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The Post/Freshwater Strategy poll reveals Luxon's leadership under growing pressure

POLITICS
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Finance Minister Nicola Willis and Speaker Gerry Brownlee would both be ousted from Parliament if an election were held today, as National's support slides and Christopher Luxon's personal ratings hit new lows.

In the latest *The Post*/Freshwater Strategy poll with Infrastructure New Zealand, Labour has climbed seven points since the 2023 election to 34%, overtaking National, which has fallen seven points to 31%.

NZ First continues its resurgence, rising to 11%, while ACT is on 9%, the Greens 9%, and Te Pāti Māori 3%.

Based on the Electoral Commission's seat calculator, that would give National 43 seats, NZ First 14 and ACT 11 – a combined 68 seats for the governing bloc. Labour would secure 42, the Greens 11 and Te Pāti Māori 6, totalling 59 seats for the opposition.

That result would create a 127-seat Parliament, larger than usual due to overhang from Te Pāti Māori's electorate wins.

The calculation assumes all seats won on election night are held. But the swing away from National means it would likely lose key electorates and return no list MPs, costing Willis and Brownlee their places in Parliament. (It would have to lose around half a dozen of the 43 electorates it holds before candidates on the party list can make it into Parliament.)

The poll also shows that Luxon's personal standing continues to deteriorate.

His net favourability has fallen to -24, down six points since June. Just 36% of voters now prefer him as prime minister, compared with 45% for Labour leader Chris Hipkins, who has extended his lead by two points since mid-year.

While Hipkins' overall favourability has softened slightly to net 0 (down four points), he remains far more popular than Luxon.

Former prime minister Jacinda Ardern continues to hold the highest public favourability, at +11.

The figures underline the growing pressure on Luxon's leadership as economic anxiety and cost of living pressures dominate the political mood. Luxon's credibility as prime minister is opening up a key political faultline. His personal standing has now sunk well below that of his party. Only 27% of voters view him positively, while a majority – 51% – hold an unfavourable view.

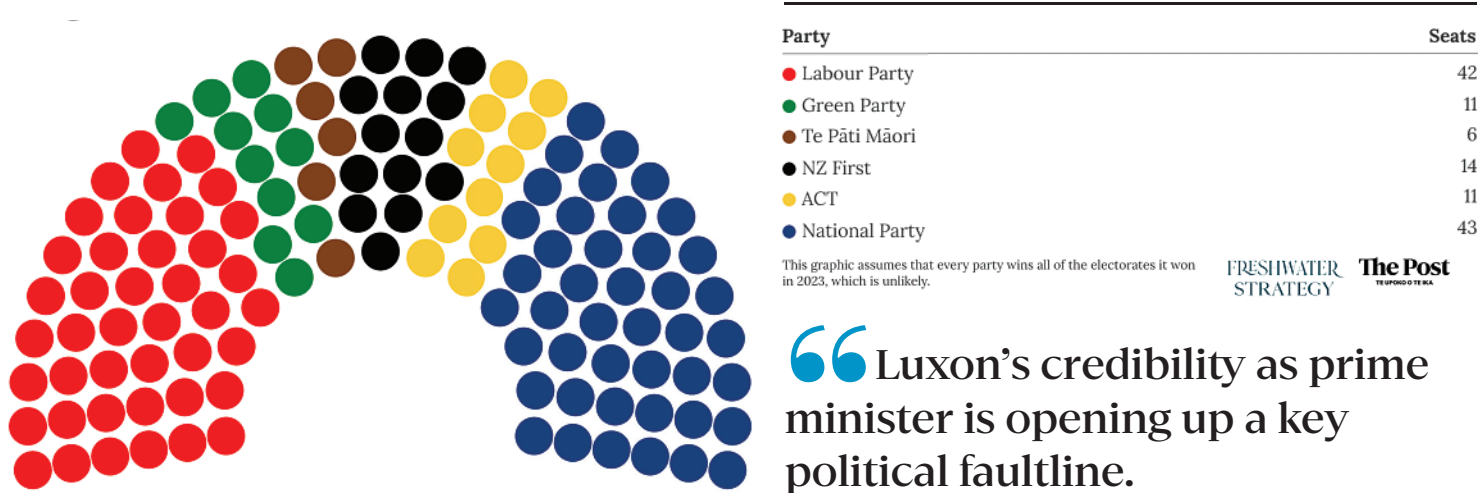
Just 1 in 5 voters remain neutral, suggesting most have already made up their minds about him. By comparison, the National Party's own favourability sits 10 points higher, at -13. That gap indicates Luxon is now a drag on the brand rather than an asset to it.

His personal unpopularity also stands out among public figures tested in the survey. Only David Seymour, (-27%), Te Pāti Māori (-34), Elon Musk (-33) and Donald Trump (-49) are viewed more negatively. The numbers reveal a widening gender gap: 41% of men hold a positive view of the prime minister, compared with only 31% of women.



Prime Minister Christopher Luxon's personal standing has now sunk well below that of his party. BRUCE MACKAY/THE POST

The coalition would return to Government on these polling numbers



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Luxon's appeal is also heavily concentrated among older voters. Support climbs steadily with age, from the high 20s among those aged 18-34, to nearly 40% among voters 65 and older. Among younger voters, particularly women, Luxon's personal brand is deeply under water.

Since the middle of the year, Luxon's net favourability has slipped by more than 20 points across most demographic groups.

The decline is sharpest among women and under-35s.

Hipkins leads Luxon across nearly all measures of competence, relatability, and policy trust. On core decision-making metrics, Hipkins slightly outpaces Luxon on “making the right decisions for New Zealand, even when unpopular” (37% v 36%).

He pulls further ahead on “ensuring taxpayers’ money is spent wisely” (37% v 35%) and “responding best to a national crisis or natural disaster” (42% v 34%).

Hipkins also leads on “making decisions most likely to improve my life” (42% v 31%).

Luxon's standing has slipped since June: his perceived ability to make the right decisions even when unpopular has fallen five points (from -1 to -6 net), and his perceived stewardship of taxpayers’ money is down five points (from -2 to -7 net).

Hipkins' advantage is even stronger on personal connection. He outperforms Luxon on relatability (39% v 27%) and understanding what families are going through (45% v 23%). On environmental leadership, Hipkins enjoys a commanding lead (44% v 20%) as the figure most likely to reduce car-

bon emissions and improve New Zealand's natural environment. He now enjoys both competence and empathy advantages with voters, while Luxon faces challenges on decision-making, connection, and climate credibility.

The Post/Freshwater Strategy poll with Infrastructure NZ interviewed n=1050 eligible voters in New Zealand, aged 18+ online, between October 3 and October 8, 2025. The margin of error is +/- 3%. Data are weighted to be representative of New Zealand voters.

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PAGE 3