



Jacinda Ardern announces resignation as Prime Minister: NZ Labour leader reveals she will not lead party to 2023 election

Description

NEW ZELAND: Jacinda Ardern has announced her resignation as Prime Minister as she revealed when New Zealanders will head to the polls this year.

Jacinda Ardern has announced her resignation as New Zealand's Prime Minister.

Ms Ardern made the announcement on Thursday as she revealed New Zealand's next general election will be held on October 14.

"My term as Prime Minister will conclude no later than the 7th of February," Ms Ardern said.

"I am leaving because with such a privileged role, comes responsibility – the responsibility to know when you are the right person to lead and also when you are not."

Ms Ardern made the bombshell announcement on Thursday as she revealed New Zealand's next general election will be held on October 14.

She said she will not lead Labour to the election because she does not have enough left in the tank for another term.

"Leading a country is the most privileged job anyone could ever have but also one of the more challenging. You cannot and should not do it unless you have a full tank plus a bit in reserve for those unexpected challenges," Ms Ardern told media in Napier.

"This summer I had hoped to find a way to prepare for not just another year but another term because that is what this year requires. I have not been able to do that.

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Jacinda Ardern announced her resignation as Prime Minister while speaking to reporters in Napier on Thursday. Picture: Kerry Marshall/Getty Images

“And so today I’m announcing that I will not be reseeking election and that my term as Prime Minister will conclude no later than the 7th of February.”

Ms Ardern reflected on her time as Prime Minister since taking the top job in late October 2017 and denied she was stepping down from the role because it was hard.

“This has been the most fulfilling five and a half years of my life but it’s also had its challenges. Amongst an agenda focused on housing, child poverty and climate change, we encountered a major biosecurity incursion, a domestic terror event, a major natural disaster, a global pandemic and an economic crisis,” she said.

“The decisions that have had to be made have been continual and they have been weighty. But I’m not leaving because it was hard. Had that been the case I probably would have departed two months into the job.

“I am leaving because with such a privileged role comes responsibility. The responsibility to know when you are the right person to lead and also when you are not. I know what this job takes and I know that I no longer have enough in the tank to do it justice. It’s that simple.”

Ms Ardern was elected Labour leader seven weeks out from the 2017 election and came to power in a minority government with support from New Zealand First and the Green party.



‘So proud’: Jacinda Ardern reflects on her govt’s achievements amid resignation

She was 37 when she became Prime Minister, making her the youngest female head of government in the world at the time.

Ms Ardern said she was not stepping down as Labour leader “because I believe we can’t win the election but because I believe we can and will”.

“We need a fresh set of shoulders for that challenge,” she noted.

“After going on six years of some big challenges, I am human. Politicians are human. We give all that we can for as long as we can and then it’s time, and for me it’s time.”

Ms Ardern – who first entered parliament in 2008 – said she intends to remain as the Member for Mt Albert, in Auckland’s west, through to April to avoid a by-election.

She added she is not yet sure what her post-parliamentary career will entail but she is looking forward to marrying her partner Clarke Gayford and spending more time with their daughter Neve, who she gave birth to while she was Prime Minister.



Jacinda Ardern is embraced by her partner Clarke Gayford after she announced her resignation as New Zealand’s Prime Minister. Picture: Kerry Marshall/Getty Images

“I have no plan, no next steps. All I know is that whatever I do I will try and find ways to keep working for New Zealand,” Ms Ardern said.

“I’m looking forward to spending time with my family once again. Arguably they are the ones that have sacrificed the most out of all of us.

“And so to Neve, mum’s looking forward to being there when you start school this year, and to Clarke, let’s finally get married.”

Polling released last year had revealed Ms Ardern and Labour were facing an uphill battle ahead of the

2023 election.

In August, support for Ms Ardern fell by three points to 30 per cent, marking her worst approval rating since taking office.

The [1News/Kantar poll](#) also revealed the Labour Party had dropped to a 33 per cent primary vote, behind the National Party – Labour’s main opposition – which led on 37 per cent.



'I am human': Ardern reveals reason for resigning

The Labour leader's popularity has slowly declined over recent times after soaring during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic which culminated in a landslide 2020 election victory.

New Zealand faces similar cost of living pressures as Australia with rising inflation pushing up the price of food and fuel, eroding consumer confidence.

A caucus vote for the next Labour leader will take place on Sunday. Ms Ardern will then issue her resignation to the Governor-General soon after if a successful candidate emerges.

If a candidate fails to garner the required level of caucus support, the leadership contest will then be open to the wider party membership, Ms Ardern said.

She has been thanked for her service by her political opponents but some have argued she has left New Zealand with "big problems".

"On behalf of the National Party, I offer to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern our thanks for her service to New Zealand," Opposition Leader Christopher Luxon said.

"She has given her all to this incredibly demanding job and I wish her and her family all the very best for the future. Thank you Jacinda."

ACT Party leader David Seymour said: "Jacinda Ardern is a well-meaning person, but her idealism collided hard with reality. We wish her and her family well for the future".

"Ardern's collision with reality has left this country with big problems: the economy, the lawlessness, the Treaty," Mr Seymour continued.

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