

## **Barton Deakin Brief: Resignation of Prime Minister John Key**

**5 December 2016**

Today John Key announced that he will be resigning as Prime Minister of New Zealand on December 12. A special meeting of the National Party caucus will be held on that day to select the new Leader and Prime Minister. Key will resign as a Member of Parliament closer to the general election in 2017, when he can do so without triggering a by-election in his Helensville seat.

### **Key's legacy**

Prime Minister Key will perhaps best be remembered for steadfast leadership during times of crisis – from the Global Financial Crisis, to the Pike River Mine disaster, to the devastating earthquakes in Christchurch in 2011.

The Government has also ushered in substantial reforms, including increases to GST, partial sell-downs of state owned companies, and reform of welfare and labour law. Welfare entitlements and tax relief for families have been maintained, Government debt reduced, and benefit payments increased for the first time since 1972.

Key cites his legacy as a “more confident, outward-looking and multi-cultural New Zealand that competes and succeeds on the world stage”.

When asked about his regrets, he would have liked to have seen a successful campaign to change the flag; and regrets that the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement has not come to fruition.

The Prime Minister states he is leaving behind a “capable, committed and cohesive” Cabinet, words echoed by Bill English, current Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of New Zealand. Party membership is high and National has consistently polled close to 50 per cent in 2016.

### **Reasons for resignation**

Key's resignation is partly for family reasons, to spend more time with his wife Bronagh.

He would have been unable to commit to serving a fourth term, and did not want to seek re-election without being able to “look the New Zealand public in the eye” and declare that he would stay for another three years.

Key states that he has “never seen himself as a career politician” and did not want to be seen to out-stay his welcome, as so many other leaders have. He thus becomes the first New Zealand Prime Minister to resign on his own terms, rather than losing an election or internal leadership challenge.

### **New leadership**

National Party leaders are chosen by caucus ballot. The Prime Minister has indicated he will lend his support to Bill English if he seeks the leadership.



English has led the Party before, from 2001-2003, including an unsuccessful election campaign in 2002. No other contenders for the leadership have been named at this stage.

If English gains the backing of the caucus, a new Deputy Leader and Finance Spokesperson will need to be selected, precipitating a significant Cabinet reshuffle.

### **Next steps**

The National Party will select its new leader at a special caucus meeting on Monday 12 December. There will be one caucus meeting prior to this, on Tuesday 6 December.

Following the selection meeting, John Key will travel to Government House to officially resign. The Governor-General is expected to appoint the new Prime Minister soon after.

### **Further information**

For media release on announcement of resignation, click [here](#).

For more information, contact [Jenna Raeburn](#) or [Jessica Yu](#) or call +64 21 249 9769.

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