP was down significantly, delivering only \$0.8 billion.

It's critical we get sectors that can bring in much-needed export earnings like international education back on their feet as soon as possible.

National will revive New Zealand's international education sector to help rebuild the economy and get it working for all New Zealanders. Supporting international education to recover will boost export revenue, create job opportunities, and strengthen global connections that will drive economic growth in New Zealand.

Reviving international education is also vital for our tertiary education institutions. The revenue raised from higher international fees allows our universities, polytechnics and other tertiary institutions to provide better quality education and services while keeping costs down for domestic students.

National will make a series of sensible changes to make New Zealand a more attractive destination for international students.

National's plan to revive international education will:

- Fast track visa processing for international students who pay an additional fee.
- Increase the hours international students are able to work each week from 20 to 24.
- Expand work rights for international students and their partners to make New Zealand a more attractive destination.
- Diversify the countries Education New Zealand recruits international students from.

Read more about National's plan for [Reviving International Education](#).





**It's time to get our
country back on track.**