

What business wants from the 2005 election

Surveys and feedback (from members of EMA Northern, EMA Central, Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce and the Otago Southland Employers' Association) give a clear picture of the things business would like as an outcome from the 2005 election.

These fall under seven main headings:

- *infrastructure*
- *positive attitudes to enterprise*
- *sustainability*
- *responsible taxing and spending*
- *skills & productivity*
- *investment , innovation & entrepreneurship*
- *trade*

Infrastructure - business would like:

- RMA consent processes streamlined to reduce delays in building infrastructure
- all petrol tax money spent on roads and none in the consolidated account
- the Land Transport Act changed to give higher priority to building & maintaining roads
- government committed to privatising more state owned generators, to get more competition & lower electricity prices
- faster upgrading of the Transpower grid to improve certainty of power supply
- relevant legislation changed to make it easier to get private sector investment in infrastructure

Positive attitudes to enterprise – business would like:

- government committed to reducing compliance costs on business
- central and local government out of private enterprise – no central or local government enterprises setting up business in competition to private enterprise
- no carbon taxes, instead, other policies to reduce emissions that won't harm our competitiveness
- changes to fix the loose wording in the RMA that lets trivial and ideological claimants prevent development
- a better system for allocating natural resources e.g. tradeable rights for water
- the Holidays Act simplified, and 'relevant daily pay' replaced by 'ordinary pay'
- choice restored to ACC legislation, so businesses are free to choose private accident cover if they wish
- choice restored to the ERA, so everyone is free to choose either individual or collective bargaining
- the union monopoly over collective bargaining removed from the ERA
- a grievance-free probation period put in the ERA
- the 'presumed imbalance of power' clauses removed from the ERA
- the 'employer presumed guilty until proven innocent' bias removed from the Health & Safety in Employment Act
- the return of the right to insure against fines under the Health & Safety in Employment Act

Sustainability – business would like

- government committed to reviewing all legislation where it affects business sustainability (including tax legislation, RMA, ERA, health & safety, holidays, climate change and other legislation)

Taxing and spending – business would like:

- government committed to restraining govt spending (including Super Fund assets) to less than 30% of GDP by 2010
- political parties committed to simplifying, flattening and reducing taxes (especially company tax rate - to 30% immediately and to 20% over time)
- government committed to cutting net Crown debt (including Super Fund assets) to below –5% of GDP by 2010

Skills & productivity – business would like:

- less public money spent on courses with low relevance and value to the economy, and more on industry training
- the cap removed from the industry training fund so the number of apprentices and trainees can grow
- government committed to requiring schools to achieve minimum levels of literacy and numeracy for all school leavers
- the NCEA made more reliable and easier to understand
- enough immigrants with relevant skills and good English to meet business needs

Investment, innovation & entrepreneurship – business would like:

- greater deductibility for R&D and capital investment
- better coordination of publicly funded research intended for commercial application

Trade - business would like:

- government committed to policies that help, not hinder, the competitiveness of NZ companies against overseas companies
- greater on the ground support for exporters in foreign markets
- government committed to policies that would allow a free trade agreement with the US
- government committed to continue working towards bilateral and multilateral trade agreements as well as a comprehensive WTO agreement
- trade deals that recognise foreign investment issues as well as trade in goods and services