



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Political Polling Code updated ahead of 2020 election**

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With the election fast approaching Research Association New Zealand (RANZ) has updated its Political Polling Code. The Code provides rules for RANZ member organisations who conduct and report on political polls, plus best practice guidelines for those publishing stories on poll results.

The Code review was conducted by a team of polling experts and takes into account technology changes in data collection and reporting methodologies since it was first introduced in 2014.

So why does political polling matter? Well importantly it is a sign of a free democracy where voters are allowed to openly voice their opinions and to have the same information available to them when they vote. Polls provide the most authoritative (and highly visible) guide as to which of the political parties are ahead and which behind, whether the gap between the government and opposition is widening or narrowing, and which is likely to win the majority of seats. They are also the most authoritative guide between elections as to the strength of the minor parties.

Among politicians, across the media, and among voters, political polls can create expectations, especially about which party or parties are likely to win, and expectations can drive a range of actions such as changes in party leadership, closer policy scrutiny of a party by the media, and activism among the voting public. Properly conducted public opinion polls remain the best way of providing the public with a voice in decision making. Polls give government and parties better ability to represent and serve voters.

RANZ acknowledges that political polling has had mixed results around the world leading to increasing levels of scrutiny. This has been the case in Australia and USA, although interestingly, prior to the last general election in the UK the polls were very accurate in measuring the final outcome. Here in NZ we have a strong history of closely predicting election results through polling.

Murray Campbell, RANZ Fellow and a political pollster since 1989, says “political polls in this country have an enviable track record of accurately predicting election outcomes over the years. It’s going to be fascinating for the public, the political parties and the pollsters themselves to see the polling results unfold as the September election draws closer”.

Accurate political polling is a combination of statistical rigour to select a representative sample of active voters, and good research practice to design the right questions to measure peoples’ beliefs and intended behaviours.

The updated Code and a summary of political poll results over the last 6 elections can be found on the RANZ website <https://researchassociation.org.nz/political-polling>.

**Research Association New Zealand (RANZ)** is the industry body dedicated to supporting and developing the community of professional providers and users of research and insights in New Zealand.

- RANZ vision is to enable “a smarter NZ through superior research, data, insights, knowledge, alliances and actions”.
- RANZ brand is a trust-mark for clients, employers, colleagues and other industries and indicates that the bearer is a member of an expert community, which upholds the highest professional and ethical standards. All members are bound by the RANZ Code of Practice.
- RANZ members enjoy the benefits of strong global links through its membership of the Global Research Business Network (GRBN) and Asia Pacific Research Committee (APRC) and its partnership with ESOMAR.

For further comment or information please contact RANZ spokesperson:

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