The General Election of 26th November 2011 was New Zealand’s 50th since general elections began in 1853, and the sixth election conducted under the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system. This paper provides a summary of the final (official) results released by the Electoral Commission, following the counting of special votes.

The final results confirm there will be a total of eight political parties and 121 members represented in the 50th Parliament. This compares to the 122 members and seven parties that comprised the 49th Parliament.

Although the National Party has lost one list seat compared to election night – and now has 59 seats in total – its share of the party vote (47.3 percent) is the highest it has achieved under MMP. The Labour Party has retained its overall election night total of 34 seats but both the number of seats and its 27.5 percent share of the party vote is the lowest it has achieved in any MMP election to date.

After its share of the party vote was finalised at 11.1 percent, the Green Party now has 14 seats in Parliament, its highest number of seats and party vote share to date. There are no changes to the number of seats held on election night by other parties, although their final share of the party vote has changed marginally.

The six minor parties gaining parliamentary representation in 2011 gained a total 21.8 percent share of the party vote – just below the average in MMP elections to date (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Share of the Vote by Major and Minor Parties**

All electorate candidates leading on election night have been confirmed as winning their seats, including Waitakere, where Paula Bennett (National) has won the seat with a margin of 9 votes.
after a judicial recount. Nicky Wagner (National) has won Christchurch Central following the counting of special votes after the election night tie with Brendon Burns (Labour).

Of 70 electorates, 49 winning candidates won with a majority (over 50 percent) of the valid electorate votes, while 21 electorates were won with a plurality (less than 50 percent) of the valid electorate votes. The electorate with the lowest share of the electorate (candidate) vote was Ohariu (38.6 percent). The Helensville electorate had the largest winning margin (21,066), while Waitakere was the electorate with the smallest winning margin (9).

There are 39 women MPs (almost one-third of the new Parliament), compared to the record 41 women MPs in the 49th Parliament. Globally, New Zealand ranks 21st in terms of the share of representation of women in Parliament, or 10th among the 34 OECD nations.

There are 21 MPs who have self-identified as being of Māori descent – 17 percent of the 50th Parliament, and similar to the 18 percent of the population who identified as being of Māori descent in the 2006 census. There are six MPs who self-identify as being of Pacific Peoples ethnicity, compared to five in the previous Parliament. There are five MPs who self-identify as being of Asian ethnicity, compared to the six of the 49th Parliament.

The average age of MPs in the 50th Parliament is 49.8 years. The youngest MP is 26 years old; the oldest, 70 years. In generational terms, almost two-thirds (63 percent) of the 50th Parliament are ‘baby boomers’ (born from 1946 to 1965), over one-third (34 percent) are ‘generation X’ (1966 to 1985), and 3 percent are from the pre-World War Two generation.

A total of 3.07 million people were enrolled to vote in the 2011 general election, or 93.7 percent of the estimated 3.28 million voting age population (VAP) – the lowest proportion of the VAP enrolled since 1999. Voters aged under 30 years accounted for over two-thirds (67 percent) of the total eligible voters who were not enrolled in 2011.

Voter turnout (total party votes cast as a proportion of enrolled electors) for the 2011 General Election was 74.2 percent overall, a significant decrease on the 79.5 percent overall turnout for 2008, and the lowest turnout in any MMP election to date.

The referendum on the voting system saw 58 percent in favour of keeping the current MMP system, while 42 percent voted to change it.

The next election must be held by Saturday 24th January, 2015.

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