



Molesworth & Featherston In The Loop

Lobby Edition, 21 April 2005

New data shuffles the numbers in our exclusive poll of polls. There's also new data from the world bank, showing New Zealand's income is not too flash – and there are useful tax comparisons to make, too. We wrap up the John Tamihere business, at least for now, and in our round of media gossip we ask whether publicly-funded radio is now the most listened to in Auckland.

It's all in this week's complimentary Lobby Edition of Molesworth & Featherston.

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Winston, Don up, Jeanette and Rod down.

It is again a 121 seat Parliament in our rolling poll of polls, but the weekend's Marae-Digipoll – with a strong showing for the Maori party in the electorate seats – suggests that could be bigger still. On those numbers the Maori Party could win four or five seats, but only qualify for say three under its list vote, thereby creating another two seats in the House, taking it to 123 members. Anyway, with two interesting new sets of data come into our rolling poll of polls this week the numbers are (assuming party leaders hold their seats):

Labour	44.71	56
National	34.42	43
NZ First	6.49	8
Greens	5.29	7
United Future	2.11	3
Maori	2.01	3



Progressives	0.08	1
Act	2.71	0
Destiny	0.12	0

We're 36th out of 208.

We're not exactly poor, but New Zealand ranks 40th in the world for gross national income per head of population. On a purchasing power parity basis (that's comparing our earnings with what it costs to buy things in New Zealand), we rank 36th in the world.

The World Bank's 2005 development indicators were released this week. They show New Zealand's gross national income as the 48th highest in the world overall. (GNI is the amount of money New Zealanders keep - unlike GDP, which is the sum our economy earns). Our rankings are unchanged from last year.

Tax policies in the survey show New Zealand's 39-cent top personal income tax rate is unexceptional, with many richer and poorer countries having both higher and lower rates. The income threshold at which our top tax rate applies is also middling, but New Zealand's corporate tax rate is looking high. Only Colombia, Congo, India, Israel and Pakistan were reported with company tax rates over the US rate of 35 cents in the dollar. While there is a minority around our 33-cent rate, socialist Denmark has a company rate of 30 cents, Sweden and Norway both have 28-cent company tax rates, 'anti-business' Germany is on 25, 'sclerotic' Japan on 30 and ex-commie Russia on 24 cents.

Newsflash: JT fails to clear tall building in a single bound

Without wanting to get too heavy or "how clever these Labour leaders are"-ish we would just like to point how much clap-trap has been written in the wake of John Tamihere's fall from grace.

Sure, he messed up Labour's spin by gate-crashing the caucus against advice, thereby making Helen Clark look a bit weak and indulgent.

But a big win for Mr Tamihere? Hardly.

He has blown his last chance of getting back into cabinet for the foreseeable future, his seat is on the line against a popular rival in Pita Sharples of the Maori party (and he is not on the Labour list so a loss there wipes him out as an MP until 2008). Few if any cabinet ministers are going to raise a finger to help him during the campaign, and he is back on



stress leave pending his next blunder, which could come any time once his talkback show gets under way.

Meanwhile the right faction, which would have been his powerbase, has been blown to bits. George Hawkins is on his way out, Clayton Cosgrove and David Cunliffe are septic on him after criticisms of them, and Damien O'Connor is wisely distancing himself because he has a bright future in cabinet ahead of him. If Mr Tamihere is popular anywhere, it is not inside Labour anymore, and the unions-women-gay axis is never going to trust him with any authority again.

So let's hear no more nonsense about his successfully facing down his opponents.

If he has a future in politics surely it is outside the party, not as a future leader or as a threat to Helen Clark.

A small tactical victory that temporarily embarrassed PM should not be taken as a sweeping strategic victory for a much-diminished politician.

Media tattle

The end of Paul Holmes' TV One programme might – just might – be damaging his radio ratings. Figures released on Friday show the Newstalk ZB breakfast programme down more than two points since the last survey last year when he was still on the tele. But his audience share of almost nineteen percent is still around his average for the last decade and a half, and Holmes remains totally dominant on radio with more than double the audience of anyone else.

Speaking of radio ratings, we think the top rated radio station in Auckland's congested market is National Radio. Radio New Zealand doesn't purchase ratings survey data (ratings info is used to sell advertising) so the information is not publicly released. But we hear gossip from the industry suggesting the big networks are tracking National Radio ahead of their own mostly bloodless stations. Research International survey figures available online at medianstrip.com (an excellent source of industry news) show Newstalk ZB was number one with a 12.1 percent share in Auckland. But 'others' scored 17 percent. Where could the 'other' audience be? Radio Pacific might have collected a point or two, and the other forty or so tiddler stations in Auckland another couple in total, but no more. In all likelihood, National Radio is rating somewhere around thirteen or even fourteen percent in Auckland with a cumulative audience of two hundred thousand.

The press gallery has elected its new executive for the year and Newsroom Internet journalist Marie McNicholas is its new chair – how new age is that? – with TV3 political editor Stephen Parker as her deputy.

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The arrival of invites to the annual Qantas media awards has sent shockwaves through Auckland newsrooms; rumours that the gala event and annual drinking fest will be held in Wellington were true. As a result, fears are now emerging about the future viability of Auckland's Shakespeare Hotel.

Matt Philp, currently Metro writer and ex-Listener, is Christchurch-bound. Philp will join the Press as a feature writer, replacing Warren Gamble, who, as we've mentioned before, is returning to Auckland where his wife, Monique Devereaux can take up a position as chief reporter of the NZ Herald. She has been the paper's first and only South Island bureau.

Fresh rumours abound in Auckland of more hanky-panky at APN's highest levels. Although the cast remains the same, the set has moved from a restaurant lavvy to the company stationery room. We await developments.

Don's Diary

"Murray says Tamihere must have planned it from the outset, conspiring with Wishart who would be only too eager for an opportunity to damage the frontbums."

More from this week's satirical look into a leader's diary is now online at:

<http://molesworthandfeatherston.info/satire/>

More depth, more stories, earlier

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