

Key to future is improved productivity, infrastructure

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National Party leader John Key hit the Far North campaign trail full force on Monday, a day after two television polls suggested Labour in deep trouble with voters.

Polls by TV One and TV3 put National far enough ahead of Labour to govern alone if the election was held now.

Having seemingly shrugged off its tiptoe down copyright lane, Mr Key was well received by the majority he met in Kerikeri.

The DVD entitled "Ambitious for New Zealand — Meet John Key" is the cornerstone of a heartland tour during November and December.

"The DVD aims to give Kiwis a closer look at my life and what I stand for," says Mr Key.

In it, he talks about life before politics, his motivations and ideas for confronting the challenges of a nation.

Challenge was one facet Kerikeri District Business Association President Carolyne Brooks-Quan was concerned with when presented with the opportunity to speak with Mr Keys.

"I put my Business Association hat on and asked him straight out what National was going to do for the north as far as infrastructure goes," says Ms Brooks-Quan.

Mr Key replied that National saw infrastructure investments

"as a really critical point for us".

"If you look at why the wage gap is widening so rapidly between New Zealand and Australia, it's actually a combination of two things," he says.

"One that is easy to recognise is taxes. Australia has cut taxes, we haven't. So we'll obviously increase focus there. But a second part of it is just productivity. The answer is that we haven't invested in the structure in the way we need to."

"Those two elements we see as critical. Broadband

By Greg Robertson

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National leader John
Key

communication we also see as very important and energy to a certain extent."

My Keys says National will do three things that will produce flow-on affects and benefit the north.

"One, we'll reform the Resource Management Act so we can do things quicker.

"Secondly, we'll put in more money ourselves. We don't see

New Zealand as having a debt problem, we have a growth problem and we are quite happy to invest. And the third thing is some capacity for the private sector to play a role."

Another point raised by Ms Brookes-Quan concerned the exodus to Australia by New Zealanders, lured by attractive wage compensation, and the recent call for employers to pay more.

Mr Key would like to see the opposite occur.

"We would love to see wages drop," he says.

"The way we want to see wages increase is because productivity is greater. So people can afford more. Not just for inflationary reasons, otherwise it's a bit of a vicious circle as it comes back at you in higher interest rates."

"We really want to drive that out," he says.

Roading is also a big issue on National's agenda says Mr Key — in the north and Auckland.

The recent polls saw National on 54% support while Labour lagged on 35%. The Greens dropped under the crucial 5% threshold to 4.6 per cent with New Zealand First and the Maori Party on 2%, Act holding 1% and United First not rating a mention.