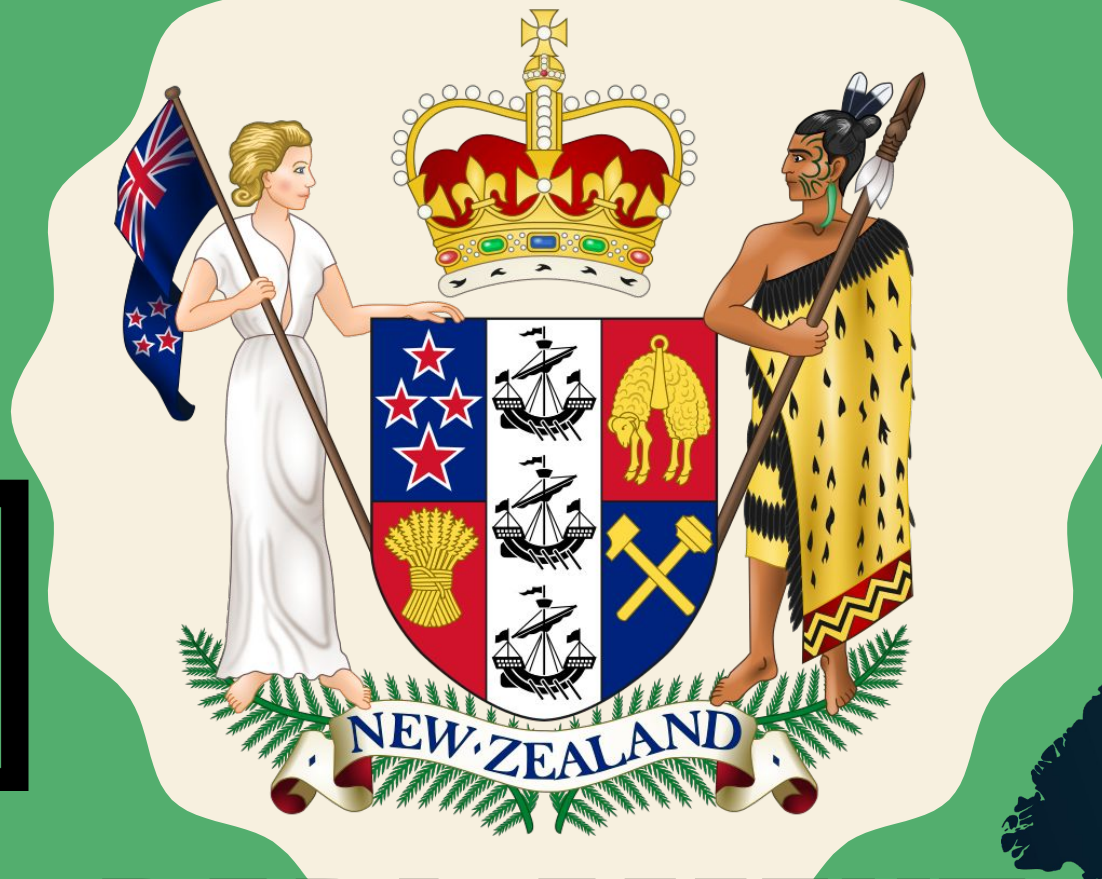


# NEW ZEALAND



# PARLIAMENT



- The New Zealand Parliament is the legislature of New Zealand, consisting of the Queen of New Zealand and the New Zealand House of Representatives.
- The Queen is usually represented by her governor-general.
- Before 1951, there was an upper chamber, the New Zealand Legislative Council. The New Zealand Parliament was established in 1854 and is one of the oldest continuously functioning legislatures in the world. It has met in Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, since 1865.

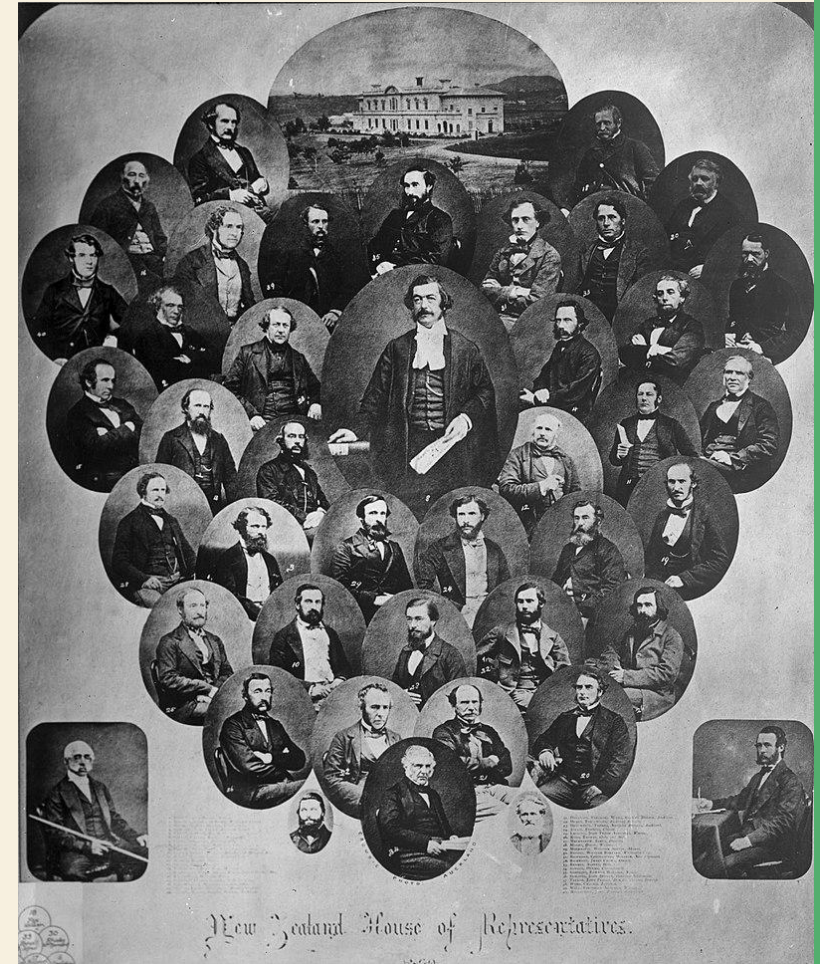
# HISTORY

- As early as 1846 the British settlers in New Zealand petitioned for self-government.
- The New Zealand Parliament was created by the New Zealand Constitution Act 1852, an Act of the British Parliament, which established a bicameral legislature officially named the "General Assembly", but usually referred to as Parliament. It had a lower house, called the House of Representatives, and an upper house, called the Legislative Council.
- The members of the House were elected under the first-past-the-post (FPP) voting system, while those of the Council were appointed by the governor. The first members were sworn in on 24 May 1854 in Auckland.



# UPPER HOUSE ABOLISHED

- Initially, legislative councillors were appointed for life, but from the 1890s they were appointed for renewable seven-year terms.
- This change, coupled with responsible government (whereby the premier advised the governor on Council appointments) and party politics, meant that by the 20th century, the government usually controlled the Council as well as the House, and the passage of bills through the Council became a formality.
- In 1951, the Council was ended altogether, making the New Zealand legislature unicameral. The Council sat for the last time on 1 December 1950, before it was formally abolished on 1 January 1951.
- At the time of its abolition the upper house had fifty-four members, including its own speaker.



# PARLIAMENTARY SOVEREIGNTY

- The New Zealand Parliament is supreme, with no other government institution able to over-ride its decisions. The ability of Parliament to act is, legally, unimpeded. For example, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 is a normal piece of legislation, not superior law, as codified constitutions are in some other countries.
- The House of Representatives has the exclusive power to regulate its own procedures. The House has "entrenched" certain issues relating to elections.
- These include the length of a parliamentary term, deciding on who can vote, how they vote (via secret ballot), how the country should be divided into electorates, and the make-up of the Representation Commission, which decides on these electorates.
- These issues require either 75% of all MPs to support the bill or a referendum on the issue. As the entrenchment mechanism is not entrenched itself, it could be repealed by a simple majority, thus allowing the entrenched provisions of the Electoral Act to also be repealed by a simple majority.



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- The New Zealand House of Representatives is a component of the New Zealand Parliament, along with the Sovereign (represented by the Governor-General).
- The House passes all laws, provides ministers to form a Cabinet, and supervises the work of the Government. It is also responsible for adopting the state's budgets and approving the state's accounts.
- The House of Representatives normally consists of 120 members, who bear the title "Member of Parliament" (MP). They were previously known as "Members of the House of Representatives" (MHRs) until the passing of the Parliamentary and Executive Titles Act 1907 when New Zealand became a Dominion, and even earlier as "Members of the General Assembly" (MGAs)
- All members are democratically elected, and usually enter the House following a general election. Once sworn in, members normally continue to serve until the next dissolution of Parliament and subsequent general election, which must take place at least every three years —although early general elections (sometimes termed "snap elections") are possible at the discretion of the prime minister, especially in the event that a minority government is unable to retain the confidence of the House.



# THE 52ND NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT

- The 52nd New Zealand Parliament is the current sitting of the House, meeting since 7 November 2017. It consists of five parliamentary parties represented by 120 members. Of these current members, 46 (38%) are women—the highest number since women were first allowed to stand for Parliament in 1919.
- Based on British tradition, the longest continuously serving member in the House holds the unofficial title "Father (or Mother) of the House".
- The current Father of the House is Nick Smith, first elected in 1990. Smith inherited the title on 14 March 2018, following the departure of former Prime Minister Bill English, who had also entered the House in 1990.

