

8TH ANNUAL ROLL CALL – How Our MPs Performed In 2012

Trans Tasman's Editors have once again run their rule over NZ's MPs and rated their performance in 2012. Roll Call looks at how they've performed in Caucus, Cabinet, Committee, the House, their electorate and the influence they bring, or are likely, to bring to bear in their various forums. This year Labour MPs are listed according to their caucus ranking rather than alphabetically. The MPs are ranked for their full year performance by Trans Tasman's highly respected team of Capital insiders.

Cabinet Ministers					
Name	Seat/list	Responsibilities	Comments	2011 Rating	This Year's Rating
<i>Key, John</i>	Helensville	Prime Minister Minister of Tourism Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services Minister in Charge of the NZ Security Intelligence Service Minister Responsible for the Government Communications Security Bureau	Still firmly in control and well positioned to win a third term if National can find coalition partners. The PM has a party united behind him and his policy (unlike his opponents). On the international stage, he has taken NZ's engagement with Asia up a notch. At home it's been a tough year, littered with political stumbles, but Key and his Govt have retained high levels of support. The majority of voters believe they are taking the country in the right direction, and are not too fazed by beltway issues like the Kim Dotcom - GCSB fiasco. Key and his Govt will have to deliver tangible gains in 2013 if National is to hold on to its poll lead. His "chair of the board" style has strengths and weaknesses - one of them is it is harder to sack underperforming Ministers than it is to sack underperforming private sector executives. Must improve political management and start seeming like he enjoys the job next year.	9	8
<i>English, Bill</i>	Clutha-Southland	Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Finance	As Deputy PM and Finance Minister English has supplied the ballast to complement the effervescent Key in the coalition, supplying the intellectual grunt for policies across the spectrum from welfare reform to housing affordability. He's kept the party on-message in the House. Away from the limelight, English deserves credit for encouraging a more flexible, free-thinking and results-oriented public service. The Better Public Services initiative was feared as "slash and burn", but it hasn't been. Instead, English has used fiscal pressure to pursue intelligent improvements in the value of the public sector's output.	8.5	7.5
<i>Brownlee, Gerry</i>	Ilam	Leader of the House Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister of Transport	As Minister overseeing the rebuilding of Christchurch, Gerry Brownlee has one of the most difficult jobs in Cabinet. He commands the respect of his colleagues for the way he has remained staunch in the Govt's commitment to create a Christchurch which its residents can be proud of. He has had more time for his Leader of the House duties in this term and learnt co-operating with Labour instead of crashing on relentlessly has led to more progress on legislation than in the last Parliament. Transport Ministry officials would like to have seen a bit more of him this year.	9	7.5
<i>Joyce, Steven</i>	List	Minister for Economic Development Minister of Science and Innovation Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment Associate Minister of Finance	Joyce continued his rise to become one of the most powerful Cabinet Ministers. He is a top man in the kitchen cabinet and he can handle the heat. He created the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment despite some distrust amongst civil servants and Ministerial colleagues. There's no doubt he is now shaping the gov't's economic growth agenda. Some call him a pragmatist. Key seems to trust him, others don't. The weight of office has also seen a more exasperated Joyce. The ready wit of the first term has been replaced by a grumpy frustration.	7	7

Name	Seat/list	Responsibilities	Comments	2011 Rating	This Year's Rating
<i>Collins, Judith</i>	Papakura	Minister of Justice Minister for ACC Minister for Ethnic Affairs	Collins plays to National's party base with aplomb and some think she would have a fair chance at being the next PM if John Key fell under the proverbial bus. Surprised some at her delicate handling of the Justice portfolio and ability to work on issues with opposition parties... well sometimes anyway. Inherited ACC after Nick Smith's demise and was ruthless in her clean out of the board and management.	7	7.5
<i>Ryall, Tony</i>	Bay of Plenty	Minister of Health Minister for State Owned Enterprises	Ryall's dream run in the once politically difficult health portfolio (at least for a National minister) underscores his adroit political and policy management. He has managed relatively low growth in the health budget without too many problems popping out, while increasing efficiency in some areas. There are huge workforce issues building across the sector and little sign the Govt has a grip on the size of the problem. As Minister of SOE's, he's also been in the thick of the policy push to sell off state assets and doesn't appear to be suffering any wounds from the public backlash.	8	7.5
<i>Parata, Hekia</i>	List	Minister of Education Minister of Pacific Island Affairs	Parata was pushed up through the Cabinet rankings and now it looks as though she moved past the point of her competence in the complex education portfolio. Ill at ease in Parliament when under pressure, Parata had difficulty in answering questions when they moved off her prepared script. She runs a notably unhappy office, with plenty of staff turnover, although her own capacity to maintain a cheery exterior in the face of adversity is something of a phenomenon. Tough and smart, but not politically astute yet.	6.5	2
<i>Finlayson, Chris</i>	List	Attorney-General Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage Associate Minister of Maori Affairs	Finlayson has made big strides this year as one of the most effective ministers, and his take over of the Labour portfolio from Kate Wilkinson is an indication of the confidence John Key has in his Attorney-General. His legacy though will be continuing the momentum of treaty settlements and in particular getting Tuhoë to sign up to what many thought would be the impossible deal. His disdain for his political opponents is palpable - one of the sharpest debaters in Parliament.	7	8
<i>Bennett, Paula</i>	Waitakere	Minister for Social Development Minister of Youth Affairs	Greatly admired among National's support base who love the former beneficiary getting tough on welfare. Departmental stuff ups over privacy cast a shadow, though Labour's inability to lay more hits on her when unemployment is rising says more about the Opposition than it does about her political skills.	6	7
<i>Carter, David</i>	List	Minister for Primary Industries Minister of Local Government	Rarely tested politically and as far most can tell managed his portfolios competently. His willingness to pick up the Local Govt portfolio earned him credits but possibly not enough to avoid becoming the next Speaker. He's now one of the inner circle of Key's kitchen Cabinet. Carter has got the agricultural lobby on his side, which is vital for his portfolio, and Federated Farmers backs him.	6	6.5
<i>McCully, Murray</i>	East Coast Bays	Minister of Foreign Affairs Minister for Sport and Recreation	McCully has got few plaudits from the Wellington cognoscenti for his drive to shake up the hidebound Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, where the sense of entitlement had outgrown the capacity to deliver the kind of results National demanded from one of the premier ministries. His successes in foreign policy have yet to be fully measured, Still thrives on a reputation as a political master strategist, although the gov't's performance this year would suggest otherwise.	8	6.5

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<i>Tolley, Anne</i>	East Coast	Deputy Leader of the House Minister of Police Minister of Corrections	Parata's handling of the education portfolio has made Tolley's stint there appear as verging on the brilliant. She's been comfortable in the Police and Corrections portfolios. Working hard to see how money can be saved in her portfolios. Still too uptight with the media, which could be a throwback to her education days. Needs to loosen up and lose her irritating habit of trying to walk away from reporters when she's bailed up going into the House.	5.5	5.5
<i>Coleman, Jonathan</i>	Northcote	Minister of Defence Minister of State Services Associate Minister of Finance	Coleman has shown political skill in putting the best-equipped talent into the top military posts. This skill will be further tested as NZ runs down its engagement in Afghanistan. He has been quiet in the state sector as well with Bill English in charge of the macro-settings and the technocrats at the State Services Commission taking care of the day to day management. He may come under more pressure in the future as the squeeze on departments continues and contentious public sector reform makes its way through Parliament.	4.5	6
<i>Groser, Tim</i>	List	Minister of Trade Minister for Climate Change Issues Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs	Groser's bid to become the next Director-General of the WTO underlines the international reputation he has gained in trade negotiations. He has John Key's backing for his run at the WTO job. At home he has overseen the gutting of the emissions trading scheme. Slow progress in trade talks, but there are plenty bubbling away. Always gives the impression of a Minister who would rather talk than listen. Treats question time as a nuisance he doesn't need.	7.5	7.5
<i>Heatley, Phil</i>	Whangarei	Minister of Energy and Resources Minister of Housing	His management of the energy and resources portfolio seems to be really in name only with Steven Joyce's hands on the levers. In housing progress is being made. Frequent trumpeting of "good news" announcements in Parliament makes him look like a cabinet lightweight - which he is.	6	4
<i>Wilkinson, Kate</i>	Waimakariri	Minister of Conservation Minister for Food Safety Associate Minister of Immigration	Not a great year for Wilkinson, she lost the Labour portfolio because the Pike River Coal tragedy happened "on her watch." Does not seem particularly enthusiastic about the conservation portfolio. Has to lift her game, as the kudos for winning Waimakariri off Labour will not keep her at the top table for ever. Key rated her highly when he appointed her - he might now be wishing he hadn't.	4	3
<i>Guy, Nathan</i>	Otaki	Minister of Immigration Minister for Racing Minister of Veterans' Affairs Associate Minister for Primary Industries	Immigration is not the easiest of portfolios and the Govt's immigration law reforms have stalled. He is having as much luck as his predecessors in trying to sort out the mess the racing sector has become. He may be lucky to have been elevated to Cabinet and will need to work hard for further elevation. A younger MP seen to hold promise, he has yet to deliver.	5	5
<i>Foss, Craig</i>	Tukituki	Minister of Commerce Minister of Broadcasting Associate Minister for ACC Associate Minister of Education	Foss has handled the complex commerce portfolio competently, but only because all the heavy lifting was done by his predecessor Simon Power. The David Ross Investment scandal could be a test of his abilities in this portfolio, as sector reform is under question. Did not seem to get an early grasp of the size of the problems with the Novapay debacle, his only major education responsibility, until it snowballed into a major and long-running issue. It is all very well to blame officials for the initial blunders, but Ministers have to take responsibility for sorting problems out. Public performances have been notably poor. Emerging as a minor Cabinet liability.	5	4

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<i>Adams, Amy</i>	Selwyn	Minister for the Environment Minister for Communications and Information Technology Associate Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery	Adams has been one of the more impressive performers in the new intake of Ministers, and some think she has done so well in the Environment portfolio she will hang on to it, even if Nick Smith regains his Cabinet seat. Rarely looks flustered in the House, and colleagues are confident she can handle the RMA reform process. Likely to be promoted in Cabinet ranking and given more responsibility. Ambitious, public performances improving after a rather wooden start.	6.5	7
<i>Tremain, Chris</i>	Napier	Minister of Internal Affairs Minister of Civil Defence Associate Minister of Tourism	Tremain has competently handled the Internal Affairs portfolio and is very proud of the new passport system. Some officials fear more work is needed on Civil Defence structure after the lessons of the Christchurch quakes, but this could still come after the Royal Commission reports back. In summary, not really tested but lingering doubts remain.	6	5
Ministers Outside Cabinet					
<i>Williamson, Maurice</i>	Pakuranga	Minister for Building and Construction Minister of Customs Minister for Land Information Minister of Statistics	The on-going reform of the building and construction regulatory regime has been criticised as "piecemeal," Williamson would prefer it was seen as "step-by-step" and thorough. Played the Crafar Farm saga with a straight bat and seems to take great delight in the minute detail of his other portfolios. Solid performer but his political past makes it unlikely he will rise any further.	5.5	5.5
<i>Goodhew, Jo</i>	Rangitata	Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector Minister for Senior Citizens Minister of Women's Affairs Associate Minister of Health	Goodhew has not made any gaffes, but her portfolios are not the most testing. Critics say not enough has been done to tackle the pay gender gap, but she does not really have the levers to make much of a difference.	5	5
<i>Borrows, Chester</i>	Whanganui	Minister for Courts Associate Minister of Justice Associate Minister for Social Development	His Ministerial ranking belies the responsibilities he has been given with reform of the courts system. Steady in his other portfolios and in the House. He is well liked by colleagues and opponents for being such a genuine character. Ready to step up to the next level. His experience as a former police officer shows, and he knows what he's talking about. Media appreciates his straight answers.	6	6.5
<i>Bridges, Simon</i>	Tauranga	Minister of Consumer Affairs Associate Minister for Climate Change Issues Associate Minister of Transport	Makes the most of his portfolios and getting valuable experience in dealing with interest groups as he attempts to reform vehicle inspections. Seemingly ever-present in the House where he delights in mocking his opponents and in particular Winston Peters. Has quietly taken a big load on domestic climate change policy for Tim Groser. Marked for greatness, but needs to create more opportunities to shine.	5	6
SUPPORT PARTY MINISTERS					
<i>Dunne, Peter</i>	Ohariu	Minister of Revenue Associate Minister of Conservation Associate Minister of Health	Dunne has managed to keep his remarkable ministerial career alive spanning changes of Govt and many Parliaments. Has handled the pressure of being painted as the "key vote" in what is a knife edge Parliamentary majority. Remains one of the best speakers in Parliament. More outspoken in his criticism of Labour this term, and he could find it difficult to keep his job if there's a change of government despite his party-hopping abilities. Appears to have put all his eggs in National's basket, where they could get broken. Might decide he doesn't want another term but isn't showing any signs of it so far.	5	6.5

Name	Seat/list	Responsibilities	Comments	2011 Rating	This Year's Rating
<i>Banks, John</i>	Epsom	Minister for Regulatory Reform Minister for Small Business Associate Minister of Commerce Associate Minister of Education	Banks has overseen the complete destruction of ACT's political brand, taking over where Don Brash left off. Scandals and police investigations over donations have left his political reputation in tatters. Things are so bad even if National did not run against him in Epsom again, he would still lose. Despite this managed to advance some ACT policies such as the policy idea formally known as charter schools. However it seems even these gains were just because National was interested in them. Essentially now National's 60th MP and a lame duck one as well. Issues endless press statements which are universally ignored.	N/A	0
<i>Sharples, Pita</i>	Tamaki Makarau	Minister of Maori Affairs Associate Minister of Corrections Associate Minister of Education	Spent much of the year trying to rebuild the Maori Party's base after the defection of Hone Harawira. Sharples and his colleagues know though they can make practical changes within Cabinet, this will not help them much politically. Arguably, he has shown considerable integrity by continuing to honour the coalition agreement with a Govt which has made life very difficult. Even the Maori Party's wins are rarely more than a watering down of what the Govt would have liked to have done.	8	5
<i>Turia, Tariana</i>	Te Tai Hauauru	Minister for Whanau Ora Minister for Disability Issues Associate Minister of Health Associate Minister of Housing Associate Minister for Social Development Associate Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment	Without her it is hard to see the Maori party surviving. No-one doubts her passion for the Whanau Ora programme, though predictably it has been firmly in Winston Peters' sights. The question is whether the positive aspects of Whanau Ora get submerged by the negative headlines the NZ First leader stirs up. Very active in her health portfolio.	7.5	6
National Back Benchers					
<i>Ardern, Shane</i>	Taranaki-King Country		Ardern ably chaired the Primary Production Committee. Knows his stuff in areas of interest to him, but destined to rise no further than a backbench foot soldier. He may come under pressure to give up his seat for new blood.	4	4
<i>Auchinvole, Chris</i>	List		A good humoured orator, Auchinvole has kept an even keel while chairing the Local Govt and Environment Committee which has dealt with some very controversial legislation.	3.5	4
<i>Bakshi, Kanwaljit</i>	List		Said to work hard in the Indian community and made a few headlines with his opposition to the same-sex marriage legislation. There to make up the numbers at this stage.	3	1
<i>Barry, Maggie</i>	North Shore		Ambitious, but few are convinced she is up to it. Gushing speeches in parliament about the Govt's brilliance are mostly a waste of time.	N/A	4
<i>Bennett, David</i>	Hamilton East		He does have brains but sometimes fails to engage it before he speaks in the House, really needs to do more.	3.5	4
<i>Blue, Jackie</i>	List		Underused and probably past her use by date politically, which is a bit of a shame.	4.5	3
<i>Calder, Cam</i>	List		Maybe he will get some more publicity now he has had a Bill on banning laser pointers drawn out of the ballot, not seen to have done much else.	3.5	3
<i>Dean, Jacqui</i>	Waitaki		Works hard in her electorate, chairs the Law and Order Committee and a good speaker in Parliament. Will be hoping for promotion, but there could be better candidates.	3	4

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<i>Goldsmith, Paul</i>	List		A good if somewhat academic contributor in Parliament moving closer to the next step in his career - chairing a Select Committee. Tendency to self-deprecation can be charming, but runs a fine line with buffoonery.	N/A	4
<i>Hayes, John</i>	Wairarapa		Still tends to make somewhat strange speeches in Parliament, such is his ego he is likely to resist the push to step aside for new blood. He knows what's popular in his electorate.	4	4
<i>Henare, Tau</i>	List		Still pretty loud and aggressive in Parliament, but seems to have toned down the swagger. Hopes for a return to higher office, but hoping ain't getting.	3	4
<i>Hutchison, Paul</i>	Hunua		One of National's influential voices on the backbenches. An earnest man and earnest speaker. Likely to be a target for new blood seeking a blue seat.	4	5.5
<i>Kaye, Nikki</i>	Auckland Central		She works hard and while her ever increasing hold on Auckland Central gives strength to her argument, she has yet to convince some senior colleagues she has what it takes.	5	5.5
<i>King, Colin</i>	Kaikoura		Destined to be forever one of Parliament's lonely foot soldiers.	2	4
<i>Lee, Melissa</i>	List		Cheerful and willing contributor in Parliament, but her disastrous dash for Epsom leaves her chances of any advancement as minimal.	2	2
<i>Sam Lotu-Liga, Peseta</i>	Maungakiekie		Intelligent and capable. Gives National a look more in line with the ethnic diversity of Auckland and is likely to rise through the ranks, so far he seems like he will be up to the task.	4	5
<i>McKelvie, Ian</i>	Rangitikei		Nice guy, but pretty invisible. Will have to pull something out of the hat to advance	N/A	3
<i>Macindoe, Tim</i>	Hamilton West		He is knocking on the door. However there are limited places and is unlikely to get a chance in this term to advance.	3.5	4
<i>McClay, Todd</i>	Rotorua		Often seems out of his depth as Finance and Expenditure Committee Chair. Not exactly set the world on fire. May not go futher.	4	4
<i>Mitchell, Mark</i>	Rodney		Has the time, the safe electorate and money to burn to advance his career, but it is not clear if he is very interested.	N/A	4
<i>Ngaro, Alfred</i>	List		Needs to pay more attention to what's going on in the House. Respected for his work in the Pacific Island community.	N/A	4.5
<i>O'Connor, Simon</i>	Tamaki		Not a bad performance for a first term MP, but really not that exciting either.	N/A	3
Ross, Jamie- Lee	Botany		Journey man like performance so far. His youth and a safe electorate means he has plenty of time to make an impact, but so far hasn't.	3	3
<i>Roy, Eric</i>	Invercargill	Deputy Speaker	Affable bloke has done his deputy speaker role with care, competence and diligence. Most probably in his last term and will go out with the quiet grace and dignity he has displayed throughout his Parliamentary career.	4	5
<i>Sabin, Mike</i>	Northland		This is another one of National's ex cops, with a military addition to his CV as well. Speaks well in Parliament in areas within his comfort zone, but not living up to the hype.	N/A	4

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<i>Shanks, Katrina</i>	List		Poor old Katrina, an intelligent and capable woman but needs to be more aggressive to make an impact. Her chance has passed.	3.5	4
<i>Simpson, Scott</i>	Coromandel		We predicted last year he was unlikely to make an impact. We were right.	N/A	2
<i>Smith, Lockwood</i>	List	Speaker	Smith has rewritten the rules in the House and has probably been the best Speaker for a very long time. More recently some of the clashes designed by Winston Peters to test his command of the House have stretched his patience to the limit, and on occasion he's given the impression he won't be sorry to leave the old curmudgeon to stew in the next Speaker's juice.	8	7
<i>Smith, Nick</i>	Nelson		After a spectacular fall from grace he settled into the backbenches. Expected to return to Cabinet, but probably not his cherished environment portfolio. Loses many points for losing his job. Seen increasingly as a lone wolf operator who doesn't take colleagues with him	7	5.5
<i>Tisch, Lindsay</i>	Waikato	Assistant Speaker	An able Assistant Speaker. Another longer serving MP who is likely to have to fight off young blood if he wants another term.	5.5	5
<i>Upston, Louise</i>	Taupo		Doing a good job as junior whip. Has good instincts, is well qualified and one to watch.	6	6
<i>Wagner, Nicky</i>	List		Still revelling in her victory in Christchurch Central, but it will be hard to hold on to.	5	4
<i>Woodhouse, Michael</i>	List	Senior Whip	Has a case to make for promotion. A student of standing orders, does well in the House against the likes of Trevor Mallard.	5	6
<i>Yang, Jian</i>	List		A virtually invisible academic, though has been useful for National in building support in China and the Chinese community in NZ.	N/A	2
<i>Young, Jonathan</i>	New Plymouth		After a shaky first term has looked more comfortable around the House. Perhaps having a more comfortable majority has helped.	4	5
United Future					
<i>Dunne, Peter</i>	Ohariu	See Support Party Ministers			
ACT					
<i>Banks, John</i>	Epsom	See Support Party Ministers			
Maori					
<i>Sharples, Pita</i>	Tamaki Makarau	See Support Party Ministers			
<i>Turia Tariana</i>	Te Tai Hauauru	See Support Party Ministers			
<i>Flavell, Te Ururoa</i>	Waiariki		Carries himself with a sense of gravitas and seriousness which means even those who disagree with him listen. Won extra kudos last year at the Parliamentary press gallery's Xmas party when he fired up the barbecue when all other efforts had failed.	5	6
Mana Party					
<i>Harawira, Hone</i>	Te Tai Tokerau		Rarely seen in the House as he tries to build support for his fledgling party. When he does speak Harawira is worth listening to as he usually manages to combine humour and passion. As a one man band, he has no influence, so can pretty much say what he likes.	5	4.5

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Labour Front Bench					
<i>Shearer, David</i>	Mt Albert	Leader Security Intelligence Service Science and Innovation	Many words have been written about David Shearer, his leadership and the rivalries in his caucus with most agreeing it has not gone as well as many in Labour had hoped. Shearer hasn't helped his cause much – the public expect their leaders to string a sentence together – but neither have many of his MPs. Needs to really stamp his authority on MPs and the wider party and get them working. A decent man whose instincts for politics have proved sadly lacking to date. Said to run a chaotic office. A great disappointment.	5	4
<i>Robertson, Grant</i>	Wellington Central	Deputy Leader Environment Tertiary Education, Skills and Training	A powerful speaker in Parliament, does politics and policy very well. Has built up an influential support base and could well replace Shearer if he does not succeed in his job. Needs to take more responsibility for caucus discipline if Shearer cannot do it. Arguably suffers from some of Shearer's "too nice" problem.	6	6
<i>Parker, David</i>	List	Finance	Intelligent, articulate and amiable: he's got the background and Ministerial experience, so why hasn't he been more successful in framing new policy? Few believe Parker is really convinced Govt intervention in the forex markets could work. Should leave the wacky stuff to the Greens and assert himself in putting together some coherent economic policies.	6	6.5
<i>Ardern, Jacinda</i>	List	Social Development	Thinks she knows her stuff but there is little sign she does her homework or has come up with new ideas in her policy area. If she were to be regarded as a future leader she surely should have landed enough hits on Paula Bennett by now. Seems genuinely bemused and a bit hurt at the number of people who like Bennett and her reforms.	6	5
<i>Cosgrove, Clayton</i>	List	SOEs Commerce Small Business Trade Negotiations Associate Finance	Has been a bit invisible since losing his electorate at the election. Seems either to have lost his enthusiasm for the job or to have fallen into the Opposition MP trap of relentless negativity. Perhaps a change of portfolios might make a difference.	5	4
<i>Jones, Shane</i>	List	Regional Development Associate Finance Economic Development (Maori) Fisheries	As he becomes more isolated, Jones increasingly speaks his own mind, which is refreshing, but sometimes leaves him sounding more like a National than a Labour MP.	5	4
<i>Mahuta, Nanaia</i>	Hauraki-Waikato	Education Associate Maori Affairs (Social)	Publicly AWOL for almost the entire year leaving more junior colleagues to do the work. Has never convinced she is even interested in the education role let alone capable of it.	4	2
<i>Street, Maryan</i>	List	Health Disarmament and Arms Control Associate Foreign Affairs	Street seems to have put up the white flag in the health portfolio. Gives the occasional good speech in Parliament, however not contributing enough, meant to be a front bencher and she is not acting like one...Asks the right questions in Parliament but it's really hard to get past "Teflon Tony" Ryall,	4	3
<i>Sio, Su'a William</i>	Mangere	Employment Pacific Island Affairs Inter-Faith Dialogue Associate Foreign Affairs	Capable enough, but it is telling that his greatest political impact was getting offside with his more liberal colleagues over same-sex marriage laws.	2	2
<i>Twyford, Phil</i>	Te Atatu	Transport Auckland Issues Associate Environment	Upbeat and busy in Parliament. Always enthusiastic and likes to chip away, but needs a senior politician to take him in hand and harness his policy capacity.	4	4

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<i>Mallard, Trevor</i>	Hutt South	Shadow Leader of the House Associate Finance America's Cup	As Shadow Leader of the House has had a huge influence on the passage of legislation. When Brownlee works with him the Bills can positively fly through. Otherwise underused and the saying goes "the devil makes mischief for idle hands."	5	5.5
<i>Chauvel, Charles</i>	List	Justice (incl Courts and Corrections) Attorney General Arts, Culture and Heritage	Given his much higher profile in the shadow cabinet, he seems to have disappeared a bit in Opposition. Believed to be one of Cunliffe's more staunch supporters, which doesn't bode well for his future under Shearer. Will have to be very careful he doesn't skewer himself.	5	4
<i>Dalziel, Lianne</i>	Christchurch East	Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Civil Defence and Emergency Management Earthquake Commission Consumer Rights and Standards Associate Justice	She continues to be one of Labour's most reliable MPs both in the House and in Christchurch. Should be given more to do because some of the so-called senior ranking MPs don't seem to be up to the job. Identified as one who voted for Cunliffe. Labour's secret weapon in Christchurch.	6	5
<i>Hipkins, Chris</i>	Rimutaka	Senior Whip State Services Associate Education	Hipkins made a good fist of the Senior Whip job. To his credit picked up the dropped baton in many education areas. Still has a youthful exuberance but with politics his only career is a bit one dimensional	4	5.5
<i>Goff, Phil</i>	Mt Roskill	Foreign Affairs and Trade	Goff's contacts and experience led to him scoring some serious hits on Murray McCully over the restructuring of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. One of the most experienced former ministers in Parliament, could be invaluable if there's a change of Govt.	6	6.5
<i>King, Annette</i>	Rongotai	Housing Local Government	She outshines most of those sitting on Labour's front bench. Many pick her to leave to have a tilt at the Wellington mayoralty which will be a loss to Parliament. She's denying it, though. Like Goff, she has a wealth of ministerial experience which could be put to good use in a new cabinet but the money isn't on her standing for another term. Sounding bitter now.	6	6
<i>Fenton, Darien</i>	List	Junior Whip Labour Immigration	A constant presence in Parliament. With Labour moving to the left, her union links may strengthen her position, although whether it helps Labour get elected is an open question.	2	3
<i>O'Connor, Damien</i>	West Coast -Tasman	Primary Industries Food Safety	Works hard in areas where Labour is largely voiceless in rural and provincial NZ, but has less support in caucus and in the party than he does outside it. A strong Shearer supporter, could be rewarded for it.	5	5
<i>Curran, Clare</i>	Dunedin South	Communications and Information Technology Broadcasting Open Government Disability Issues	Trying to be Parliament's top geek, Curran gets very earnest and intense on issues which most people find dull as ditch water. Points for visibility and indefatigability.	3	4.5
<i>Dyson, Ruth</i>	Port Hills	Conservation Senior Citizens Internal Affairs	She still struggles to say anything nice about her opponents. Her continual slide down the Labour rankings might partly explain why she looks so bored.	3.5	2
<i>Horomia, Parekura</i>	Ikaroa-Rawhiti	Maori Affairs Treaty Negotiations	Sometimes he turns up in the House and makes a good speech, more often they are strange and rambling affairs. A bit of mystery what he does with his time.	2	2
<i>Moroney, Sue</i>	List	Early Childhood Education Womens Affairs	Worked hard on education until the Shearer takeover and he gave the portfolio to Mahuta because she ran on Cunliffe's ticket and he wanted to heal divisive wounds.	3	3

Name	Seat/list	Responsibilities	Comments	2011 Rating	This Year's Rating
<i>Mackey, Moana</i>	List	Energy Climate Change	Tries hard, but finds herself overshadowed by the Greens in her portfolio areas. Also in Camp Cunliffe for a while.	4	3
<i>Lees-Galloway, Iain</i>	Palmerston North	Defence Transport Safety Veterans Affairs Associate Health (Alcohol and Drugs)	Enthusiastic contributor in Parliament, not a bad effort in defence.	3	3.5
<i>Huo, Raymond</i>	List	Building and Construction Statistics Land Information	Squirrels away in a pointy-headed sort of way through his portfolios, never really bested Maurice Williamson.	N/A	2
<i>Prasad, Rajen</i>	List	Ethnic Affairs Associate Social Development	His presence in Parliament remains a mystery, but he seems to enjoy it.	1	1
<i>Fafoi, Kris</i>	Mana	Police Customs Associate Health	Scored a few points in the police portfolio and seems to be enjoying the job security of a safe electorate seat in comparison to his former life as a gallery journalist (how can we criticise him for that?)	3	4
<i>Wall, Louisa</i>	Manurewa	Sport and Recreation Community and Voluntary Sector	Has one of the highest profiles of any backbencher due to her marriage equality bill, and handled the pressure of dealing with such a contentious issue with poise and dignity.	2	4
<i>Clark, David</i>	Dunedin North	Revenue Associate Tertiary Education	One of the more impressive of the new intake. Annoys the hell out of Peter Dunne, which is a good sign. Had the great good luck to have two of his members bills out the ballot and one of them through its first reading (Mondayising public holidays) when the Govt lost a vote. The other one, increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, failed. He's learning fast.	N/A	5
<i>Little, Andrew</i>	List	ACC	Landed some hits on ACC. Many get the feeling he could have done more as ACC puts the squeeze on claimants, perhaps was a bit distracted over his and Trevor Mallard's legal battle with Judith Collins. Sometimes looks like he regrets the decision to come to Parliament.	N/A	5
<i>Tirikatene, Rino</i>	Te Tai Tonga	Tourism	Still seems to be trying to find his feet in a new environment, the jury is still out.	N/A	3
<i>Woods, Megan</i>	Wigram	Youth Affairs Associate Science & Innovation	Seems delighted to be in Parliament and should be given more opportunities.	N/A	4
<i>Robertson, Ross</i>	Manukau East	Assistant Speaker Racing Associate Disarmament (Small Arms)	Puts his energy into the Assistant Speaker role, which he handles well. A peripheral player in caucus, where many wonder whether he will resist being ousted from his safe seat at the next election. As he likes to point out he has one of the biggest majorities in Labour.	3.5	5
<i>Cunliffe, David</i>	New Lynn	Economic Development Associate Finance	One of Labour's strongest communicators and greatest assets, but so disliked by his colleagues the joke about the "Anyone But Cunliffe" club became a reality. He really believes he would do a better job in dislodging the Govt than Shearer. He might get another shot, but should really get over his ego and get on with his job. Recent policy speeches have promised much but delivered little new thinking.	6	4.5
Greens					
<i>Browning, Steffan</i>	List		Seems to have a very narrow perspective on life: not made the same impact as some of the other new Green MPs. Knows a vast amount about genetic engineering but tends to talk in a language most others don't know.	N/A	2

Name	Seat/list	Responsibilities	Comments	2011 Rating	This Year's Rating
<i>Delahunty, Catherine</i>	List		A nice, well-intentioned but slightly barmy hippy. She would probably not be able to cope with the realities of being part of a Govt.	3.5	2
<i>Clendon, David</i>	List		One of the dullest speakers in the House, painful to listen to. If you can stay awake, he sometimes has something useful to contribute.	2	2
<i>Genter, Julie Ann</i>	List		For students of human behaviour her exchanges with Ministers are fascinating. Both sides think the other insane and both think they have comprehensively won the intellectual argument.	N/A	3.5
<i>Graham, Kennedy</i>	List		Pompous and over-serious, but speaks from his heart and his conscience. By far the most effective climate change debater in Parliament, the only one capable of taking on Groser.	4	5
<i>Hague, Kevin</i>	List		A good Parliamentary performer, strong on health issues. Found the task of both attacking and defending mining in the same year a tough intellectual challenge	3.5	5
<i>Hughes, Gareth</i>	List		His exuberant performance in Parliament is something to behold. Students of politics wonder how he would fit into a Labour-Green-NZ First coalition.	5	4
<i>Logie, Jan</i>	List		A pretty safe first term so far, tends to slip into green gobbledegook a bit quickly.	N/A	3
<i>Mathers, Mojo</i>	List		Will have to do more if her greatest achievement will be just to achieve the moniker of "first profoundly deaf MP in Parliament."	N/A	3
<i>Norman, Russel</i>	List	Co-Leader	Norman has led the economic debate against Bill English much to English's amusement. He must take some credit for bringing a competent team into Parliament and keeping them on message. He seriously believes the Greens are ready to take a part in governing, others are not convinced. Looks and sounds like the leader of a much larger, more mainstream party.	8	8
<i>Roche, Denise</i>	List		Bubbly, enthusiastic contributor in Parliament. Tends to get a bit over-excited about waste management and similar issues.	N/A	4
<i>Sage, Eugeine</i>	List		Looked comfortable on her return to Parliament as an MP. An asset to Parliament at an intellectual level, if not a dramatic performer.	N/A	5
<i>Turei, Metiria</i>	List	Co-Leader	Has equal distaste for National and labour, which might make a coalition negotiation tough. She is ambitious and thinks there's plenty of money to solve NZ's problems.	6	6
<i>Walker, Holly</i>	List		Another of one of the Greens highly intelligent and academically qualified MPs who always looks to be delighted to be in Parliament.	N/A	4
NZ First					
<i>Horan, Brendon</i>	List		Has a higher opinion of himself than he deserves. Best contribution was a few songs.	N/A	2
<i>Martin, Tracey</i>	List		Done well and is close to perfecting her sneering speeches in the House.	N/A	4
<i>O'Rourke, Denis</i>	List		His clash with fellow MPs over performance or lack of it shows the tension between NZ First MPs. If it's like this in opposition, it does not bode well if they get near the levers of power.	N/A	3.5

Name	Seat/list	Responsibilities	Comments	2011 Rating	This Year's Rating
<i>Peters, Winston</i>	List	Leader	Roared back into Parliament with all the vengeance of a politician scorned. Opened his first speech with "...as I was saying when I was so rudely interrupted." This year he has shown Labour how to do opposition politics – snipe away, dig up scandal and snap at the heels of the Govt at every opportunity. Currently a National/NZ First Govt post the next election looks the most likely prospect if Peters can keep his party above 5%. This will come as a shock to many of his MPs. Still no succession plan, should he ever retire. NZ First remains a creature of Peters's personality, arguably his greatest failing as a politician. Marks off for it.	N/A	7
<i>Prosser, Richard</i>	List		Was picked by many to be the most likely MP to embarrass his party. So far he hasn't. Contributions at Select Committee suggest he may be reading too many conspiracy theory blogs. Didn't crash and burn as expected, which was disappointing.	N/A	3
<i>Stewart, Barbara</i>	List		The mother hen of NZ First, though not all of her fledgling MPs appreciate her clucking	N/A	3
<i>Lole-Taylor, Asenati</i>	List		Solid, but unexciting first term MP. It would help if her press statements were within 24 hours, or even 48 hours, of the event she's talking about.	N/A	3
<i>Williams, Andrew</i>	List		Swaggered into Parliament like he owns it... he doesn't. His arrogance and hubris is a ticking time bomb. Williams also has an amazing ability to rewrite history, both his own and NZ First's. He should be more careful, Peters is good at supporting loyal but flawed MPs, but he is equally adept at working out who is his weakest link and quietly removing them.	N/A	2

Politician Of The Year

Several candidates considered to be our politician of the year were eliminated - or eliminated themselves - when events blew up in their faces. A case could be made, for example for John Key whose leadership through a sea of troubles sustained his poll ratings, but our panel worried about his memory fades. So too Paula Bennett was in the race because of her welfare reforms up to the point she had to confess to mortification over the WINZ kiosk blunders. And there were those who argued Kim Dotcom had a claim - but we'll wait to see what the courts say on his extradition. Tony Ryall has maintained his Teflon-coated reputation as Health Minister, but he hit some potholes with his SOE portfolio. Trade Minister Tim Groser rates highly for his work in the specialised trade negotiations, but not so on Climate Change. David Cunliffe was looking good until his parachute into Labour's leadership failed to open, and he hit the ground with a nasty thud.

So who then? Our panel examined in turn a trio who came into focus as politicians maturing in their roles.

First of all, Russel Norman showed real leadership qualities, and staked out a claim to be Deputy PM in a Labour-Green-NZ First coalition (providing he can elbow Winston Peters out of the way).

Then Judith Collins proved she has the makings to be National's Iron Lady, as she stemmed the blood-letting at ACC, and levered herself into being a potential leadership contender. Amy Adams made big strides as a relative newcomer in Cabinet.

But the politician who to a degree previously hid his light under a bushel and emerged centre stage in 2012 is Attorney-General Chris Finlayson. Increasingly assured in the House where his lacerating wit can lay waste to his opponents, he brings a cool intellect, as well as sage legal advice to the Cabinet table. His increasing stature as a politician and member of the inner circle was evident when John Key passed responsibility for the Department of Labour to him after Kate Wilkinson stepped down. He was also charged with the role of informing the Pike River families of the outcome of the Royal Commission into the mining tragedy. And as Treaty Negotiations Minister, he racked up so many settlements he made his predecessors in the role look like amateurs.

By majority vote our panel rates him Politician of the Year.

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