

## Political polls are no longer poles apart

By DAVID CLARK

Opinion

**T**he polls have changed dramatically. Most say the gap between Labour and National is now around 10 points; a far cry from the 20 point gap at the election.

Why has the gap closed so fast? Are voters in the rest of New Zealand now waking up to what discerning Dunedin voters already knew?

Around the country, people say they feel let down by John Key's performance. Scandals around ACC, SkyCity deals, John Banks, Kim Dotcom and the GCSB paint a picture of a government that is poorly

managed and not focused on the issues that matter to most Kiwis. The Government is out of touch.

By contrast, the David Shearer-led Labour Party is crystal clear where it stands on the big issues. We've pushed pro-growth tax

reform, universal savings, and monetary policy reform to support our export sector. We're pro-growth and pro-jobs.

David Shearer has led from the front with a new vision for the education sector. He wants every child to be able to access the world's best education at their local school. He has pledged: Food in schools, reading recovery, a clear report card for parents

on the local school and better pathways through school to work.

Shearer wants a New Zealand where the best and brightest want to live. He wants our country to be a place where everyone can get ahead.

Education lies at the heart of this vision. Labour has always been the party of education. It embodies our values of opportunity and fairness. These values underpin a prosperous and united country.

While Minister of Education

in 1938, future Labour Prime Minister Peter Fraser set out an aspiration that still resonates today.

He said: "The Government's objective, broadly expressed,

is that all persons, whatever their ability, rich or poor, whether they live in town or country, have a right as citizens to a free education of the kind for which they are best fitted and to the fullest extent of their powers."

If we make the most of our professional teaching workforce and get our economic settings right, New Zealand will prosper. If the polls keep shifting dramatically in Labour's direction, and the scandals and distractions bring the John Key Government down, we may have the opportunity to get our country again focused on the bigger picture.

► David Clark is the Labour MP for Dunedin North.