

Political Party Responses to Business NZ Election Survey 2005*

Some responses edited for space, and those not relating to the topic have been removed. Full answers are available on www.businessnz.org.nz

Businesses	Labour	National	NZ First	Act	United Future	Greens	Progressive	Maori
------------	--------	----------	----------	-----	---------------	--------	-------------	-------

1. GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Is achieving balanced economic growth your key strategy?

Yes (70.8%); No (26%); Unsure (3.2%)	Aim to increase productivity, get stable economy, higher living standards	Yes	Aim to get flexible monetary policy, NZ ownership of key assets, innovative export plan	Yes	Yes	Aim to grow quality of life rather than simply national turnover	Aim to get economic & social development together	Aim to get sustainable economy
--------------------------------------	---	-----	---	-----	-----	--	---	--------------------------------

If no, what do you believe is a higher priority?

Faster economic growth (9.5%), social goals (9.4%), other (6.1%), environmental goals (1.7%)						Sustainable development & NZ becoming a better place to live		
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

1.2 Do you consider economic growth necessary for social well-being and effective environmental management?

	Yes	Yes	Little benefit currently seen from economic growth	Yes	Yes	Sustainable development more important	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	--	-----	-----	--	-----	-----

If yes, what are the building blocks for increasing New Zealand's economic growth? If no, what is/are the major precursor/s to economic growth?

	Policies to increase skills & capital investment, & lower compliance costs	Lower taxes & compliance costs, better education, more trade training, better incentives to work & invest, fewer labour market barriers	Need to get a coherent export plan & ditch blind commitment to free market economics & sale of key assets	Lower taxes, less compliance costs, & genuine welfare reform	Need more flexible labour laws, trade deals, less compliance costs & tax, better educated work force, better infrastructure & security of electricity supply		Need to lift investment, innovation, skills; improve infrastructure, encourage entrepreneurship & extend international networks to aid export growth	Need more employment & innovation while ensuring integrity of the environment is maintained
--	--	---	---	--	--	--	--	---

1.3 Do you support a reduction in current business and/or personal tax rates?

Yes (92.1%), No (6.1%), Unsure(1.8%)	Continue to oversee a tax policy which is low by world standards but that is sufficient to sustain a large investment in public services and the economy, while managing a fiscally responsible budget.	Yes	Yes - we will actively oppose any increase in general taxation.	Yes	Yes	Ecological tax reform is a simple idea: shift taxes off work and enterprise, and onto waste, pollution and scarce resources.	Yes	Yes
--------------------------------------	---	-----	---	-----	-----	--	-----	-----

If yes, what are your policies for reducing tax rates?

49.7% of businesses said the business tax rate should be reduced first, while 50.3% said personal tax rates should be reduced first		Lower company & personal tax rates; higher thresholds; no carbon tax	Lower tax over time; a 20% rate on 'new export' net income; tax abatement on value added and start-up businesses	Company tax & top personal rate (above \$38,000) down to 25%; bottom rate down to 15% (incomes under \$38,000)	Company tax to 30% over the next 3 years.; no carbon tax; first \$3,000 of earned income tax-free; increase other thresholds by \$5,000 to offset inflation; flatten rates over time	Remove tax on the first \$5,000 of income & replace with carbon tax	Company tax to 30%	Cut tax for individuals & small businesses with earnings/profits below \$25,000; small adjustments downward of all other tax rates
---	--	--	--	--	--	---	--------------------	--

1.4 Do you agree with a goal of reducing the corporate tax rate in stages to 20% over time?

Yes (53.4%), No (26.5%), Unsure (20.1%)	Rather cut taxes to encourage productivity, not just for those making taxable profits	All tax rates to come down over time - no timetable	Cut company tax upon achieving short term growth goals	Yes	Yes – but only as economic conditions allow	Could be considered as part of overall package of ecological tax reform	Not currently, but incentives needed for investing in R&D, equipment, skills	Yes, for small businesses (net before tax income \$25,000)
---	---	---	--	-----	---	---	--	--

If no, do you have targets for reducing the corporate tax rate?

Of those that wanted the corporate tax rate reduced but not to 20%, 60% wanted it reduced to 25%								
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

1.5 Are you committed to the annual indexing, for inflation, of income thresholds for personal tax rates?

74.5% said income thresholds for personal tax rates should be indexed annually for inflation, while 15% said it shouldn't. 10.5% were unsure.	Yes	No	No	No	Yes		Yes	
---	-----	----	----	----	-----	--	-----	--

1.6 Do you agree that government spending (including the Super Fund) should be reduced from 31.8% to less than 30% by 2010?

Businesses ranked current Government spending as follows: Excellent (0.8%), Good (12.1%), Average (50.5%), Poor (36.5%)		No particular targets	Would review Govt spending levels	Yes	Yes			Yes
---	--	-----------------------	-----------------------------------	-----	-----	--	--	-----

If yes, what changes are proposed?

	Cutting SME compliance costs through changes to depreciation & FBT	Higher tax thresholds; no carbon tax	Accelerated depreciation for approved industries & investments; tax incentives for R&D; tax abatement on value added and 'start up' businesses	Lower taxes across the board	Reduction of the tax burden as discussed above		Reduction of the company rate to 30%	Small businesses (income below \$25,000) to be taxed at a lower rate (20%) than bigger business (25%)
--	--	--------------------------------------	--	------------------------------	--	--	--------------------------------------	---

1.9 Do you believe more should be done to manage exchange rate volatility?

Unsure (42.6%), Yes (28.3%), No (29%).	Took action to enable the Reserve Bank to pursue a more active role in foreign exchange markets in 2004	No	Yes	No - Govt can best help with sensible stable fiscal policies	No – nothing beyond normal standards of fiscal prudence	Yes	No - best to support development of high value exports to protect our economy from exchange rate movement	No
--	---	----	-----	--	---	-----	---	----

If yes, how should it be managed?

			Amend Reserve Bank Act to make export, growth & employment objectives part of the policy targets agreement			Make Reserve Bank policy targets agreement more flexible ; look at alternatives to a fully-floating exchange rate		
--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--

1.10 Do you agree New Zealand should pursue the adoption of a common currency with Australia if there is a net economic benefit to New Zealand?

Yes (60.2%), No (30.5%), Unsure (9.3%).	No	It should be explored - no firm policy on this	No - sovereignty would be threatened	Open to ideas - one option might be to just adopt the \$AUS; this could bring lower interest rates, but would give away our ability to use interest rates to manage inflation	Yes – but only if the net economic benefit to NZ is clearly demonstrable	No	No. Nor surrender of banking supervision.	No
---	----	--	--------------------------------------	---	--	----	---	----

If yes, which currency? Australia/New Zealand/combined?

Combined currency (61.4%), Australia (36.4%), New Zealand (2.2%).					A combination of the two would be preferable so NZ retained some control over monetary policy settings			
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

1.11 Which, if any, major central government assets will your party seek to sell?

61% thought no major central government assets should be sold/privatised, while 15.2% said yes. 23.9% were unsure. 3.9% thought Air New Zealand should be sold, while 2.4% thought the same for ACC	None	Some Landcorp farms, & possibly a private sector partner for Solid Energy	None	Review all government SOE holdings with a view to sale	We will seek to sell minority stakes in some SOEs (but not Transpower)	None, but Superannuation Fund should be abolished & money invested in health, education, sustainable development	None	None
---	------	---	------	--	--	--	------	------

Which, if any, major business assets will your party seek to purchase?

Electrical generation and/or supply (8.1%), Rail (5.9%), Telecom (2.8%).

None

None

Ensure that the government has first right of refusal on the resale of former state assets, especially infrastructure

None

None

None

None

None unless it enhanced kaitiakitanga and rangatiratanga

2. INFRASTRUCTURE

2.1 Do you have a policy to rectify the current security of energy supply in New Zealand?

94.7% were concerned about the future energy supply in New Zealand. 4.4% said they weren't concerned, and 0.8% were unsure.

Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If yes, what are these policies?

Electricity Commission monitoring supply & demand & encouraging investment in generation & transmission; focusing on renewable energy	Fix the RMA to allow development of new electricity generation assets & facilitate discovery of new oil & gas reserves	Provide incentives for more investment in the industry; facilitate energy efficiencies; ensure energy is supplied at a fair and reasonable price	Fix the RMA; fix the problem of skewed priorities of Govt as shareholder	Wouldn't favour one type of electricity generation over another; amend the Conservation Act so hydro proposals within conservation estate go to full resource hearing; upgrade national grid; convert Transpower to public utility with sole objective of transporting power through national grid	Carbon taxes, fuel efficiency standards, especially for renewables; investment in rail & public transport; more R&D on biofuels; commitment to 500,000 solar panels installed over 5 years; reform electricity market to encourage demand side participation & enable small users to sell power back to the grid	Encourage better energy efficiency, conservation & generation; if sufficient renewable energy can't be developed at acceptable cost, we may require the construction of a coal-fired power station	Promotion of solar, micro-hydro, PV, wind facilities; tax incentives for businesses & families who install them; encourage demand side participation & enable small users to sell power back to the grid
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.2 Do you believe that future energy prices will adversely affect business operations?

69.7% thought that future energy prices would adversely affect their operations, while 25.7% thought it wouldn't. 4.6% were unsure.	Depends on how they respond	Yes, if the measures above are not taken	Depends on the path taken on energy infrastructure and regulation	Yes	Probably not - price volatility & uncertainty of supply are a greater threat	Yes	Yes	Yes
---	-----------------------------	--	---	-----	--	-----	-----	-----

2.3 Do you believe the proposed carbon tax regime will encourage energy efficiency or inhibit the uptake of efficiency technologies?

	It will encourage energy efficiency	It will not encourage energy efficiency	It will not encourage energy efficiency	It will not encourage energy efficiency	It will not encourage energy efficiency	The experience of countries that have introduced carbon taxes is that they encourage energy efficiency	It will encourage energy efficiency and provide an opportunity for NZ to move into production of related technology	It will encourage energy efficiency
--	-------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	--	---	-------------------------------------

2.4 What are your party's major infrastructure issues?

Infrastructure issues in New Zealand that were considered of concern for the future were: Road Network (79.7%), Water (42.7%), Rail Network (33.4%), Gas (30.7%), Port Access (15.3%).	Under-investment	Roading network and energy infrastructure	Investment, RMA, roads including rural roads, rail tracks	Roading, electricity, RMA	Roading, especially strategic networks in Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington, & many parts of SH1, which should be progressively upgraded and 4-laned in entirety	Rebuilding rail & coastal shipping network, evaluating alternatives to major roading & transmission investment, expanding broadband services	Regular infrastructure stocktake to plan ahead for growth on whole of govt basis	Transport & telecommunications
--	------------------	---	---	---------------------------	---	--	--	--------------------------------

2.5 Are you of the view that all tax generated from petrol taxes should be spent only on roading infrastructure?

Yes (82.4%), No (12.3%), Unsure (5.3%).	No: not appropriate to tie particular tax revenue to one form of spending	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No, because use of roads impacts on other areas eg accidents on roads bring costs in health, justice systems	Yes
---	---	-----	-----	-----	-----	----	--	-----

If not, what would you consider to be more pressing in terms of government expenditure?

						Investment in better public transport & travel demand management		
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2.6 Do you support increasing the level of spending on eliminating roading constraints?

67.7% thought there should be more government spending in addition to that from petrol taxes to speed up road construction and maintenance. 19.6% said no, while 12.7% were unsure.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No – maintaining the network & improving safety are priorities		Yes
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	--	--	-----

If yes, how should this ideally be funded?

		Use all petrol tax revenue; potential for private investment		Use all petrol tax revenue; allow a mix of funding including tolling	Use all petrol tax revenue; additional allocations out of general taxation; tolling			Borrowing
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	-----------

2.7 Do you support amending the Resource Management Act (RMA) as one means of eliminating roading constraints?

	Changes already made should resolve delays	Yes	Yes	yes; rewrite RMA from first principles	Yes	No	Yes	No
--	--	-----	-----	--	-----	----	-----	----

2.8 Overall, what changes (if any) do you believe are required to the RMA to assist economic growth?

		Reduce costs, delays & uncertainties of RMA to maximise economic growth	Clarify processes required; remove obstacles; ensure all affected parties have access to consent process	Focus on property rights; limit to environmental effects, not spiritual, amenity, aesthetic effects; speedier process for infrastructural approvals; limited rights for parties to frustrate process	Shorter timeframes for councils processing consent applications; national environmental standards to improve consistency between councils	Better procedures	Continue with changes underway	Make funding available to hapū and iwi to assist them to carry out research into applications for resource consents
--	--	---	--	--	---	-------------------	--------------------------------	---

2.9 Would you consider deregulating the provision of water, waste water, and roading services, as a means of facilitating greater investment?

48.4% thought water, wastewater and roading services should be subject to greater commercial disciplines and user charges. 33.6% said no, while 18% were unsure.	No	Yes	No	Yes	Depends - would not support residents having to pay market prices to a private corporation for their drinking water	No	Possible role for public private partnerships	No, unless it can be shown as an avenue to raise the effectiveness of kaitiakitanga and heigthen wairuatanga
--	----	-----	----	-----	---	----	---	--

If yes, what are the key points?

	Will monitor progress & take action if not met; regulatory work to ensure competitiveness in wholesale market; investment in project PROBE	Support Project Probe	Would enforce unbundling of Telecom's local loop	Remove disincentives to infrastructure investment, same as for other industries-less tax, compliance costs & regulatory hurdles	Support unbundling of Telecom local loop; also support Project PROBE	Support unbundling of Telecom's local loop; support subsidies for extending broadband services to provincial NZ; support more use of Open Source software	First step was implemented earlier this year as the Digital Strategy in schools, businesses & the community	Acknowledge Maori interest in managing radio spectrum (as Waitangi Tribunal did) and involve the Maori partner in this role
--	--	-----------------------	--	---	--	---	---	---

2.13 Do you have other policies for improving infrastructure services?

	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	----	-----	-----	-----

If yes, what are the key points?

	Funding to help communities upgrade water & sewerage systems; RMA policy statements, national standards for greater consistency; policy statements/standards for electricity, telecommunication infrastructure & road noise	Reforming the RMA is key	Various policies.	Local government needs to be refocused on its core business.		Would significantly upgrade rail network, with a view to eventual electrification; ensure existing electricity & road infrastructure is used more efficiently, rather than just extending capacity	Public involvement in ensuring that strategic infrastructure is provided to all	Involvement of the Maori partner in shaping infrastructure to better suit Maori partner particularly in rural transport & management of water
--	---	--------------------------	-------------------	--	--	--	---	---

2.14 Do you have any specific policies regarding manufacturing in New Zealand?

86.2% of manufacturers surveyed thought the current regulatory environment was not helping their business activity and growth. 4.7% thought it was, while 9.1% were unsure.

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

If yes, what are they?

Currently working on a National Manufacturing Strategy, with national conference in 2005; NZTE & MED working with sectors & firms to develop high value products

Same as for other sectors - lowering tax burden, reducing regulation, opening up employment environment

We will enter free trade talks with caution, especially with large low-wage paying nations such as China

Same as for other industries- less tax, less compliance costs and regulatory hurdles

The same as for other industries - reducing compliance costs & tax burden, ensuring a flexible labour market, providing education to get skilled workforce, advancing export opportunities & trade arrangements

Review ways to get a more stable exchange rate; stronger controls on foreign investment; introduce a major "Buy Local" campaign; protect NZ businesses from unfair competition; Commerce Commission proactivity on anti-dumping

Focused on lifting value of our manufactured products; implementing policies to lift skills, extend markets, encourage innovation, build up infrastructure; a Manufacturing Strategy is forthcoming

Encouragement of innovative activity; reduction of compliance costs; building/increasing local and regional self-reliance; support for quality, relevant industry training & apprenticeships

3. TRADE

3.1 Are you committed to further development of CER?

78.2% support further development of CER. 2.9% do not, and 19% are unsure.

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

CER is creating environmental & regulatory costs, & may not be delivering benefits; small businesses & regional communities may have been disadvantaged by it

Yes

Yes

If yes, what are your priorities?

Overall effort to improve relationship with Australia

Review for transparency & accountability & to ensure NZ's interests; access for NZ apples with referral to WTO if necessary

Moving as far as possible towards a single market

Removing non-tariff barriers to NZ goods e.g. apples

Extending NZ access, including access for apples

Apples; lifting impediments to the free flow of products & services

3.2 Do you support a Free Trade Agreement with China?

65.4% support an FTA with China, so long as it provides a net economic benefit to New Zealand. 18.9% do not support it, while 15.7% are unsure.

Yes

Yes

We would treat any FTA with China with great caution

Yes

Yes

No - further trade liberalisation will worsen environment & inequality

Will not sign agreements unless in national interest

No, unless they are meeting human rights standards

If not, what are your main concerns with the Agreement?

						Unfair to have to compete with manufacturers in China who are govt subsidised & do not meet environment, labour, human rights		Actions that are a denial of kaupapa Maori
--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--

3.3 Do you agree with the view that New Zealand should pursue Free Trade Agreements with other countries?

35.6% thought there was not enough being done regarding FTAs that provide a net economic benefit to NZ. 33.6% thought there was, while 30.5% were unsure.	Yes	Yes where they are of strategic value to NZ	See 3.2 above	Yes	Yes	Only if labour, environmental & human rights standards met	Yes	No (see 3.2 above)
---	-----	---	---------------	-----	-----	--	-----	--------------------

If so, what other countries/regions do you particularly have in mind?

An FTA with the USA (42.2%) was considered the most important trade issue at this time, followed by further development of CER (30.4%), and an FTA with China (27.4%).	Currently negotiating with China, ASEAN, Malaysia, making progress on possible CEP with Mexico, but working through WTO top priority			All significant trading partners, in particular the US	The United States, Latin America and the ASEAN countries.			
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--

4. INVESTMENT, INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

4.1 Do you have any specific policies for increasing the amount of private sector research and development in New Zealand?

	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If yes, what are they?

Out of a scale of 1-5 were 1=poor and 5=excellent, the following rankings were given to the current regulatory regime supporting investment, innovation and R&D: Excellent (1.4%), Above Average (6.4%), Average (35.8%), Below Average (36.3%), Poor (20.2%).	Improved R&D tax deductions, streamlining business taxes, R&D grants	More through the tax system to encourage port-free private sector investment in R&D	More public private partnerships; incentives for adding value, creating jobs, export growth or import substitution, contributing to regional development; will develop Business Angel Networks	Lower taxes, less red tape and regulation	Review the tax treatment of R&D, to generate incentives for an increase in private sector expenditure to 1.5% of GDP	Identifying factors affecting R&D; facilitating pooling of R&D spending in clustered partnerships with research institutions	Dropping the company tax rate to 30% to encourage investment; lifting funding for R&D	Reduced taxes for especially small business; promoting education for creativity; pursuit of kaupapa tuku iho by Maori entities
--	--	---	--	---	--	--	---	--

4.2 Do you have any policies directed to improving innovation and entrepreneurship in New Zealand?

	Yes	Yes	See 4.1 above.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	----------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If yes, what are they?

63.1% thought government money should go into investment, innovation and entrepreneurship. 23.2% thought it should not, while 13.7% were unsure.	The \$500m Growth & Innovation Framework	Support some work undertaken by NZTE & tertiary institutions; considering ways to encourage skilled foreigners to come to NZ and impart their skills		Lower taxes, less red tape and regulation.	Reducing business compliance costs as discussed above.	Access to capital & support in financial management and planning for SMEs; more mentoring services	Already implemented policy to support innovation and entrepreneurship in NZ	See 4.2 above
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	---------------

4.3 Do you have policies for improving access to venture capital?

58% thought new policies were required to improve access to venture capital in New Zealand. 34.7% were unsure, while 7.3% thought not.	Yes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, but support Unlisted as a simpler, alternative means for raising capital	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	------	-----	-----	-----	--	-----	-----	-----

If yes, what are they?

	Announced limited partnership regime to bring venture capital; launched Seed Co-investment Fund to help SME's attract venture capital			Lower taxes, less red tape and regulation.		Support the venture capital schemes introduced by Govt but these need clear ethical investment guidelines	Progressive leader Jim Anderton started Investment NZ, Visiting Investor Programme, work on matching high growth potential companies with investors	Assisting with plans that will persuade a combination of family and friends to combine with institutions to provide funding; adopting development model of the Maori Women's Welfare League
--	---	--	--	--	--	---	---	---

5. SKILLS AND PRODUCTIVITY

5.1 Do you have specific policies for increasing skill levels in the current workforce by increasing numbers involved in formal industry training?

	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
If yes, what are your policies?								
88.2% thought there should be specific policies to increase numbers in formal industry training. 6.4% thought there shouldn't be, while 5.5% were unsure.	Will provide extra 5,000 Modern Apprenticeship places towards goal of 250,000 in industry training, introduce Youth Apprenticeships pilot providing opportunities for students to work towards apprenticeships while at school		Aim to ensure all young people either in work industry training; community wage scheme to allow businesses to offer apprenticeships through 'topped up' weekly wage system; will review ITOs for best practice; will extend Modern Apprenticeships to older trainees	Industry training preferable to marginal quality courses; lower taxes to lift relative wages	Significantly increase the available number of Modern Apprenticeships	Expand apprenticeship programme; encourage women, Maori, Pacific & others to train in industries where they are currently underrepresented	Will double the number of people in apprenticeships and industry training by 2007	More opportunities for training with cadetships

5.2 Do you have any specific policies for eliminating 'very poor' literacy and numeracy in the population?

	Yes	Yes	No specific policy.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	---------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If yes, what are the policies?

<p>Out of a scale of 1-5 were 1=poor and 5=excellent, the following rankings were given to how well Government policies and programs produce well educated people for employment: Excellent (1.9%), Above Average (8.1%), Average (37.7%), Below Average (37.5%), Poor (14.8%).</p>	<p>Promote assessment tools; committed to foundation learning for non-school aged NZers</p>			<p>Scrap the NCEA, replace with internationally comparable nationwide exams; govt to focus more on standards & testing, & less on directing resources at local school level; basic literacy, numeracy testing at primary school</p>	<p>Increase resources in primary schools; reading skills to be taught beyond first few years at primary school; funding for extra reading tuition; periodic testing against national standards; all subject teachers & curriculum areas to take responsibility for literacy; training to up-skill older unemployed NZers; those under 25 to either be 'earning or learning'</p>	<p>More investment in early childhood and school education, work-based & community based programmes; evaluate initiatives for student underachievement & recommend solutions in concert with affected communities</p>	<p>Improve funding for teacher development, literacy programmes, and early childhood education</p>	<p>Public campaign on optional approaches to achieving progress including reo</p>
---	---	--	--	---	---	---	--	---

5.3 Do you support the provision of policies for improving the outcomes of compulsory education so that all students achieve basic literacy and numeracy standards, and attain at least NCEA Level 1?

<p>Yes (92.4%), No (5.1%), Unsure (2.5%).</p>		<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes – see 5.2 above.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>
---	--	------------	-------------	------------	-----------------------------	------------	------------	------------

If yes, what are your key policies for achieving this?

The following outlines employers understanding of NCEA reports (records of learning): Poorly (45.4%), Adequately (31.7%), Well (9.4%), Very Well (4.4%), NA (9%).	Every student achieving Level 1 is not realistic; NCEA introduced minimum standards for literacy and numeracy; continue this focus with new assessment tools		Conduct inquiry into NCEA assessment, standard setting & consider removing unit standards from NCEA; taskforce on underachievement of boys; reduce class sizes for lower decile schools in first 3 years of schooling			Improve NCEA; develop info to increase understanding of NCEA; change assessment; make NCEA a more internationally recognised qualification	Will continue to support & improve quality of education	To promote this to new entrants to education; encourage work places to provide daily activity to improve the literacy and numeracy development where needed
---	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	---

5.4 Do you consider the relevance of post-compulsory education would be improved by more rigorous quality assurance, greater partnership with business and a greater proportion of learning taking place within business and on the job?

	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If yes, what are your key policies for achieving this?

Government assistance in on-the-job training (37.5%) was considered the most important post-compulsory issue, followed by greater partnership with business (35.75), and better quality assurance (26.9%).	Partnership between tertiary sector, business & govt; a more strategic approach for tertiary funding focused on quality & relevance			NZQA needs an overhaul	Supporting further investment in industry training	Provide adequate funding; encourage tertiary institutions, employers & ITOs to work together	Continued support in school & after school educational opportunities	
--	---	--	--	------------------------	--	--	--	--

5.5 Do you support the development of a specific educational policy on the role of enterprise, science and technology throughout the curriculum?

	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If yes, what are the key points?

71.6% believe there should be a specific education policy in this area. 6.85 said no, while 21.6% were unsure.

Enterprise education resource for secondary schools; deliverance of laptops in schools for teachers; project PROBE

No detailed policy

Increase the attractiveness of research as a career option by reducing the costs of study, expanding access to student allowances, introducing bonding, establishing research scholarships between tertiary providers and private sector

Shift the focus to a more holistic, systems orientated form of science education; more links & exchanges between research scientists, technology developers & educational institutions; more opportunities for science teachers to do research

These are important curriculum topics and will be funded accordingly. Key areas are to lift teacher skills and fully support them with resources.

In the Maori community, people who have the essential skills of numeracy and literacy and an operational understanding of kaupapa tuku iho will be successful and valuable contributors in any environment

5.6 Do you support an increase in the number and proportion of highly skilled, talented, and motivated immigrants with good English language skills?

Yes

Attract skilled migrants who will contribute to our economy, fit in with our community & be independent of the state

Yes, but immigration will not be used as an excuse for our failure to train, skill & employ our own people; strict limits on immigration into NZ

Yes

Yes

NZ does attract a number of highly skilled & talented migrants already

Yes

Yes, in limited numbers where they show signs of having the capacity to adopt the values of this country including kaupapa tuku iho

If yes, what are your key policies for achieving this?

	Need to continue to support the arrival of skilled and talented immigrants; introduction the Skilled Migrant Category to shift from being a passive receiver of migrants to an active recruiter of the skills and talent we need		Immigrants must have a sound command of English, a job, & be willing to integrate into NZ society. Need to ensure immigration streams are more directly matched to the skills and qualifications necessary to further regional economic and social goals.	ACT would change the immigration targets to focus first and foremost on attracting qualified & able bodied immigration from those most likely to assimilate well	Develop a 10-year strategy to identify the impact of demographic changes; increase current net migration residents pa; prioritise the residency applications of those who have skills we need and a job offer that is relevant to those skills & regularly update the priority occupations list	All New Zealanders, including migrants need a certain level of English language competence, but that this should not be a key determining factor for entry into the country; affordable or free ESOL training for migrants; encourage professional bodies to accept qualifications from a much wider range of countries	We will support all migrants with English classes. All skilled migrants are welcome to New Zealand as we enter a global competition for skills.	
--	--	--	---	--	---	---	---	--

5.7 Do you take the view that there should be a target for net migration levels?

Yes (82.2%), No (8.7%), Unsure (9.1%).	Labour's Immigration Programme places emphasis on the skilled/business immigration stream, by ensuring that 60% of approvals under the programme are allocated to that stream	National stands for managed immigration.	We seek to drastically reduce the inflow of migrants.	Yes	Yes – see 5.6 above.	Approach to accepting migrants includes humanitarian responsibility to those who have suffered in their home countries, & the need to achieve our own social, economic and environmental sustainability. We would increase the refugee quota from 750 to 1000, as a humanitarian gesture.	Limitations on skilled migrants are not necessarily in our interests and we will monitor numbers and address any policy issues based on how they affect the needs of our economic and social development.	Yes
--	---	--	---	-----	----------------------	---	---	-----

If yes, what should the target be?

			Will end the blind commitment to bringing in 45,000 plus migrants annually and ensure that migrant numbers are matched to true gaps in the labour market that New Zealanders	This is likely to be somewhere around the 15,000 – 20,000 per annum level, about 300 – 400 a week.				Zero except in circumstances where manaakitanga and wairuatanga might hold sway.
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

5.8 Do you consider current skills and training regimes encourage productivity growth?

No (68.1%), Yes (12.7%), Unsure (19.2%).	Yes	Yes		No	There is always room for improvement.	Yes - modern apprenticeship programmes	Yes, but there is always room for improvement.	Yes, though the rates of advancement of skills and of enjoying new insights may not be as high as they could be.
--	-----	-----	--	----	---------------------------------------	--	--	--

If not, what are your main areas of concern?

				Concerned that despite huge increases in resources devoted to education and training, our productivity growth has been dismal.				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

6. BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

6.1 Do you consider that the current regulatory regime encourages growth in business activity?

<p>No (71.5%), Yes (8.1%), Unsure (20.4%).</p>	<p>Yes. This year's budget helps SMEs in particular. The Ministerial Panel on Compliance Costs showed that of 155 recommendations 90% have been implemented or are being implemented.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No. Compliance costs are too high under the current regulatory regime. N</p>	<p>No. We are surrounded by badly drafted regulation and poorly crafted laws. The effect on business is devastating as we get less business activity, investment and growth than we otherwise would and productivity is lower than it would otherwise be.</p>	<p>No. The tax and red tape burden on all businesses does not prevent business growth (as GDP figures over the past few years have shown) but they make it a lot more difficult than it needs to be. This could pose a problem if (or when) external economic conditions become less favourable.</p>	<p>Given record levels of economic activity and business profits it would be difficult to say anything but yes to this.</p>	<p>Yes. The World Bank, Doing Business 2005 report made it clear that New Zealand is the best environment in the world in which to do business. Our policies and regulations are some of the most business friendly in the world.</p>	<p>No</p>
--	---	-----------	---	---	--	---	---	-----------

6.2 Do you support the repealing or significant amendment of the Employment Relations Act?

<p>Out of a scale of 1-5 were 1=poor and 5=excellent, the following rankings were given to the most current Employment Relations Act: Excellent (2.1%), Above Average (8.5%), Average (30.8%), Below Average (35.4%), Poor (23.1%).</p>	<p>No. The changes we have made in employment relations have been in the interests of fairness and security.</p>	<p>Repeal the 2004 amendments to the ERA, and rewrite the original 2000 Act.</p>	<p>An ideal industrial relations environment is one based on fairness, flexibility, and neutrality between the parties. NZ First will review all industrial relations law to ensure it is consistent with the preceding statement.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Will promote a modern, flexible labour market that is stable. We will avoid wholesale changes every time a govt changes & will instead amend current legislation to make it better.</p>	<p>No. The Green Party supports the principles and objectives of the Employment Relations Act.</p>	<p>No. Even the World Bank report mentioned above made it clear that NZ's Employment Relations Act was fair. In fact, NZ is second only to Palau in terms of the ease of hiring and firing workers for example.</p>	<p>No, except, possibly to provide scope to encourage the two-way expression of manaakitanga and rangatiratanga.</p>
---	--	--	--	------------	--	--	---	--

If yes, what are your priorities for change?

		Ensure employers/employees have the same rights; remove union monopoly over collective agreements; set up probation period for new workers; make appointments to mediation and adjudication services are merit-based; review personal grievance procedures		Repeal and replace with Employment Contracts Act. Freedom to contract must be paramount.	Review general grievance & dismissal procedures in the ERA; let employers take on new employees for trial period up to 6 months; repeal provisions that allow union members to receive "bargaining bonuses"			
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--

6.3 What is your position on unions in the work-place?

63.6% thought current employment legislation encourages employment negotiation conduct through unions rather than individuals. 19.2% thought it doesn't, while 17.2% were unsure.	Unions have an important role to play in workplace relations & work alongside employers and business in the implementation of successful employment practices	Union access to the workplace should be controlled, and workers should have the right to choose a negotiating agent other than a union when negotiating a collective agreement.		Should not be an impost on employers as currently.	Unions do fulfil a genuine representative role in the workplace, but it should be left entirely up to workers to organise collectively	Unions have an important role in the workplace to represent their members in collective bargaining as well as in other issues such as health and safety in the workplace.	Unions play a key part in working together with businesses to ensure fair and open bargaining is carried out.	Employee to decide and in coming to their decision there should be opportunities for the employee and employer to arrive at an understanding of the mutuality of interest
---	---	---	--	--	--	---	---	---

6.4 Do you support the introduction of legislation on work-life balance issues?

<p>85.7% thought work life balance issues should be addressed through a voluntary basis, while 14.7% thought it should be through legislation.</p>	<p>A whole of government approach is needed to address work-life balance issues, it is not something that can be solved by a single piece of legislation.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Will form an Industrial Relations Advisory Group.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No. Such legislation invariably leads to social engineering, but we think the Government can influence practice (such as by leading by example) without the need for a legislative sledgehammer.</p>	<p>Yes - Green Party MP Sue Kedgley has a private members bill currently being considered by select committee.</p>	<p>Progressive supports healthy workers and workplaces by promoting work life balance including four weeks annual leave (in line with most of our trading partners) and paid parental leave. Both of these policies encourage people back into the workforce where we need them.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
--	---	-----------	--	-----------	---	--	--	------------

6.5 Do you believe the Holidays Act should be reviewed?

<p>Out of a scale of 1-5 were 1=poor and 5=excellent, the following rankings were given to the current framework of the Holidays Act: Excellent (1.9%), Above Average (10.5%), Average (28.1%), Below Average (32.7%), Poor (26.7%).</p>	<p>No. Last year Labour reviewed the Holidays Act to address some of the unintended consequences of the Act in 2003.</p>	<p>Yes</p>		<p>Yes</p>	<p>Not at this stage. We should allow sufficient time for the outcomes of the latest review to become apparent.</p>	<p>The Green party supports the Holidays Act and the introduction of 4 weeks leave.</p>	<p>Holiday's Act legislation is, by it's nature, complex and will from time to time, require review.</p>	<p>No</p>
--	--	------------	--	------------	---	---	--	-----------

If yes, what are the key areas of concern?

		Will change “relevant daily pay” so it does not pay more to be sick than to work; will fix stat holiday problems; will allow 4th week of annual leave to be worked and paid for by mutual agreement of employees and employers	NZ First will review the Holidays Act to ensure fairness and flexibility and to ensure four weeks annual leave is locked in.	Need freedom for employment contracts to set their own holidays rates and to trade off holiday provisions if desired. Related issue- Easter trading limitations need removing.	There may be an issue around the use of relevant daily pay as a basis for calculating leave entitlements.			
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--

6.6 Do you support the view that Health and Safety issues are currently an over-regulated area of compliance?

Out of a scale of 1-5 were 1=poor and 5=excellent, the following rankings were given to the current framework for Health & Safety: Excellent (1.5%), Above Average (17.9%), Average (40.7%), Below Average (27.7%), Poor (12.2%).	Rules are necessary for those who are not so responsible; cost of non-compliance & unsafe workplaces is severe	Yes		Yes	Yes	No. We would like to see more work done on protecting workers and employers from hazardous substances in the workplace.	Supports health and safety legislation but is always open to streamlining complex legislation where it can be shown that realistic alternatives exist.	No
---	--	-----	--	-----	-----	---	--	----

If yes, what areas are of particular concern?

		Too many rules - will develop voluntary industry codes of good practice to achieve compliance, reward companies that have good health and safety records with ACC premium reductions or no-claims bonuses, remove duplication between OSH and ACC in the area of injury prevention.		Individual employers are best placed to develop their policies. Centralization has proved costly and unnecessarily prescriptive, with no discernable benefits. Similarly, with ACC, individual employers should be free to choose from competing insurance providers.	This term we opposed Labour's employment law reforms such as the Health and Safety in Employment Act which made employers liable for stress. United Future's priority is to repeal these provisions.			Maori are more prone to accident than others and attention needs to be given to training on the job along with care to ensure the essentials of a safe environment are guaranteed.
--	--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--

6.7 Do you support the continuation of higher local authority rating differentials for business ratepayers?

Yes (42.7%), No (40%), Unsure (17.3%).	Local authorities decide for themselves how they levy their rates. However Labour has strengthened requirements for councils to consult with their communities, including rating decisions.	Require rating policies to reflect the services provided.	Will review the rating system, including GST on rates, the rating of schools for sewerage disposal and the proportion of rates spent on roading.	No	Yes – but concerned that the local authority rates burden is too high. Will review to find alternative revenue sources for local authorities so they can reduce their over reliance on property rates based funding.	We support the right of local communities to make fully informed and democratic decisions on these matters.	Business relies upon many public services as part of their daily operations and therefore a contribution is necessary. Progressive is open to constructive suggestions.	Should be discussion with each business about any adverse impact on the environment and their rates should reflect the findings.
--	---	---	--	----	--	---	---	--

If no, what policy changes should be implemented?

				Local authority rating increases should be kept within the inflation rate. Any resulting general rate requirement should be levied without differential.				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

6.8 Do you consider that additional policies should be put in place to ensure government generated business compliance costs are minimised?

Yes (81.2%), No (7.6%), Unsure (11.6%).	Yes. Budget 2005 included changes to FBT, depreciation rates and other business costs, which are designed to reduce compliance costs and remove anomalies.	Regulation should only be used to solve identifiable problems, not simply to increase the power and reach of government and its agencies.	New Zealand First will progressively reduce government generated business compliance costs to encourage growth in business activity.	Yes - would pass a Regulatory Responsibility Act.	Yes, will undertake an immediate review all legislation and regulations that impose coercive powers and administrative burdens on businesses to ensure the impact on business is minimised, consistent with the overall public interests.	We believe there is considerable scope for initiatives such as single points of contact for SMEs and greater integration between agencies to reduce compliance costs.	Yes and much work has been done in this area. Already over 104 compliance cost reductions have been made and we are always willing to consider more. No one benefits from over-wrought administration systems.	Yes. Accountability should be the key and only the essentials for this are required.
---	--	---	--	---	---	---	--	--

6.9 Do you consider that specific additional policies should be put in place to minimise compliance costs from the activities of regional and local authorities?

<p>Yes (76.6%), No (8.9%), Unsure (11.2%).</p>	<p>That is a matter for local government to decide.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>See 6.8 above.</p>	<p>Better use of national guidelines and processes. Harmonisation of planning rules would help. A nationwide business might be dealing with 30-40 district plans, and a range of approaches to handling consents or levying charges.</p>	<p>Limited scope for achieving this given that local authorities have powers of general competence. Would have biennial review of the RMA, reducing number of Territorial Authorities; Ministry of Environment to take a more active role in ensuring that Reg Councils perform their environmental responsibilities</p>	<p>Local Government has the potential to more accountable to its stakeholders. We support devolution of decision-making and the granting of a general power of competence to Councils. We have also been concerned with the arbitrary way some councils have acted over a range of issues of concern to their communities.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>See 6.8 above.</p>
--	---	------------	-----------------------	--	--	--	------------------	-----------------------

6.10 Do you support specific policies for promoting public attitudes to wealth creation, business success and entrepreneurship?

<p>79.6% thought there was not enough being done to promote better public attitudes to entrepreneurship, business success and wealth creation. 11.3% thought there was, while 9.1% were unsure.</p>	<p>Yes. We want our national culture to value and foster the entrepreneurial spirit.</p>	<p>No core educational policies that focus on such issues - but key focus of our government will be an economic one, and educating the public on the benefit of a stronger economy.</p>	<p>NZ First will assist NZ companies in developing new technology and facilitate technology transfer.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>We believe the best way to promote positive public attitudes is to ensure that the route to business success is through making money in ways that are socially and ecologically sustainable.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>
---	--	---	---	------------	------------	---	------------	------------

If yes, what are the key points?

				Educational system has replaced references to competition, winning, and success with references to participation and inclusion - needs changing.	We believe some progress can be made in this area by developing appropriate educational resources.		Progressive Leader Jim Anderton, as Minister for Economic Development, has instigated a programme of entrepreneurial education, research and policy making in this area to lift public support for business success.	Promoting public attitudes to wealth creation, business success and entrepreneurship should be couched within kaupapa Māori for the Māori population at least.
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

7. SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Do you consider that business activity and government regulation should be directed to achieving sustainable outcomes for business as well as for the community and the environment?

Yes (90%), No (3.7%), Unsure (6.3%).	Yes	Yes	We maintain that the role of the state must be to strike a balance between economic progress and appropriate environmental goals.		Yes	Yes. Sustainable business is business that can prosper without harming the community or the environment.	Yes	Yes
--------------------------------------	-----	-----	---	--	-----	--	-----	-----

7.2 Do you believe that accident compensation legislation should provide for businesses to self-insure against workplace illness and accidents?

Yes (67.2%), No (21.4%), Unsure (11.5%).		Re-introduce competition in workplace accident insurance.	NZ First will allow the ACC to contract out to private insurers any particular employer's requirements (including the self-employed).	Yes	Yes	The original vision for ACC offers the best solution for accident insurance in NZ.		
--	--	---	---	-----	-----	--	--	--

* For the full unedited version of political party responses please visit www.businessnz.org.nz. Political party responses were received between the 4th-13th August. Business responses were received between 13-24th of June.

Glossary of Maori Party kaupapa or values

The Māori Party's policy framework is based on nine kaupapa from which are derived the tikanga or policies, operating procedures and organisational structures. These kaupapa are:

Manaakitanga - Giving prestige to or elevating the prestige of individuals or organisations through the expression of affection, hospitality, generosity and mutual respect.

Rangatiratanga - Finding opportunities for tangata whenua develop as the Māori partner to the Tiriti; self-determination of tangata whenua through mana Atua, mana tupuna and mana whenua.

Whanaungatanga - Affirming the relationships that tangata whenua and other people have to each other individually or at whānau, hapū and iwi level through a common whakapapa and reciprocal obligations inherent in that relationship.

Kotahitanga - Demonstrating commitment and unity of purpose in pursuit of a vision.

Wairuatanga - Connecting people to their maunga, awa, moana, marae, tūpuna, atua and other cultural taumata or icons.

Mana Whenua - Attaching tangata whenua and others to their ūkaipō, tūrangawaewae, takiwā and rohe; and expressing the authority that whānau, hapū and iwi have over their ancestral land, resources and wellbeing.

Kaitiakitanga - Exercising the responsibility that tangata whenua have to whānau, hapū, and iwi and that all people have to the environment.

Mana Tupuna / Whakapapa - Defining Māori and others through links to their ancestors and heritage.

Te Reo Māori - The repository of mātauranga Māori that sustains Māori people and their culture, just as language sustains other people and their cultures.