

Voting is important. In the past, voting was restricted to just men and even landowners. In 1893 women received the right to vote. In 1960s and 70s NZ shifted the voting age from 20 to 21. Nowadays, people are arguing that we should Make it 16. Proponents of this believe the government should lower the voting age because they believe that more young people should get their voices heard. Young people deserve the right to vote as decisions about the future have greater implications for them than for older people. Voting young will enhance the habit of participation, I also think it will be great for new and young ideas for the future of our country.

Make it 16 is a Youth organisation that is youth-led, a non-partisan campaign aiming to lower the voting age to 16 in Aotearoa. They believe in the power of youth voice, and letting young people have a say on the decisions that will impact them the most. They have tried to take their case to the High Court, and Court of Appeal After failing, the Make it 16 groups took their case to the Supreme Court earlier this year and succeeded, but it didn't do anything to change the law it just puts pressure on the government to change the law.

The Greens party believes that 16 & 17-year-olds should be able to vote because it will strengthen democracy. The Green party thinks that 16 and 17-year-olds should vote because they're allowed to give consent, drive, work, and pay tax so it should make sense for youth to vote. Green Party electoral reform spokesperson Golriz Ghahraman says "16 and 17-year-olds can work, pay tax, drive, and leave home. They deserve to have a say in the decisions that affect them, both now and in the future. My Strengthening Democracy Member's Bill would help ensure more people's voices count in our democracy by lowering the voting age to 16."Not only would this change create a more representative democracy, but it would also provide more opportunities to engage young people in politics while they're at school.

The Greens party is a liberal progressive party. They care about environmental issues and social change. Young people are more likely to vote for them because climate change is likely to affect younger people like us. The Greens party cares about the rights of 16- & 17-year-old more than the National party does because of their voter base. The Green Party says Parliament must take action to make democracy more accessible by lowering the voting age to 16. The Green Party has long pushed for there to be a thorough review of electoral law. The Government finally agreed and announced a review of the system in 2021. This review will allow for a long overdue public debate about the voting age. The Green party's view is more supportive of young people and therefore I am likely to sign up to their campaign or support them in the future.

The National Party believes that 16 & 17-year-olds shouldn't be able because Young people are not informed enough, are too immature, and lack enough life experience to vote, and they might

get influenced to vote for a certain party. The National Party have publicly said that 16 & 17- year-olds shouldn't be able to vote because we're too immature and are not informed enough. Nicola Willis says "You can't marry at 16, you can't buy alcohol at 16, you can't serve in the army at 16 and I don't think you should be able to vote then either.

Liam Hehir says "That includes presenting to select committees, bringing petitions forward... it includes lobbying and petitioning their local MPs and Members of Parliament, it includes the right to protest. So I'd argue that youth should and do have a voice, but a vote isn't necessary. Mr. Heir also says "he's against it [reducing the voting age]," he said. "We shouldn't be changing the electorate to include children. You know - children still have developing brains. When you're 16/17, you're still in school. You're subject to a whole lot of influences. You haven't had a lot of experience outside the family or living on your own. And with that experience comes a lot of perspectives that you just don't have as a child." I am more likely to vote than present to a select committee, therefore I don't really have a voice.

The National Party is a Conservative party. They care about economic issues and are more traditional and don't often like change on social issues. Young people are less likely to vote for them because their focus is on economics and is not likely to affect younger people like us. The National Party cares less about 16 & 17-year-olds than the Green Party.

The National party has done nothing to stop the voting age from being lowered, other than voicing their opinion but Parliament now has to consider a law change, National and ACT have said they would strike it down, and that the Supreme Court was going too far. So if National are in power when the vote happens, the law probably won't pass. The National Party doesn't believe in my right to vote, therefore when do turn 18, I am less likely to vote for them. The impact of their response is that young people feel excluded but also will not vote for them.

I think that if we lower the voting age more voices of young people will be heard. Only a handful of countries allow under-18s to vote, but in recent years, international campaigns to lower voting ages have grown, with many arguing that young people should have a say on long-term democratic decisions, given they will have to live with the consequences. When countries like Austria and Scotland lowered the voting age, more people ended up voting between the ages of 16-18. Therefore a similar thing may happen in New Zealand.

However, I think the long-term implications are that 16-year-olds will start to be influenced by their parents or friends to vote for a specific party and many other groups. This means more votes but who gets those votes? Young people might not know what they are voting for and I agree with National and think some 16-year-olds are not mature enough to vote as well.