



Where do the parties stand? - Introducing our election series

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Summary

Our elected representatives make choices that impact the long-term health and wellbeing of every New Zealander. These decisions are not confined to the health system but range across all parts of our society.

To make an informed decision, voters need to know where political parties stand on issues that impact the health and wellbeing of the people.

In the lead-up to the election, we will be publishing a series of articles analysing political party responses to our questions on several policy areas relevant to public health: long-term planning, tax, water quality, Māori health inequity, and transport.

He hauora te taonga

Health is a treasure. Good health and wellbeing is one of the most fundamental concerns for New Zealanders.¹ Our own physical and mental health, but also the health and happiness of our families/whānau, the people around us, and the nation as a whole.

Health is not just about hospitals and doctors, what matters even more are the *building blocks of good health*. These are basic needs like having a healthy home in a supportive community, clean air, and water, access to affordable and healthy food, and financial security.

The *core* role of government should not be increasing GDP or reducing hospital waiting lists. It should be ensuring the health and wellbeing of the people.² To do this, it must first make sure these building blocks of health are in place for all people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In addition, government needs to promote and institutionalise long-term thinking and take the electorate along with them. We need to invest in policies where the best available evidence suggests they will improve the health of people and our environment for decades to come. Doing this means maintaining and enhancing strong government institutions with a high level of science and policy competency. A current example is the [debate](#) about whether a [new Ministry of Green Works](#) might offer better outcomes and value than a series of public-private partnerships.

The general election is the time when all voters decide who they want in power, and the direction of the country. To make an informed decision, voters need to know where political parties stand on important issues, and what they intend to do to improve the lives of New Zealanders.³

The survey

In the lead-up to the 2023 election the Public Health Communication Centre has surveyed the political parties currently in parliament on public health issues.

We asked the five parties currently in parliament about support for specific policies, and offered them a chance to outline their broader positions, in five key areas: long-term

planning, tax, water quality, Māori health inequity, and transport. All five parties provided a response.

Over the coming weeks, we will be publishing articles on the *Public Health Expert Briefing*. In this 'Where do the parties stand?' series, subject matter experts outline, analyse, and comment upon parties' responses to our questions.

These articles build on our [Public Health Priorities Series](#) published earlier in the year, and the Health Coalition Aotearoa Briefing article [covering party policies on alcohol, tobacco, and unhealthy food](#).

You can read the [first article on long-term planning policies here](#), and further articles [can be found here as they are published](#).

How you can be involved

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- If you are a public health researcher or practitioner, consider [writing for the Briefing](#)

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