

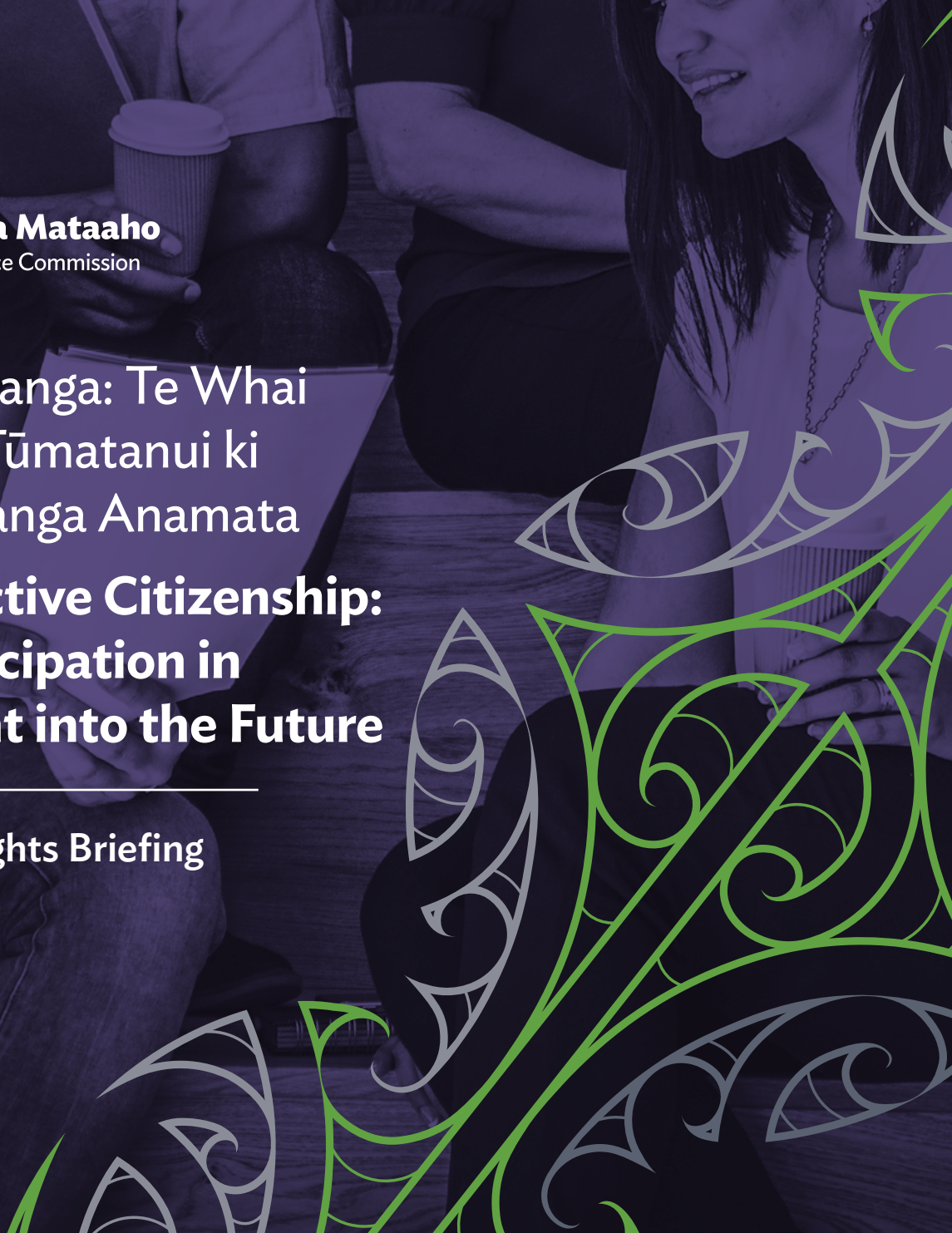


**Te Kawa Mataaho**  
Public Service Commission

**Te Kirirarautanga: Te Whai  
Wāhitanga Tūmatanui ki  
Te Kāwanatanga Anamata**  
**Enabling Active Citizenship:  
Public Participation in  
Government into the Future**

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**Long-Term Insights Briefing**





## Acknowledgements

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**Whakarāpopotonga  
Matua  
Executive Summary**





## Whakarāpopotonga Matua | Executive Summary

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**T**he aim of this briefing is to help the public and decision-makers think about the role of public participation in government in New Zealand. We think that public participation will play a bigger part of how government makes decisions and how our democracy works in the future. Participation is central to building and maintaining trust in government and to working through complex issues, and we are seeing international trends such as misinformation and climate change that will make these benefits all the more important.

In this briefing we examine the factors that could improve government's ability to engage the public, and we look at examples of New Zealand's experience of public participation to date. From this we identify the key things that can be done to improve public participation in government.

Participation in this context means participation by any part of New Zealand society, or any community of New Zealand, on an individual or collective basis, in government decision-making. This involvement can range from simply giving advice or providing views, to collaborating on the solutions to issues, or even making decisions on behalf of government.

### **Benefits: why participation matters**

Public participation helps build trust in democratic government and in the agencies that deliver public services. Trust is a foundation of democracy.

Participation builds trust by:

- giving the public opportunities to provide their views and be informed about and influence decisions that affect them;
- enabling the public and communities to influence the design and implementation of public services, leading to services that are more appropriate and effective for them; and
- providing a way to work through complex long-term issues in a way that is inclusive of all interests and communities.

In New Zealand the Treaty of Waitangi/te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty) emphasises the importance of Māori having opportunities to participate in government and decisions that affect their rights and interests. The ability of Māori to participate can help to build trust between Māori and the Crown, provide opportunity for Māori to influence decisions and improve the effectiveness of government decision-making to deliver outcomes and services.

### **Trends: what might impact participation?**

Trends in society and public service will form the context for participation in the future. Some trends form a positive basis to build on, while others will pose challenges.



New Zealand consistently performs highly in international rankings related to public trust and confidence. Many OECD<sup>1</sup> countries experienced a decline in public trust between 2007 and 2020, while New Zealand had the opposite.<sup>1</sup> Trust in government will help the Public Service to navigate a challenging future.

Changes in New Zealand's public management system over recent decades also provide an important foundation for the future. The focus on greater collaboration between agencies, and citizen-centred services, allows the Public Service to engage more easily with communities.

Other macro trends are more complicated in their effect on future participation. Demographic change, growth in inequality, climate change, and the pervasiveness of digital technology will all present governments with challenges.

How New Zealand responds to those challenges is likely to be key to maintaining and building trust into the future, and consequently safeguarding our system of representative democracy. We believe that safeguarding trust through public participation will become even more important in the context of these challenges.

We suggest that, given the scale of the challenge, the development of public participation in government should be approached with some urgency.

### Enablers and challenges: what can help or hinder progress?

Governments can build towards enabling greater public participation in government. Enabling factors include:

- the level of support for public participation by elected government;
- availability, accessibility and timely disclosure of official information;
- building the capacity and capability of the public and communities;
- the capability of the Public Service to work in new ways; and
- the availability and accessibility of digital and online forms of engagement.

On the other hand, there are factors that may limit or constrain the development of public participation in government. To some extent these are the opposite of those above: poor process, indifference, or ethical lapses can undermine the willingness of communities to engage. Some New Zealanders are unable to access or use digital technology, which becomes a source of exclusion rather than an enabler of participation. Participation has benefits overall, but it comes at greater costs than traditional forms of decision-making, and there are also limits to people's capacity to engage.

<sup>1</sup> The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an association of 34 countries, including New Zealand, that are democratic and have free-market economies, and that exists to discuss and develop economic and social policies.





Specifically in New Zealand we note that we currently have:

- a relatively high level of support for participatory approaches but without a uniform standard or expectation of how participation in government should happen;
- progress on openness of official information but with some challenges of accessibility and usefulness of information;
- positive impacts of engagement by public agencies for New Zealanders in terms of support, respect, and building their capacity as well as drawing on their views and expertise;
- progress on developing Public Service capability to support public participation but with work still to do;
- the potential for digital technology to support and enhance public participation, alongside the reality of issues such as misinformation and digital disadvantage; and
- differences in capacity for engagement between different communities and individuals, and for the work to develop better engagement.

### Forms of participation

There are many forms that public participation can take, and many ways that participation has been used in government in New Zealand. In discussing forms of participation, we refer to the public participation framework provided by the

International Association of Public Participation (the IAP2 Framework). Though this is not tailored to specific New Zealand circumstances, it is familiar in New Zealand, has international standing, and could serve as a basis for developing our own framework over time.

The IAP2 framework sets out a spectrum of approaches that range from simply making information available to the public or seeking feedback, through to working closely with the public to develop a proposal or putting the final decision in their hands. New Zealand has examples of public participation right across this spectrum, including collaboration with, and empowerment of, communities. Different relationships between Māori and the Crown under the Treaty provide lessons and experience, such as in the joint management of resources, that can be of assistance in developing public participation generally.

The bulk of public participation in New Zealand has tended to be consultation rather than deeper involvement of communities in decision-making. New Zealand does not have the same depth of experience as some other countries in the use of more innovative tools and models for public participation such as representative deliberative processes. Examples of models that have seen success elsewhere are collaborative governance and consensus building, participatory budgeting, participatory editing, and citizens' juries.



## The direction of travel

We conclude our analysis by asking: given the importance of public participation, what can be done now to improve New Zealand's capacity and capability to support public participation? That is, what could our direction of travel be?

Drawing on our analysis of enablers, challenges, and the different forms that participation can take, we identify three key issues:

- the lack of a single cross-government framework that can serve as a standard for how agencies engage with the public and communities and that can provide clarity around expected behaviours and forms of decision-making;
- the overall capability of the Public Service to work in new ways with diverse communities, especially at the collaborate/empower end of the IAP2 spectrum; and
- the narrow range of experience in New Zealand with the use of public participation methods at the empower end of the spectrum.

To address these issues, and to place the Public Service in the best position to support future governments, we outline three elements that could form the basis of a way forward.

## Element One – common framework and measurement

As a first step, the Public Service could adopt a common framework for classification of our approaches to participation and require agencies to identify which engagement approach they have taken in developing policy or designing services with reference to this framework.

## Element Two – innovation in priority areas

There are opportunities to trial new and different approaches that allow for deeper involvement of the public in decision-making. Issues that are of national importance might benefit the most from a high level of public participation.

There could be a move to explore representative deliberative processes that are relatively unfamiliar in New Zealand. There are also opportunities to use technology to involve a greater number of New Zealanders in decision-making in a more meaningful way, by increasing the reach of public institutions and decision-makers and making it easier for people to participate.

## Element Three – broader shift to collaborative approaches

Expectations could be set for where agencies should be operating on the common framework. Initially this might involve requiring more consistency in the approaches agencies take. Over time it could involve an expectation that agencies are more frequently operating at the 'collaborate' or 'empower' end of the spectrum (such as co-design approaches or devolved decision-making).

Across these elements there is a considerable capability challenge for the system. This covers both individual and organisational capability and includes development needs relating to ensuring transparency, cultural competencies, workforce diversity, whole-of-government approaches, and outreach and facilitation skills.





WĀHANGA 1.  
**Kōrero Whakataki**

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CHAPTER 1.  
**Introduction**





Department of Internal Affairs  
Te Titiri o Waitangi, The Treaty of Waitangi  
at He Tohu exhibition, National Library New Zealand  
Credit: Mark Beatty

## Kōrero Whakataki | Introduction

**T**he Public Service Act 2020 (the Act) introduced the requirement for every Public Service department to produce a long-term insights briefing every three years. The briefings are a tool to help the Public Service look forward so that it can effectively serve New Zealand not just today but into the future. This is known as the stewardship responsibility of the Public Service.

The purpose of these briefings is to:

- support stewardship by ensuring our Public Service departments are thinking about the more complex long-running issues facing society and are exploring skills and actions that might be needed to respond to these issues; and
- make the information and analysis public to inform public debate on important issues. This also helps democracy by providing parties from across the political spectrum with a basis to formulate their policies.

The Act requires that the briefings are prepared independently from ministers. The chief executive of each Public Service department decides the topic and the content.

In deciding a briefing topic, the chief executive must consider the purpose of the briefing, which is to make available into the public domain:

- a. information about medium- and long-term trends, risks, and opportunities that affect or may affect New Zealand and New Zealand society; and
- b. information and impartial analysis, including policy options for responding to these matters.<sup>2</sup>

Chief executives must also consider the matters particularly relevant to the functions of their department and take into account any feedback from public consultation. The public must be consulted on the subject matter to be included in the briefing and a draft of the briefing once this is prepared. These requirements are designed to ensure that the briefing is relevant to the concerns of the public, to the department, and to government.



This is the first long-term insights briefing produced by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. The briefing is focused on the question:

### *How can we better support public participation in government in the future?*

Public participation means the involvement that the public, whether as a community or other grouping or as an individual (sometimes referred to in this briefing as ‘citizens’), can have in the decisions that governments make. Definitions of ‘public’ and ‘government’ are discussed further in Appendix 1.

The relationship of the Public Service to the people of New Zealand is of fundamental importance to the Public Service Commission. The Public Service exists to serve New Zealand and can only do so if the relationship is positive and built on trust. The Public Service must ensure that it is trusted by behaving in an ethical and professional manner, and by enabling government to provide services and outcomes that are of greatest relevance and benefit to New Zealanders. The importance of public participation in developing and maintaining trust, combined with the level of public support that we received for choosing this topic, led the Public Service Commissioner to focus on this topic.

## Scope

This briefing is intended as a broad overview of public participation and its place in government in New Zealand, identifying possible courses of action at an all-of-government level to develop our capability and improve public engagement practices.

Other departments are also covering more specific aspects of public participation in their long-term insights briefings. The Department of Internal Affairs, which has responsibility for the local government and community sector, will address the question of digital technology and how it can better enable community participation. The long-term insights briefing from Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Security and Intelligence Board agencies will address the question of how to engage an increasingly diverse Aotearoa New Zealand on national security risks, challenges, and opportunities.

## The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi is an integral part of New Zealand’s constitutional framework, setting the foundation for an ongoing partnership between Māori and the Crown. The influence of the Treaty extends beyond public participation, but there is a link between the two. There is a distinction between involvement of Māori in general public engagement processes and engagement with Māori as Treaty partners, and the former should not be seen as a substitute for the latter. However, both can help to strengthen relationships between Māori and the Crown and improve decision-making, and there are lessons and experiences that can be shared between Māori Crown partnership approaches and participatory approaches more broadly.

The Treaty establishes that Māori have relationships with the Crown as individuals, whānau, hapū and iwi. Participation can support rangatiratanga by enabling Māori to take a role in decisions that affect their rights and interests. Participation can also contribute to decisions and delivery of services that reflect Māori perspectives, tikanga and mātauranga Māori or use kaupapa Māori approaches, and that are ultimately more likely to deliver better services and more equitable outcomes for Māori. We cover Treaty considerations in more detail in this briefing in connection with the benefits and enablers of participation in a New Zealand context.

## Process

The development of this long-term insights briefing began with discussions, both internally and with experts in the fields of public management and futures thinking, about a range of possible topics that could then form the basis of our first statutory consultation on the subject matter of the briefing. The results of that consultation, along with consideration of the specific role and functions of the Public Service Commission, indicated favour for the topic ‘how can we better support public participation in government in the future.’

Research, use of existing information from previous consultations and other work programmes, and workshop sessions with the public formed the basis for the content of the briefing itself.

We then issued a draft version of the briefing for the second round of statutory consultation under the Act. The feedback we received from that consultation helped us further develop the document into this final version. Appendix 2 outlines more detail on our consultation approach throughout the process, including the comments we received.



WĀHANGA 2.

**Te Whai Wāhitanga  
me Tōna Whaitake**

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CHAPTER 2.

**Why Participation  
Matters**





## Te Whai Wāhitanga me Tōna Whaitake | Why Participation Matters

**T**rust in government is necessary for the functioning of a democracy and for cohesive society. As the OECD states: “Trust is the foundation upon which the legitimacy of public institutions and a functioning democratic system rest. It is crucial for maintaining political participation and social cohesion. Trust is important for the success of a wide range of public policies that depend on behavioural responses from the public. For example, public trust leads to greater compliance with regulations and the tax system. In the longer term, trust is needed to tackle long-term societal challenges such as climate change, ageing populations, and the automation of work.”<sup>3</sup>

The link between trust in government and social cohesion is a major concern in New Zealand following the terrorist attack in Christchurch on 15 March 2019. Social cohesion is the sense of connectedness and support between people within communities, and between different communities. As is highlighted in The Report of the Royal Commission into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain, trust is part of this wider web of relationships of confidence.<sup>4</sup>

Many factors contribute to building trust. Some are relatively stable, like the culture of a nation or its historical experiences. Others are regarded as ‘public governance drivers,’ that is, drivers on which the actions of governments and public servants can have some impact. The OECD framework on drivers of trust in public institutions recognises two types of public governance driver:

- values: the behaviours associated with openness in government, integrity, and fairness; and
- competencies: relating to the responsiveness and reliability of services provided to the public.

A further driver has recently been added to the OECD framework: “Perception of government action on inter-generational and global challenges.” Climate change is usually cited as the major example of this kind of challenge. This driver stems from the belief that public confidence in governments will be determined by how those governments respond to these highly complex problems.



Below we discuss the ways in which participation can help build trust by providing opportunities to have a say, by improving public services, and by providing ways to work through complex long-term issues in an inclusive way.

In New Zealand the Treaty of Waitangi emphasises the importance of Māori having opportunities to participate in government and decisions that affect their rights and interests. The ability of Māori to participate can contribute to the building of trust between Māori and the Crown, including by providing the opportunity to influence decisions and by improving the effectiveness of government decision-making to deliver outcomes and services.

### **Participation provides the public and communities with opportunities to be informed about issues, to provide their views, and to influence decisions**

There is a strong link between openness and inclusiveness in how governments work, and the trust that citizens have in government. Though it is hard to establish the exact causal link, the two are usually regarded as mutually reinforcing.<sup>5</sup> A central aspect of inclusiveness is the right of New Zealanders to participate in decisions that affect them. The OECD framework on the drivers of trust in public institutions explicitly references citizen participation as a way in which openness in government can be built, with resulting improvements in trust levels.<sup>6</sup>

Expectations of participation have grown over time, and there is now a high level of expectation by the public that they will be involved government decisions that affect them, in ways that go beyond the means of participation traditionally provided by the electoral system.

At the broadest level this can be linked to increases in living standards, with the emergence of an increasingly affluent and relatively secure middle class with high levels of education.<sup>7</sup> The combination of affluence and education leads to demands for greater transparency from people who are increasingly empowered, vocal, participatory, and critical. As a KPMG report puts it “Advances in global education, health and technology have helped empower individuals like never before, leading to increased demands for transparency and participation in government and public decision-making.”<sup>8</sup>

But the demand for greater participation in government processes does not exist only at an individual level. Society has become more characterised by multiple organisations whose aim, among others, is to influence or contest government decision-making. Community activism and engagement remain powerful impulses even though voting, the core of traditional participation in government, is declining (especially among the young). This demand for participation is evident across multiple levels, from neighbourhood activism on local issues to national politics.

### **Participation enables the public and communities to influence the design and implementation of public services, leading to services that are more appropriate and effective for them.**

Better decisions are made if people who are affected by them are invited to participate in processes of policy-making and implementation. In turn, better decisions mean government is more likely to provide the services and outcomes that people need and is more likely to be trusted by citizens.



Traditionally, consultation has been used as a major way of gaining community and stakeholder input to improve policy proposals – including those for services to the public. Deeper public involvement is achieved by involving the public early to participate in the design of proposals, and/or through collaboration on implementation. In Chapter 5 we present several examples where participation in the design of services has helped design services more responsive to the needs of communities.


Also, in New Zealand the benefits of public participation can be seen in the relationships between Māori and the Crown and how these can lead to better decisions on management of assets and provision and delivery of public services. For example, participation can support rangatiratanga by enabling iwi to take a role in decisions that affect iwi rights and interests, as has been the case with Tūhoe management of Te Urewera and establishment of the Waikato River Authority. Participation by whānau Māori and Māori as individuals also contributes to the design and delivery of services that are more likely to reflect Māori perspectives, tikanga, mātauranga Māori, and kaupapa Māori approaches. This ultimately increases the likelihood of the Public Service delivering and designing better services for and achieving more equitable outcomes for Māori.

### **Participation provides a way to work through complex long-term issues in an inclusive way**

Societies now face an array of highly complex problems with far-reaching implications that cannot be solved by governments alone. Given the seriousness and complexity of issues like climate change, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) argues that people themselves must be empowered as agents of change, which means including them in decisions and addressing levels of inequality that otherwise act as a barrier to empowerment.<sup>9</sup> In the New Zealand context, Local Government New Zealand identifies increasing “the strength and legitimacy of public decisions through greater civic participation” as one of the ways in which our major, unprecedented challenges can be addressed.<sup>10</sup>

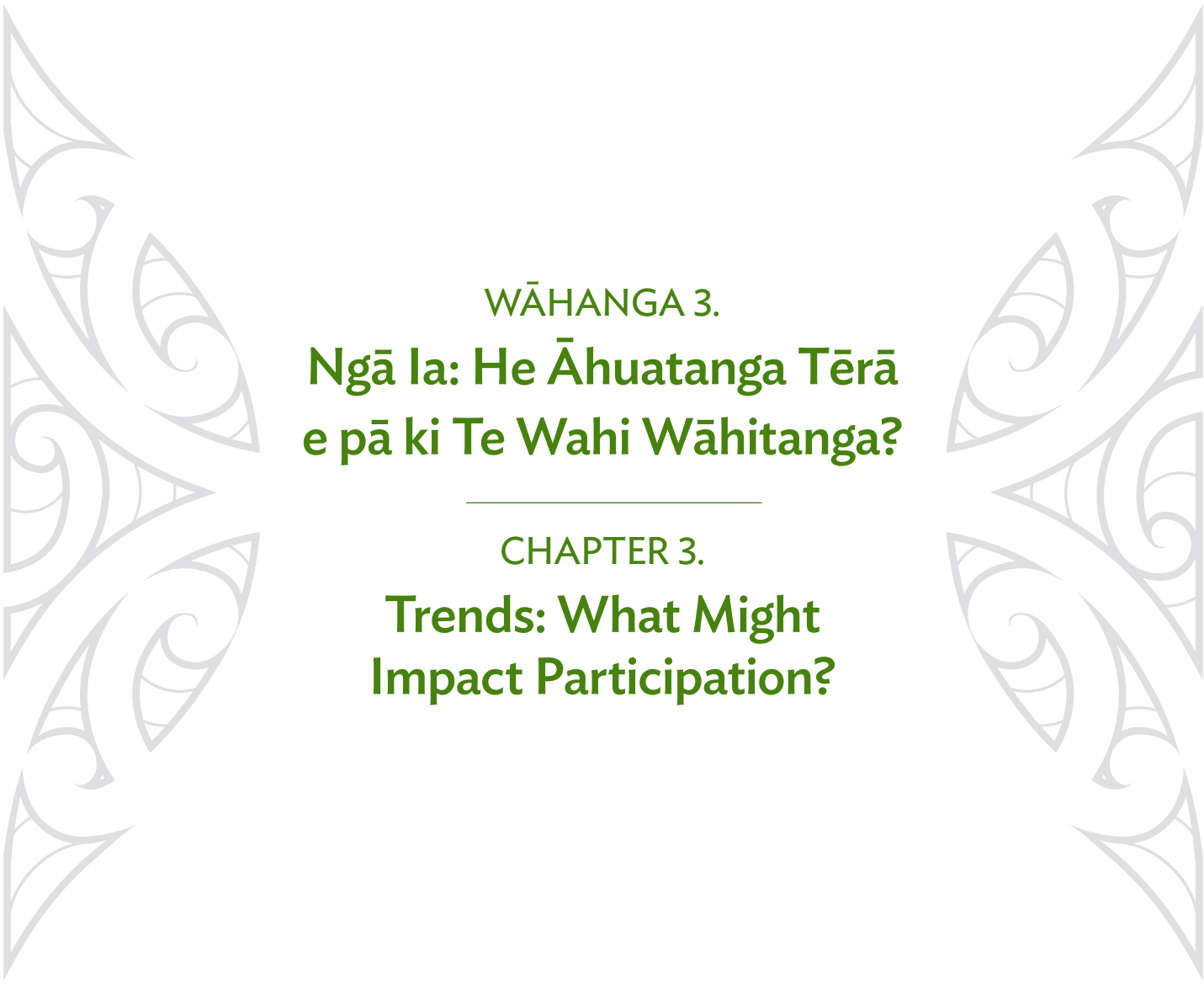
Internationally there is now interest in the use of participative methods known collectively as representative deliberative processes, which are discussed in Chapter 5 of this briefing. These processes have two central characteristics: a strong emphasis on ensuring that the participating group is representative of the general public, and well-informed high-quality discussion among participants. These processes are designed to seek consensus or at least to lessen the polarisation of views, and consequently to provide better advice and recommendations to government.





WĀHANGA 3.  
**Ngā Ia: He Āhuatanga Tērā  
e pā ki Te Wahi Wāhitanga?**

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CHAPTER 3.  
**Trends: What Might  
Impact Participation?**







## Ngā Ia: He Āhuatanga Tērā e pā ki Te Wahi Wāhitanga? | Trends: What Might Impact Participation?

**P**articipation does not happen in a vacuum. Some trends or changes in the wider society, and in government, can facilitate participation or increase the need for participatory approaches. Others may make participation a more difficult and complicated process. This chapter addresses these wider contextual trends and their impact on public participation.

The previous chapter noted that participation can help build trust in government. The converse is also true: high levels of trust facilitate participation. New Zealand consistently performs highly in international rankings related to public trust and confidence. Many OECD countries experienced a decline in public trust between 2007 and 2020, while New Zealand had the opposite. Therefore, trust in government in New Zealand will help the Public Service to navigate a complex and challenging future environment.

Changes in New Zealand's public management system over recent decades also provide an important foundation for the future. Recent years have seen a growing interest in co-creation amongst both practitioners and public administration scholars. The pervasiveness of wicked problems that can neither

be solved through hierarchical top-down command nor by enhancing market competition is causing public decision-makers to turn to co-creation. This focus on greater collaboration between agencies and with the public, allows the Public Service to engage more easily with communities.

Other macro trends are more complicated in their effect on future participation. A more diverse society, while beneficial overall, will bring differing perspectives and interests that need to be considered. Inequality risks breeding alienation and disengagement from communities and the political process. The internet brings advantages but also fuels misinformation and a fragmentation of public discourse. And governments will face more highly complex issues, so-called 'wicked problems', which cannot be tackled by government alone. To illustrate the scale of these challenges we examine the implications of four trends: demographic changes, increasing inequality, climate change, and digital technology. These have both relatively high certainty in their trajectories, and high significance for their potential impacts on public participation in government.

## Public trust

New Zealand consistently performs highly in international rankings related to public trust and confidence. There is a distinction between trust in government institutions (such as the Public Service) and trust in government more broadly (including both elected government and public sector organisations). Many OECD countries experienced a decline in general trust in government between 2007 and 2020, while New Zealand had the opposite.<sup>11</sup> In 2020 only 51% of OECD citizens trusted their national government, compared to 63% of New Zealanders.<sup>12</sup> In Kiwis Count, the Te Kawa Mataaho survey of trust in the Public Service, there has been a long-term gradual upward trend in trust since 2007, as shown in Figure 1. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated that increase, and over the past two years trust levels have remained above the pre-pandemic levels. The Public Service was highly visible to the public during the COVID-19 response, potentially creating an environment where people could see how much work public servants do on their behalf.

Our research into what drives trust in New Zealand has identified the importance of responsive services that meet the needs of the public. We have noted above the importance of responsiveness in the OECD drivers of trust framework, and the ways in which participation can help built responsiveness. Services that are reliable, accessible, and efficient build trust. Kiwis Count has consistently found that, based on their most recent experience with government services, about 80% of people trust public servants to do the right thing.

Perceptions of the motivation and integrity of public servants are also important drivers. The public expect that government workers join the Public Service out of a desire to help people and make a positive impact, and to contribute to their communities and society. In Te Taunaki, the first Public Service Census, we found that the most common reason for joining the Public Service was to make a positive contribution to society.<sup>14</sup> Perceptions of the integrity of public servants are also linked to trust and this underlines the importance of ‘values-based’ behaviour as recognised by the OECD.

### Trust in public services and public / private brand by quarter

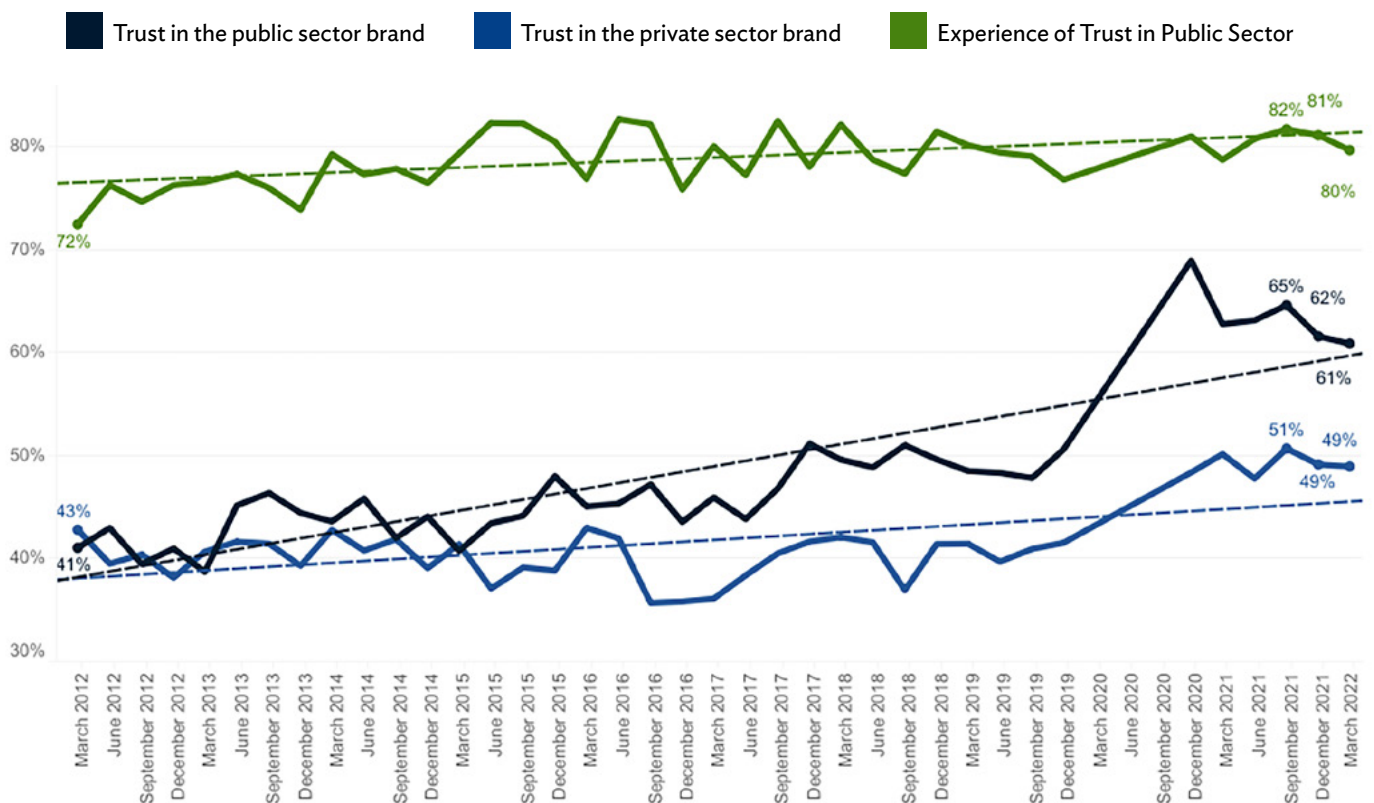


Figure 1: Trust in public services and public / private brand by quarter<sup>13</sup>

New Zealand has been recognised internationally for low levels of corruption, for example in the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, where we again tied for first place in 2021.<sup>15</sup>

We know that trust is not only about what an individual has experienced, but also about their family, social network, and wider community. Māori respondents tend to have lower trust as measured in the Kiwis Count survey. Internationally, there is a trust gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes that intersects with the trend of increasing inequality (discussed below). Since 2020, global trust has increased slightly for those with the highest incomes while it has declined slightly for those with the lowest incomes.<sup>16</sup>

In New Zealand the trends relating to trust are a positive factor for our future. Also positive are the trends in public management outlined below.

## Public management trends

Public management is commonly understood to have relatively distinct periods of differing theory and practice, known as paradigms. These paradigms offer a framework for also understanding specific trends in public participation in government.

The first coherent philosophy of public management emerged in the late 1800s and early 1900s and is now referred to as Traditional (or 'Old') Public Administration. This was replaced in the 1980s and 1990s by New Public Management, which is still the prevailing paradigm worldwide.

More recently, a new philosophy has started to emerge, although it is not yet described as coherently as its predecessors and is sometimes referred to simply as post-New Public Management. Other names for it include New Public Administration, New Public Governance, Digital Era Governance, and New Public Service.<sup>17</sup> While this appears a sequential process, all periods of history have likely featured a mixture of administrative models and competing ideas. Many public administrations have aspects of all three public management systems layered one on top of another. The New Zealand system is no exception.

At their core, these three approaches to public administration have different concepts of the respective roles of government and citizens in the design of policy and service delivery.

## Traditional Public Administration operated as a closed system, with limited citizen involvement

Some of the key characteristics of Traditional Public Administration are a focus of government on the direct delivery of services through agencies, carried out by public servants accountable to elected officials and given limited discretion in their work.<sup>18</sup> The primary values of public organisations are efficiency and rationality, with programmes administered through hierarchical organisations where managers largely exercise control from the top of the organisation. Public organisations operate most efficiently as closed systems; thus, citizen involvement is limited.

Traditional Public Administration engages with citizens through consultation using, for example, Green Paper and White Paper processes<sup>ii</sup> and 'town hall' meetings in which more or less complete proposals are presented to a public audience to muster support for their implementation. Since citizens' input comes late in the process where there is already government support for specific proposals, the impact of these traditional forms of citizen participation is limited. That limited impact has increasingly become a source of frustration both among the participating citizens who feel it is a waste of time, and among the decision-makers who realise that they are not as responsive as they would like to be.<sup>19</sup>

In the 1970s in the field of private sector service design, designers began to focus more on the needs and experiences of service users as co-creators rather than customers. They developed co-creation as a participatory approach to service production and delivery. Co-production also emerged, based on the idea that multiple organisations working together will often be better at producing goods than a single integrated bureaucracy. These concepts began to be applied in public administration but were stifled to some extent by the emergence of New Public Management.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>ii</sup> Green Papers are official documents that publish policy options early in the policy process and invite public comment. The final proposals agreed by government are published as government policy in a White Paper. Further comment may be sought on the final policy before it is passed into law.



## New Public Management treated citizens as informed consumers, using market mechanisms to drive allocation of resources

While Traditional Public Administration relied on management hierarchies to drive system performance, New Public Management relied more on market mechanisms to incentivise performance, including competition between providers, performance bonuses, and penalties. The intent of New Public Management was to embed the theory of the marketplace and business-like culture in public organisations.<sup>21</sup> Centralised rules were discarded, and public servants were given significantly more autonomy to exercise their own discretion in the belief that they would respond rationally to incentives in the system. Public servants were challenged to either find new and innovative ways to achieve results or to privatise functions previously provided by government.<sup>22</sup>

New Zealand was seen as a leader in New Public Management, going faster and further than other countries.<sup>23</sup> The reforms of the late 1980s solved issues of public service responsiveness to a considerable extent by increasing accountability, increasing transparency of resource allocation, and creating smaller departments focused on outputs rather than inputs. But the reforms also created new problems. The separate agencies were enterprising about their own resources but were not incentivised to connect with others.<sup>24</sup> Like Traditional Public Administration before it, New Public Management assumed that government could be neatly divided into different functions but was not well equipped for addressing complex problems that cut across agency boundaries.<sup>25</sup>

New Public Management had again changed the nature of the relationship between citizens and State, now conceiving of public service users as ‘consumers’ who would shop around for the services they need. Consumer behaviour would then drive allocation of resources in quasi-markets, with public and private service providers competing for contracts. The Public Service was encouraged to be entrepreneurial in innovating and improving service provision, often because the alternative was privatisation.

However, this still constrained the kinds of involvement that the public could have in government processes. While citizens have a range of different rights, responsibilities, and expectations in relation to the State, consumers are simply purchasers of goods and services.<sup>26</sup> The public were a source of user data that could become an input for entrepreneurialism. Although New Public Management emphasised business-like responsiveness to the public as consumers, its structural reforms had often separated service design and policy functions from service delivery. Responsiveness in

this context means responsiveness to the public’s consumer preferences, which they express by ‘exiting’ an unsatisfactory service. Evidently, this is a “narrow, individualistic, and service-oriented” role for the public in relation to the State,<sup>27</sup> and one which is in tension with more active partnerships between the public and the State.

## Emergence of New Public Service as a citizen-centric model of public management

As some of the shortcomings of New Public Management became apparent, the theory and practice of public management began to shift in response. Despite its reinvigorating focus on results and user satisfaction, New Public Management failed to deliver on its promise to provide more and better service at lower costs.<sup>28</sup> Some attribute that failure specifically to the public choice theory underlying New Public Management – that all behaviour is motivated by self-interest – which fails to see the public as members of democracy, community and civil society.<sup>29</sup> While New Public Management’s focus on responsiveness created one-way relationships that largely encouraged passiveness on the part of the public as individual consumers, emergent theories about public administration are starting to emphasise a more active and collective role for the public.<sup>30</sup> This shift marks the beginning of what has most generally been described as an era of ‘post-New Public Management,’ although there are some subsets within that, known variously as New Public Governance, Digital Era Governance and New Public Service.

The New Zealand Public Service’s most recent reforms and overall direction of travel fall into this era (although the system retains elements of both Traditional Public Administration and New Public Management). Features of the New Zealand Public Service’s foundational legislation, the Public Service Act 2020, indicate alignment with the ideas of ‘New Public Service’ (see discussion also in the section ‘Authorising environment and representative democracy’ in Chapter 4).<sup>31</sup> New Public Service considers that shared characteristics of citizenship and democratic values should take precedence in the relationship between citizens and the State.<sup>32</sup>

This new philosophy is based on the idea of public value, facilitated by networks and collaboration throughout the public and private sectors and civil society. This context has also seen a renewed interest in co-creation amongst both public servants and public administration scholars.<sup>33</sup> Part of the appeal of co-creation is as a tool for mobilising additional resources from citizens and other actors, especially for solving wicked problems that are not well-addressed through hierarchical top-down command

or by enhancing market competition. Often, this turn towards co-creation is supported by the development of online collaboration platforms that facilitate interactions among complex networks of people. The ‘service-dominant logic’ of this emerging approach asserts that voluntary, balanced, and reciprocal interactions will result in improved efficiency and quality of services.<sup>34</sup>

The theory and practice of public management has evolved alongside changing demands for public participation. The ‘clients’ of Traditional Public Administration received centralised services with minimal input. Under New Public Management, they became ‘customers’ able to exercise a marginally more active role in service provision by exiting unsatisfactory services and providing user data. An emerging post-New Public Management paradigm, New Public Service, re-orientates the role of the public again, this time acknowledging them as complete ‘citizens’ with multiple and ongoing relationships to the state. This ultimately leaves us with a public management environment more conducive to public participation in government than ever before.

## Macro trends

The four trends discussed in this section – demographic changes, increasing inequality, climate change, and digital technology – were identified as trends with both relatively high certainty in their trajectories, and high significance for their potential impacts on public participation in government. Each of the trends presents risks and opportunities for the ability and willingness of the public to participate in government processes.

### Demographic changes

In the topic of enabling better public participation in government, considerations about ‘the public’ form half of the equation. It is important to consider demographic changes, as the public that is participating in government in the future is likely to have a different composition and different characteristics to ‘the public’ of today.

There are several demographic trends that interact to produce projections of an ageing population as well as increased global diversity. Key among these are fertility rates, mortality rates and migration. At the broadest level, life expectancy is increasing, and birth rates are falling.<sup>35</sup> These trends are not homogenous in all countries. Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and North America are all projected to have at least 30 people aged 65 and over for every 100 people aged 15–64 by 2030, while Japan is projected to have 50 or more.<sup>36</sup> Involuntary migration, including due to the effects of climate change, and record numbers of

children and young people among the world’s refugees will also mean increasing diversity profiles in many countries.<sup>37</sup>

Since 2013 the fertility rate in New Zealand has been below the 2.1 ‘replacement’ level and is expected to stabilise at 1.65 from 2021.<sup>38</sup> Since the 1950s, New Zealand’s life expectancy at birth has increased by around 12 years for both males and females, a trend that is projected to continue gradually to increase life expectancy by another five years from 2021 to 2060.<sup>39</sup>

As with many trends, there are different patterns among smaller groups. Māori and Pacific Peoples in New Zealand have both higher fertility rates and higher mortality rates than ethnically European and Asian New Zealanders. Over time, this means Māori are projected to account for 21% of New Zealand’s total population and only 11% of the 65+ population, while Pacific Peoples are projected to account for 11% of the total population and 5% of the 65+ population by 2043.<sup>40</sup>

High rates of migration in New Zealand before COVID-19 were expected to slow the rate of population ageing but rates and impacts of migration are now more uncertain. Furthermore, migrant populations tend to be slightly younger, but their birth rates tend to shift towards that of the general population, so their overall impact on population ageing is unlikely to be significant over the longer term. However, rates of migration do have significant impacts on population diversity, even over the longer term.

A more diverse society will have implications for participation in government in terms of communication as well as a greater diversity of interest, needs and perspectives to be reconciled or balanced in decision-making. The effects of an ageing population may be more pronounced in economic issues like labour supply, reduced tax revenue, and corresponding increases on healthcare and superannuation expenditure, which could then have flow-on effects for Public Service capability for public participation processes.<sup>41</sup>

### Inequality

Growing economic inequality is a significant issue, both internationally and in New Zealand. Major international economic bodies like the International Monetary Fund, the OECD and the World Bank have all acknowledged the importance of addressing inequality, while New Zealanders consistently show concern about inequality in New Zealand.<sup>42</sup> This is because inequality has real impacts on many aspects of society, being tied to other economic crises like housing affordability, cost-of-living, and poverty.



Both livelihood and debt crises were ranked among the top 10 international risks by impact in 2021.<sup>43</sup> Income inequality is increasing in countries that house 71% of the global population.<sup>44</sup> In New Zealand, wealth inequality is greater than income inequality: “while the richest 10% of income earners have 27% of all after-tax income, the wealthiest 10% of asset holders have 59% of all wealth.”<sup>45</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic offers a case study for global inequality, having disproportionately affected youth, unskilled workers, working parents (especially mothers), and already-disadvantaged minorities. In nine of the world’s largest economies, 70% of working women believe their careers will be slowed by the pandemic, while 51% of youth from 112 countries believe their educational progress has been delayed.<sup>46</sup>

Most significantly for the subject of public participation in government, inequality undermines public trust, breeding alienation and posing risks to social cohesion. Pressure on people’s physical resources can reduce their ability to participate, especially in terms of their time availability. Inequality can also reduce willingness for citizens to engage, where the government seeks input from parts of the public who have considered themselves to have already been failed by that government.

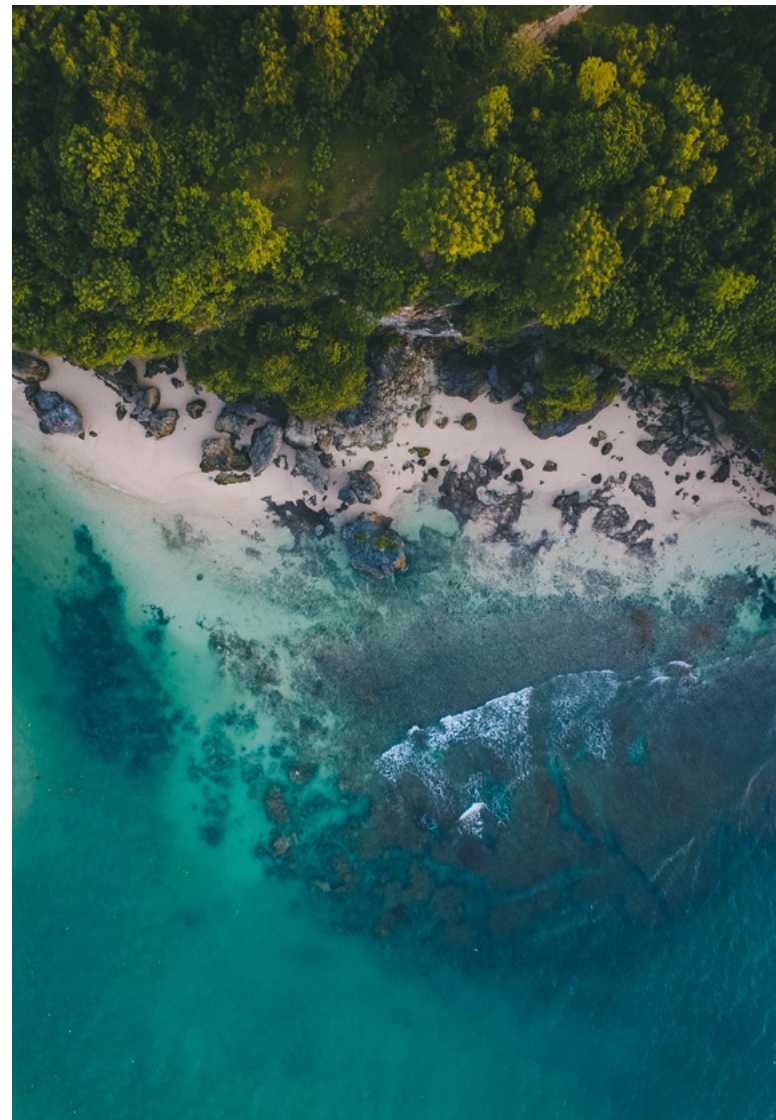
### Climate change and the environment

Around the world, global warming has already led to higher average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising sea levels.<sup>47</sup> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change unequivocally states that “widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred.”<sup>48</sup> In New Zealand, we are feeling many of the same effects, including melting glaciers and more frequent extreme weather events such as flooding and heatwaves. Our average temperature increased by one degree Celsius between 1909 and 2018, and that warming is projected to continue.<sup>49</sup>

Perceived national action on globally significant issues can enhance public trust. Climate change is already considered an urgent issue, which makes it a highly appealing subject for public participation and one suited for more innovative approaches. For example, the Irish Citizens’ Assembly on Climate is discussed as a case study in Chapter 5. The climate change movement offers many examples of new and different ways of campaigning and sharing information to put pressure on governments and build demand for engagement. The climate change movement is an especially interesting case study because of its journey in overcoming some of the earliest examples of misinformation in the form of climate change denial.

As the severity of climate change and associated environmental impacts increases, we may see increasing demand from the public to engage in government processes related to environmental policy. Conversely, a focus on climate change may reduce willingness to participate in discussions on other issues, as attention and focus become crowded out. Climate change also has the potential to undermine social cohesion, as some of its impacts (e.g., displacement) may have traumatic effects on mental health. In New Zealand, there are likely to be specific social, cultural, spiritual, and economic risks for Māori wellbeing resulting from their unique relationships with lands, waters, and biodiversity.<sup>50</sup>

Climate change impacts are likely to be unequally distributed, potentially contributing to inequality through changing asset values and resource scarcity. This could cause conflict and disruption that would further undermine social cohesion and risk loss of trust in government. The New Zealand Treasury explores some of the potential long-term fiscal impacts of climate change in their first long-term insights briefing.<sup>51</sup>





## Digital technology

Digital technology is an important enabler of participation, providing increasing opportunities to disseminate information and connect people. In 2012 there were already 2.4 billion global internet users, compared to only 360 million in 2000.<sup>52</sup> In some countries, people have greater access to mobile phones than to basic amenities like clean water and electricity.<sup>53</sup> The rate of change in the digital space has been exponential and is expected to continue increasing; it is thought that the next decade will bring more progress than the past 100 years combined.<sup>54</sup> Opportunities for digital technology to better enable public participation are discussed in the next chapter.

An area of rapid digital expansion and development inevitably brings challenges that government will need to contend with if it hopes to better enable public participation in the future. Cybersecurity and governance, misinformation, and digital exclusion will all need to be managed to ensure that the benefits of technological development for participation in government can be enjoyed without risks to trust and social cohesion.

Cybersecurity risks are some of the more immediate and direct issues evident in the digital space. Cybercrime and failures of digital and data governance can have severe impacts on public trust, as well as resulting in potential hesitance to adopt new technologies.<sup>55</sup> This then has the potential to reduce the willingness of the public to participate, especially if participation may require them to provide data through a digital process. The public may be mistrustful of new engagement technologies. Cybersecurity risks may also impact on the ability of an otherwise willing public to participate, as there is a risk that government systems are vulnerable to cyberattack.

Some countries have started regulating or otherwise taking action to address some of the more harmful effects of digital changes: fake news laws, digital services legislation, social media regulations, and Australia's move to make Facebook and Google contribute to funding journalism.<sup>56</sup> However, the nature of digital change makes these things difficult to effectively regulate. Although 80% of countries have e-commerce and data protection regulations, these are still outpaced by developments in the scale and application of various technologies.<sup>57</sup>

Misinformation has the potential for severe and far-reaching impacts on participation, through erosion of trust and social cohesion, and flow-on effects for the willingness of the public to participate. The provision of information is the basis for most models of public participation (see Chapter 5. Forms of Participation) and success is predicated on effectively sharing information, which in turn relies on trust in the credibility of that information. If the credibility of the government as a source of information is undermined, this will hamper government's ability to seek and facilitate public participation in its work. The erosion of trust and social cohesion are likely to reduce the public's willingness to participate, causing a reduction in the uptake of participation opportunities that would otherwise be functional.

Globally, the spread of misinformation is increasing, with a 150% increase in the number of countries experiencing social media manipulation campaigns between 2017 and 2019.<sup>58</sup> Misinformation can spread faster on the internet than accurate information,<sup>59</sup> often with real-world impacts. In New Zealand, a recent survey by the Classification Office found that 82% of respondents were concerned about the spread of misinformation, with 57% believing they had come across misinformation in the past six months.<sup>60</sup> The impacts of misinformation on social cohesion and trust in science on democracy more broadly have significant implications for the public's willingness and ability to participate in government processes.<sup>61</sup> The relationship between trust and misinformation is also circular, with high trust making a society more resilient to the negative impacts of misinformation. Susceptibility to misinformation is associated with the belief that government officials, international organisations, and scientists/experts intentionally spread misinformation.<sup>62</sup>



Digital divides have a clear impact on the ability of the public to participate in government processes, restricting certain parts of the population from engaging through digital channels. Those parts of the population also face broader issues in the context of social cohesion, risking disenfranchisement and disillusionment for their participation in society outside of government processes. This is also one of the factors playing into the trend of increasing inequality.

Although global access to the internet is increasing, there are still significant disparities across countries of different incomes. Internet usage ranges from more than 87% of the population in high-income countries to less than 17% in low-income countries.<sup>63</sup> Similar patterns are seen at the national level in New Zealand. The 2017 New Zealand Electoral Survey indicated that 9% of New Zealanders do not have any form of internet access.<sup>64</sup> However, much of the research on digital exclusion in New Zealand suggests that the actual level is much higher due to difficulties in research design. The Department of Internal Affairs estimate that as many as one in five New Zealanders lack “access to affordable and accessible digital devices and services at a time and place convenient to them, as well as the motivation, skills, and trust to use the internet.”<sup>65</sup> Data from the Citizens Advice Bureau have made digital exclusion the subject of a recent campaign, expressing concern about digital-only or digital-first approaches to public service provision and engagement.<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusions on trends affecting participation

In New Zealand we face these macro-level challenges in common with other countries. How they are addressed will be important for our democracy into the future. And it is reasonable to see participation as part of a positive response to each of these challenges. A positive response to diversity requires inclusiveness in decision-making, as does a positive response to alienation and disengagement. Relationships, openness, and dialogue to build social cohesion are a logical response to distrust fed by misinformation. And complex ‘wicked’ issues are known to require a response that builds and relies on partnership between government, communities, and other interest-groups.

Trust has not declined in New Zealand. But the big changes and trends that we see in our society are ones we share with many other countries in which trust in government has been in long-term decline. Any future decline in the relationship of trust between government and society risks serious consequences for the legitimacy of governments and the credibility of the norms and institutions of democratic governance.

High levels of trust and a responsive Public Service give New Zealand important advantages. Both underpin democracy and the credibility and legitimacy of decision-making. But the scale of the challenge posed by macro-level changes suggests we should not take anything for granted. This gives urgency to measures to maintain and build trust in government through public participation. As one commentator has put it: “Strengthening trust of citizens has, quite simply, become a matter of survival for open, democratic government.”<sup>67</sup>





WĀHANGA 4.

**Ngā Mea hei Hāpai, hei  
Wero hoki: He Aha Ngā  
Mea e Āhei ai, e Aukati ai  
rānei te Kaunuku?**

CHAPTER 4.

**Enablers and Challenges:  
What Can Help or Hinder  
Progress?**







## Ngā Mea hei Hāpai, hei Wero hoki: He Aha Ngā Mea e Ahei ai, e Aukati ai rānei te Kaunuku? | Enablers and Challenges: What Can Help or Hinder Progress?

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**T**he benefits and trends described in the previous two chapters all pull in the direction of greater public participation. How can these drivers be responded to? This chapter addresses five factors that act as enablers to building participation or that conversely will become barriers if not properly developed. We draw on a range of sources including:

- the work produced by the Policy Project: a function located in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet with responsibility for equipping policy staff, teams, and agencies with skills needed for effective policy-making, including responses to future problems;
- feedback received through development of New Zealand’s fourth Open Government Partnership National Action Plan: this plan is part of New Zealand’s commitment to the Open Government Partnership – an international project within which governments commit to increasing openness, participation, and responsiveness; and
- the feedback received through developing this long-term insights briefing.

### Authorising environment and representative democracy

Traditionally in New Zealand’s representative democracy, the main form of participation in government has been by voting. Once a government is in place, it then has wide discretion to make decisions, subject only to any legal requirements. Beyond that, governments may choose to consult or involve the public in decision-making. Consequently, Parliament and the government of the day can be seen as the ‘authorising environment’ for public participation. The primary role of the Public Service in this context is to support ministers in developing and implementing policy, and therefore the extent of participatory approaches is at ministers’ discretion.

Decision-makers in government can have different perspectives on and approaches to public participation. Some will appreciate the benefits of participation as described in Chapter 2. Others may see participation as delaying or hindering decisions; reluctance of elected officials and public servants



to engage in decision-making through iterative processes with uncertain outcomes can be a barrier to participation.<sup>68</sup> Many experience a tension between participation and the rights of elected decision-makers, especially in an environment where politicians want to be free to respond to political agendas and may have already made commitments that conflict with participatory approaches.

Internationally the general view is that participation contributes positively to representative democracy. In the view of the OECD, “growing efforts to embed public deliberation into public decision-making could be seen as the start of a period of transformation to adapt the architecture of representative democracy. Democratic institutions across the world are beginning to transform in ways that give citizens a more direct role in setting agendas and shaping the public decisions that affect them.”<sup>69</sup> Some commentators have gone so far as to advocate for formal rights of citizens to participate in defining issues and determining solutions.<sup>70</sup>



New Zealand’s authorising environment has also become more supportive of participation, as was touched on in the discussion of public management trends in Chapter 3. A more enabling approach to participation in government is evident in the Public Service Act 2020:

- A “spirit of service to the community”<sup>71</sup> is now enshrined as the fundamental characteristic of the Public Service in its foundational legislation and is championed by its most senior leaders.<sup>72</sup>
- The Public Service’s role in supporting the Māori Crown relationship is recognised in a specific provision. This aligns with wider recognition of the Treaty in statute law, court decisions, and government policy, making it a more powerful driver for the participation of iwi and Māori within government and Public Service agencies.
- “Facilitates active citizenship” is included in the purpose statement of the Act, aligning with a broader view of the public as citizens that encompasses both participation in the work of government and many other forms of community involvement.
- “Foster a culture of open government” is one of the five Public Service principles. Open government has a wide variety of objectives that ultimately strengthen democracy and build trust, including improving transparency and accountability, encouraging active citizenship and participation, and ensuring responsiveness of government. Open government is also “becoming increasingly important as citizens in the information age expect to be more informed and involved in government decision-making.”<sup>73</sup>

As well as its inclusion in the Public Service Act 2020, commitment to open government is also evident in New Zealand’s membership of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). OGP is an international project within which governments commit to increasing openness, participation, and responsiveness.

New Zealand has recently recommitted to OGP, as demonstrated by its inclusion in the ‘United States – Aotearoa New Zealand Joint Statement: A 21st century partnership for the Pacific, Indo-Pacific and the world’<sup>74</sup> and the enhanced collaboration process for developing New Zealand’s OGP Fourth National Action Plan which has involved collaborative workshops with civil society groups.

Though government and Parliament are broadly supportive of public participation, and government frequently seeks views and information from the public, we do not have a single, cross-government, set of expectations of how public agencies conduct

participative exercises. Without a common framework there is a risk of variations in practices that may not be seen as legitimate by the public. For example, it may not be clear to communities whether they are being invited to inform a decision or share in the making of a decision. Likewise for public servants, the nature of their mandate from ministers to involve the public in processes may be unclear.

This issue is partly addressed in the social cohesion work programme arising from the report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain.<sup>75</sup> The Government has required agencies involved in the work programme to use the framework of the IAP2 to describe their community engagement. The Policy Project has provided a community engagement tool that aligns with the IAP2 framework and its associated statements of values and ethics. In Chapter 6 we explore ways in which we can build on this framework to provide the public and Public Service with clearer and more predictable public participation processes in future.

## Information

Information is fundamental to participation.<sup>76</sup> Without disclosure of all information relevant to the public's understanding of an issue, there cannot be real participation in the making of decisions, or in their subsequent evaluation of a decision. Furthermore, participation processes should be considered open and transparent from the perspective of the public participants, not just the initiating organisation. In some cases this may require extra effort to ensure that underlying issues are communicated clearly and accessibly to potential participants.

In New Zealand our approach to the release of official documents has largely been underpinned by the Official Information Act (OIA) 1982. At the time it was introduced this Act was a significant step forward in the transparency and openness of government, requiring agencies to release information requested by the public, as long as there were no grounds for withholding it.

The percentage of OIA responses completed within the statutory timeframes has increased from 91% in 2015 to consistently over 97% since 2019, despite consistent increases in the volume of requests received.<sup>77</sup> Work to further strengthen performance is ongoing, with data collection being expanded to encompass information on extensions and transfers of requests. Agencies are also being supported with new guidance and access to a community of practice.

However, the OIA is now 40 years old and is no longer sufficient by itself to meet citizen expectations of access to information (as discussed in Chapter 2) or to respond to the increased volume of information exchange in a digital age. The approach to accessing information under the OIA is reactive, requiring individuals to request information before its release can be considered. Recent trends towards greater proactive release of information go some way to addressing these demands, with concrete steps to date including:

- routine publication of ministerial diaries online;
- more proactive release of Cabinet material;
- more publication of lists of advice received by ministers; and
- piloting routine proactive release of information.

As government makes more information available, the next challenge to address will be ensuring the relevance, accessibility (in terms of both readability and navigability), and usefulness of information to the public, particularly in a digital context. Access to, and useability of, public information is a theme in the New Zealand's Open Government Partnership Fourth National Action Plan, now in development.<sup>78</sup>





## Public capacity and capability

To develop participation further in the future, all sections of the public, and all communities, need to be able to engage and participate. That means being aware of opportunities, able to shape topics and questions, and being offered avenues and options for participation that are suited to their own circumstances.

There are developments in the Public Service that help move us in this direction. For instance, Regional Public Service Commissioners are now responsible for engagement with communities at the regional level, working with local government, iwi, and community stakeholders to identify the outcomes that communities want. A similar function is fulfilled for specific population groups by 'population agencies' that provide advice on the interests of those groups and build capability among public servants to engage with those specific communities. The existing agencies (Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and Ministry for Women) are now joined by a new Ministry of Ethnic Communities and a Ministry for Disabled People as the Government's chief advisors on the inclusion of ethnic and disabled communities respectively in wider society, and as providers of information, advice, services and support to those communities.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain has highlighted some communities' frustration in trying to engage with government, with associated risks for social cohesion. A multi-agency work programme including the Ministry of Social Development and the New Zealand Police aims to respond to these issues, with a particular focus on improving community engagement. Some communities and individuals may not participate through existing channels because of circumstances like poverty, lack of education, lack of opportunity, or disability. We know that Māori in general have lower rates of voter participation and report lower levels of trust in government, which may be factors that influence their participation in consultation.<sup>iii</sup> And there are well known issues with 'consultation fatigue' where community organisations get snowed under by multiple and uncoordinated requests for input from government agencies.

Public participation in government must be positive for the communities involved. It must support, respect, and build their capacity as well as draw on and value their views and expertise.<sup>79</sup> For this to happen:

- Engagement should be placed within a context of an ongoing relationship, rather than an episodic interaction. Within this relationship, questions can be agreed in advance, and timeframes could ensure that consultation is not rushed, and that input can be given at times and places that are possible for the public.
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the consultation process should be sought, including information on who was consulted and with what effect.
- Public agencies should work together to coordinate their consultation activities so that communities are not overloaded, and the same information is not sought repeatedly.
- The selection of issues should be selected with the public in mind: are the most important matters being chosen as the subject of public participation? There can be a sense that some major changes have not been the subject of public consultation. Examples include use of facial recognition technology, AI, number plate recognition, and algorithms.
- Participation in general, and deliberative processes in particular, can build trusting relationships and consensus in communities as well as producing better recommendations and outcomes. It should draw different communities together, not polarise and fragment.
- Governments should work to build community capability for engagement and bridge any gaps by meeting the public wherever they are at. Building community capabilities includes using local people to connect into communities, treating local people as experts, resourcing development, building relationships over time, and assisting with costs of participation.

Responding to these issues well in the future depends to a large extent on the capability and capacity of the Public Service.

<sup>iii</sup> In 2020, 73% of enrolled Māori voted compared with 82% of overall enrolled voters. The 2019 Kiwis Count survey showed Māori had lower levels of trust in government than other groups.

## Public Service capability

The reforms of recent years have accustomed public servants to working in collaborative and participative ways, especially with each other. However, many public servants do not have the capabilities or supporting infrastructure necessary to implement participatory processes that may traverse the Public Service, civil society, and private sector. To better enable public participation in the future, different skills will be needed.

Some capabilities relate to organisations and some to the development of individual skills and competencies. Ways in which public participation can be supported at the organisational level include adoption of policies and frameworks that encourage participatory approaches, prioritisation of resources towards participation, development of partnerships with communities and stakeholders, and growth of people capability.<sup>80</sup> Resourcing is a particularly important dimension of organisational capability. The processes of public participation themselves are not without cost, although better decisions that invest in reflecting the public's needs and building legitimacy often reduce costs later in implementation. Across OECD member countries, resourcing is consistently the most difficult principle of open and inclusive policy making to make progress on.<sup>81</sup> As well as the obvious financial resourcing, human and technical resources in terms of access to skills and training, time for participation, and appropriately supportive organisational culture also fall into this category.

Individual competencies also matter. The International Association of Public Participation has developed core values and a code of ethics that, among other things, guide the actions of public participation practitioners and enhance the integrity of participatory processes. Many of these are familiar aspects of good practice, like the obligation to actively seek out participants and their views and following up to ensure that all commitments, including those by government, have been met. There are also cultural competencies specific to New Zealand's context. As noted earlier, different forms and approaches to participation can be used to facilitate appropriate participation by Māori as individuals, whānau, hapū or iwi, or a combination of these. And there are specific knowledge and skills needed for engagement with Pacific and other ethnic communities within New Zealand, as well as the disabled community.

Work is underway in several areas to build the capability of the Public Service for working in closer engagement with communities and the public. The trend towards greater diversity in Public Service workforces is, in part, designed to enable the Public Service to engage better with the diverse communities, families, and individuals

that make up New Zealand society. The Public Service Act 2020 now requires chief executives and boards to promote diversity and inclusiveness and to be “guided by the principle that the group comprising all Public Service employees should reflect the makeup of society.”<sup>82</sup> Diversity has been increasing both in terms of chief executives, senior management, and the Public Service workforce as a whole.

There are new tools available to improve Public Service capability for public participation. The Policy Project, as part of the Open Government Partnership work programme, has published a wide range of resources on public engagement covering good practice, principles and values, capability and readiness, selecting appropriate levels and methods, and inclusiveness, in addition to their research on experiences of community engagement from both Public Service and community perspectives. They have also developed a Policy Community Engagement Tool specifically for agencies involved in the work on building social cohesion, in response to a recommendation from the Royal Commission of Inquiry.

The Public Service is building capability to support the Crown in its priorities to improve services and outcomes for Māori and strengthen the Māori Crown relationship, which is now required under the Public Service Act 2020. While there is still some distance to travel, there is a strong appetite across the Public Service to continue progress in this area. A 2019 Cabinet circular sets out guidelines for policymakers to consider the Treaty of Waitangi in policy development and implementation.<sup>83</sup> Te Arawhiti have published an engagement framework and guidelines to assist Public Service agencies engaging with Māori, alongside guidance for developing internal Māori capability strategies.<sup>84</sup> The Māori Crown Relations Capability Framework acts as the coordinating mechanism for the Public Service's approach to building Māori capability.<sup>85</sup> And many public servants have reported through the recent Public Service Census that they were encouraged and supported to engage with Māori to ensure Māori views and perspectives are considered.<sup>86</sup>

Despite this progress, feedback from the public indicates ongoing concerns about Public Service capability for engagement, including suggestion that training is specifically needed regarding privacy and open government. In a survey conducted by the Policy Project, community organisations identified short timeframes and rushed processes, lack of meaningful engagement, inaccessibility, lack of follow-up, and poor facilitation as top concerns for their engagement with government. Public servants identified similar concerns, as well as issues about capability for engagement with Māori.<sup>87</sup> There is also a lack of capability to implement representative deliberative processes that are common overseas but to date have seen little use in New Zealand. Chapter 6 highlights some of the areas where capability will need to be built to better support public participation going forward.



## Digital technology

Digital technology has the potential to contribute to public participation in ways that build community and a sense of social cohesion. Technology already helps us overcome challenges of scale and distance and increase accessibility of information and participation. For most, ease of access to government policy proposals, and the ability to respond, is facilitated by the internet.

The Department of Internal Affairs, in its long-term insights briefing focused on this topic, discusses how the use of technology could better enable community participation and decision-making. The possibilities may include options around investment in ‘public social media’ that could support people to build virtual communities with multiple uses including participation. There are also more technical possibilities such as using artificial intelligence to quickly support translation to make government information available in a variety of languages.

There is potential for the internet and social media to revolutionise policy processes by enabling collaboration through networks that are no longer hierarchical – without sharp separation between public servants, independent experts and academics, and public/community voice – or that no longer require restrictive sequencing from government proposal to public input.<sup>88</sup> Technology has already enabled innovations like the Ministry of Youth Development’s online platform ‘The Hive,’ which aims to increase young people’s participation in government policy development by guiding them through the submission process, and then relaying information and data back to them to close the feedback loop.

However, realising the potential of technology for participation also comes with challenges. Some of these, including misinformation, cybersecurity, and digital disadvantage, have been touched on in Chapter 3. Government is working to address these issues through its vision for digital inclusion and the associated action plans and research priorities.<sup>89</sup>





WĀHANGA 5.  
**Ngā Momo Whai  
Wāhitanga**

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CHAPTER 5.  
**Forms of Participation**





## Ngā Momo Whai Wāhitanga | Forms of Participation

**P**ublic participation comes in many forms, and this chapter provides examples to illustrate the current state of practice internationally and in New Zealand. The different approaches to participation are classified using the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Framework because of its international recognition and use in New Zealand. Many public servants will be familiar with the framework through the Policy Project’s guidance on community engagement.<sup>90</sup>

The IAP2 framework arranges five broad types of participation based on the level of impact the public will have on the resulting decision or other outcome. These create a spectrum of approaches that range from simply making information available to the public or seeking feedback, through to working closely with the public to develop a proposal or putting the final decision in their hands:

1. Inform
2. Consult
3. Involve
4. Collaborate
5. Empower

For each of the five broad categories, this chapter gives a general overview and then outlines some of the more common specific methods that fall within them. The methods are described using characteristics commonly discussed in the literature on public participation:

- Purpose/focus/objective<sup>91</sup>
- Participant selection<sup>92</sup>
- Organisational capability, culture, and attitudes<sup>93</sup>
- Participant characteristics such as skills, values, attitudes, and social capital<sup>94</sup>
- Flow of information between sponsors (government) and participants (the public)<sup>95</sup>
- Aggregation of results<sup>96</sup>
- Level of empowerment of the public<sup>97</sup>

Throughout the chapter we also provide case studies from both New Zealand and overseas to show how the methods can be used. Neither the methods or case studies are exhaustive and are intended only as examples to illustrate how the different levels of the spectrum can operate in practice.

Furthermore, the placement of various methods and case studies along the spectrum can vary, as models can straddle different parts of the spectrum (especially in the middle parts of the spectrum) depending on their implementation in a specific case. It is common for different sources to disagree on the placement of methods such as co-design, with some placing it in the ‘involve’ category and others considering it collaborative, or even empowering. Similarly, a broad category of methods known as ‘representative deliberative

processes' or 'mini-publics' can fall anywhere along the spectrum, depending on what powers are granted to participants and to what degree government acts on the outcome.

This chapter is largely descriptive rather than evaluative. We deliberately avoid the implication that empower methods are inherently 'good' and that 'involve' methods are therefore inherently 'bad'. Instead, we outline methods of participation without making judgements about how effective or 'good' they may be. There are a few reasons for this: effectiveness of participation depends largely on its specific aims and context, and credible evaluations of public participation should involve the views of the public who were involved, which is often not publicly available data (where it exists at all).

We also avoid the implication that any participation is positive, regardless of its standard or quality. Indeed, poor quality participation bears the risk of being counter-productive by eroding trust, undermining the implementation of a policy or decision, or emphasising divisiveness among differing groups of the public.

At the end of this chapter, we make some observations about New Zealand's use of public participation and gaps in our experience. This section about using the IAP2 spectrum does touch on the question of quality of participation in a general sense, drawing on guidance for the values, ethics, and behaviours of best practice participation.

## Inform

This category is focused on methods that promote transparency and accessibility of information:

- Advertising
- Publishing (including online)
- Social media
- Drop-in centres
- Hotlines
- Public hearings/meetings

These usually involve a one-way flow of information out to the public, although some methods like drop-in centres, hotlines, and public hearings or meetings also offer the opportunity for the organising party to collect data on the kind of information being sought. Informing the public can be considered as a baseline for a functioning, open democracy, especially given these methods do not imply any consequent action on the government's part.

## Consult

This category brings together methods that solicit public feedback on analysis, options, or decisions. They are usually used for more clearly defined matters for which background work has already been done. Unlike 'inform' methods, consultations generally involve a two-way flow of information, with the organising party first offering sufficient information for the public to then make a useful contribution. Successful consultation methods also usually involve a final step where the organising party feeds back to the public on what impact their contributions have had, allowing for varying degrees of government action/implementation.

## Submissions

Submissions are a conventional avenue through which government seeks input from the public. They are usually made in writing, either digitally or through the mail, with occasional options to present a submission verbally. Participants are usually self-selected, although publicising the opportunity to specific people or groups can produce a larger or more representative sample. To receive relevant and useful submissions, the organising party will need to provide background information for submitters to draw on. A submission process demonstrates integrity by also feeding back to submitters how their insights have been considered.

## Focus groups

Focus groups have their origins in the private sector, having been used for market research. They fulfil a similar purpose in the public sector, providing insight into the views held by a group, usually on a specific proposal. Depending on the participant selection process, the members of the focus group may be able to speak on behalf of others in their community. Representative sampling or targeting specific demographics increase the likelihood of that being the case.

This model can account for differing views; the aim is not to reach consensus or even agreement, although a moderator or facilitator is a common feature. The moderator or facilitator's role is usually to ask a series of questions over the course of the focus group, which is usually shorter than half a day and involves relatively few people (5–10).



## Surveys/polling

This is a well-established method used throughout the public and private sectors, as well as in academic research. It can be much more effective at producing quantitative data than many of the other methods listed here but can also accommodate qualitative data through more open-ended questions. Results are most likely to be useful if the survey has reached a representative sample of participants. Surveys can be used to collect views on a range of issues and may be particularly useful for revealing differences that could be explored in greater depth using another method.

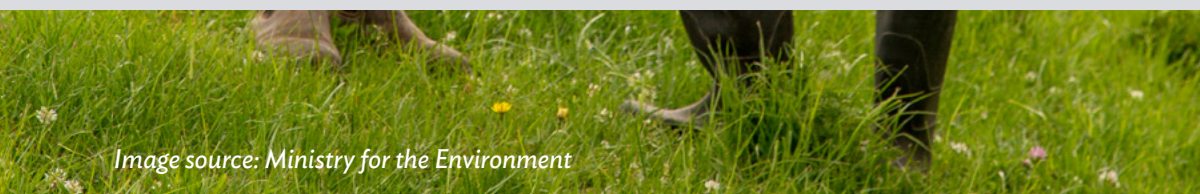
## Case Study: Farm Systems Change project<sup>98</sup>

The Ministry of Primary Industries led an engagement with farmers and rural communities, businesses, and other government agencies that support rural communities to improve their understanding of farming systems. They held home interviews and hui within the farming communities to hear the lived experiences of issues from the farming communities and to understand how best to collaborate with them. These insights helped government to better support farming communities. The outcome of the engagement was a series of case studies of best practice from high-performing farms, which were shared with farming communities.



## Case Study: Research project on how digital can support participation in government<sup>99</sup>

The Department of Internal Affairs conducted a research project in 2017 to understand the ways digital technology can support public participation. They worked with people, businesses, and communities to understand their experience when engaging with government. The engagement process included interviews, online surveys, prototype testing, and workshops with 195 individuals, nine NGOs, and 20 government agencies. DIA produced a report and proposal which described how government could enable people, businesses, and communities to be involved in government decision making, from the development to shaping of government decisions and policies.



*Image source: Ministry for the Environment*

## Involve

This category is made up of methods that often involve the public on an ongoing basis to ensure their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered throughout a decision-making process. Many of these methods involve iterative processes that extend beyond a single meeting, although they have similar information flows to methods in the ‘consult’ category. ‘Involve’ methods are suited to issues that affect well-defined groups and can be used early on to help define what those issues are and identify solutions.

### Citizens’ panels<sup>100</sup>

Citizens’ panels are an example of a deliberative model. They bring together a representative sample of citizens to be available to the organising party on a rolling basis. This method may involve several other methods at different stages. For example, regular surveys are a common method for collecting the views of a citizens’ panel. The method lends itself equally to online or in-person activities and can handle very high numbers of participants.

## Co-design

Co-design usually begins with involvement of people affected by a problem to help define the parameters of the issue. From there, the process allows participants to develop creative solutions to the problem. The emphasis of this model is on the perspective of the affected group, with their experiences providing valuable data and government parties filling more of a facilitating role. Later stages such as prototyping and piloting are key elements of design thinking, as is the highly iterative nature of this model. To be successful, this model requires many of the same enablers as innovation, especially risk tolerance.

Like many of the other methods in this chapter, the positioning of co-design within the IAP2 spectrum is dependent on its implementation in a specific case. Some co-design processes may fit more naturally into the collaborate category, while others may reach into empower. The Healthy Homes Initiative in Auckland (discussed below) resembles a fairly standard co-design process, in which affected parties are involved, but the initiating organisation retains ownership over the process and its outcomes. In the next section we look at two examples of co-design that go beyond involvement towards a more fully collaborative approach.

### Case study: Scottish Parliament Citizens’ Panel on COVID-19 (2021)<sup>101</sup>

The panel was established by the Scottish Parliament’s Covid-19 Committee to address the question ‘what priorities should shape the Scottish Government’s approach to COVID-19 restrictions and strategy in 2021?’. Establishment of the panel was guided by five criteria for selecting a citizens’ panel topic as outlined in the Scottish Parliament’s public engagement strategy. The panel met four times.

Members were broadly demographically representative. The process of recruitment was a collaboration between the Committee’s Engagement Unit and a not-for-profit organisation using a database of over 1500 Scottish residents who had registered interest in a random invite to a prior deliberative event. Stratified random sampling<sup>iv</sup> was then conducted on the 350 people who registered interest in the Covid-19 panel to select 20 members. The panel was supported by an expert steering group with a range of specialties that enabled them to contribute both to the running of the panel as an engagement process and to its subject question.

The final criterion for selection of a citizens’ panel topic is impact, requiring Committee convenor, members, and staff to ‘make a firm commitment that the results will have a bearing on their own consideration and recommendations’. Accordingly, the COVID-19 Committee heard evidence from some of the members in a session two weeks after the final panel meeting, as well as receiving the panel’s final report.

<sup>iv</sup> A method of statistical sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller sub-groups and sampling each independently.

## Workshops

Although workshops are almost too broad a method to discuss here, they are also a key form of public participation easily adapted to a range of issues or topics. Workshops that use a break-out group format can cater to large numbers of participants if there are sufficient facilitators. Participants may be invited, self-selected, or representatively sampled. Effective workshops tend to be hands-on and activity-based, with dynamic flows of information between participants as well as between participants and facilitators.

## Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing is a model that taps into collective wisdom by involving a significant number of people, with some sources suggesting 5000 as an optimum number. It operates most effectively through online channels that allow participants to give input in relatively well-defined ways, often for issues that require problem-solving and innovation. Participants are usually self-selected, but the model will be most effective if it has mechanisms to attract high numbers of people with substantial interest in the topic. Crowdsourcing has also been used in legislative processes, with Scandinavian countries using it to gather proposals for new legislation to be considered in Parliament, based on a threshold of signatures. In New Zealand it has been used to shape the content of specific legislation such as Gareth Hughes' member's bill, 'Internet Rights and Freedoms', and the Policing Act 2008 (in its update from the 1954 version).

## Case study: Healthy Homes Initiative – Auckland<sup>102</sup>

In 2015 the Ministry of Health contracted The Southern Initiative (TSI) to lead a co-design process with the Auckland-wide Healthy Homes Initiative (AHHI) to help make homes warmer and drier. The co-design process included in-depth interviews with 10 whānau and three workers in the AHHI on their experiences. This produced key insights and visual maps, which were shared back with whānau and the workers for feedback. Once the key issues were identified and agreed upon, the team held a brainstorming session to develop prototypes to be tested in workshops with stakeholders (whānau, providers, and agencies) and in homes. Following testing the prototypes were further refined where necessary.

Prototypes that have since been implemented include a Minor Repair Service to provide repair services for low-cost and high-impact repairs and building capacity to supply and install curtains. In collaboration with the Auckland Co-design Lab, TSI produced a brief outlining some lessons:

- the process to finding practical solutions for a complex issue is not linear;
- there are practical ways of testing potential solutions in real but safe environments with minimised risks and costs; and
- the co-design process connects different parts of the system to facilitate better understanding of a complex issue, improving support and policies for communities.<sup>103</sup>





## Case study: Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy<sup>104</sup>

In 2018/19 the Child Wellbeing Unit worked with other agencies to engage with more than 10,000 New Zealanders on “what would make New Zealand the best place in the world for children and young people?” as part of the development of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy). The Office of the Children’s Commissioner and Oranga Tamariki led the engagement process with more than 6000 children and young people through interviews, focus groups, and online surveys. The Child Wellbeing Unit attended 11 regional hui and 10 regional workshops, participated in other events organised by agencies, and received input from online surveys and submissions. These engagements informed the content of the Strategy and its list of actions and initiatives. This is a successful example of providing the opportunity for children, young people, their families, and wider support networks to be involved and to provide input at an early stage of the policy development process. Since the development of the Strategy, some initiatives from this Strategy have been implemented (e.g., the Youth Voice Project and the Youth Plan). There are also ongoing public engagements held to monitor success against the Strategy’s outcomes, to implement and embed the Strategy appropriately, and to potentially improve the Strategy.



## Case Study: Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata – Safe and Effective Justice Programme<sup>105</sup>

Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata is an engagement-led programme that explores long-term reform to ensure a safe and effective criminal justice system. An advisory group led the public consultations and held a Criminal Justice Summit in 2018 attended by over 600 people. From late 2018 to early 2019, the advisory group travelled across New Zealand to meet with members of the public in person. Over 4000 people participated in 220 regional engagements. Additionally, they received over 200 submissions. Their participant pool included experts, Māori with lived experience within the system, victims and their families, community members, criminal justice providers, and the general public. From the extensive engagement process including the summit, the advisory group produced two reports. The first report, *He Waka Roimata*,<sup>106</sup> presents the conversations, reflections, and written submissions from the public engagements in structured themes. The second report, *Turuki! Turuki! Move Together!*,<sup>107</sup> sets out the direction and recommendations for long-term transformative change throughout the justice system based on the input received during the public engagement process.

## Participatory editing<sup>108</sup>

Participatory editing can be considered a subset of crowd sourcing, as well as having links to the mediation technique of ‘single-text negotiation’.<sup>109</sup> It involves the use of a single document to outline diverse stakeholder interests in relation to a particular issue. Participants then refine the document in an iterative process intended to develop an output that is agreeable to all parties, setting the method apart from crowdsourcing more generally. It can be especially effective when used in combination with other methods; for example, it can be used to develop a report about the proceedings of a workshop or other collaborative meeting. Participatory editing is often usefully deployed as part of community planning processes, crystallising shared views and moving towards consensus on decisions. Outside of government, the potential of participatory editing is evident in the widespread impact of Wikipedia.



## Collaborate

Collaboration involves partnering with the public in every aspect of a decision including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution. Although they may require more time and resourcing than methods at the ‘inform’ end of the spectrum, these methods are also appropriate for more complex issues that may involve competing interests. Implementing ‘collaborate’ methods early in a process is likely to improve effectiveness, because it allows participants in the collaboration to define their parameters together. Information in these models will necessarily move freely between parties, developing constantly with reciprocal openness.

### Co-design

As noted above, co-design can be used at various levels of the framework. Two further case studies are included below which illustrate more collaborative approaches to its use. The development of The Generator through the Building Financial Capability initiative put significant emphasis on the views of people directly affected by financial hardship, rather than the views of other agencies and government organisations. Although Afghanistan’s National Solidarity Programme is probably better categorised as a successful example of collaborative governance, it is also a valuable example of how co-design initiatives can actually fall further along the spectrum of public participation (i.e., collaborate rather than simply involve) by devolving greater decision-making power. Its capability building elements in particular suggest greater empowerment than a standard co-design process.

## Case study: The Generator – Building Financial Capability<sup>110</sup>

As part of their Building Financial Capability initiative, the Ministry of Social Development led a co-design process from 2015 to 2016 to explore better ways to provide services that build people's financial capabilities. The initial discovery phase of the co-design process involved literature reviews, group discussions, workshops, interviews, design sessions, and feedback via email submissions. This phase included more than 500 people who were people experiencing financial hardships, clients and providers of budgeting services, case managers from the Work and Income unit, and financial capability experts.

One of the concepts identified in the information phase was called The Generator, which is a programme that provides a guide to complete a series of carefully planned steps for a sustainable enterprise before applying for seed funding.<sup>111</sup> Successful applicants are then paired with experienced community generators who co-fund their enterprises and act as mentors.

The Auckland Co-Design Lab facilitated a design sprint to develop a high-level prototype of The Generator from practical approaches and experiences they gathered via interviews and discussions with potential users. The structure and process of The Generator was successfully tested with different stakeholders, including people who had first-hand experience of financial hardship. The Generator is now successfully operating across Aotearoa New Zealand and a recent survey held in 2021 returned very positive feedback.<sup>112</sup>

## Case study: Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme<sup>113</sup>

Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme was initiated in 2003 to alleviate poverty. The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development contracted an oversight consultant as well as 22 national and international NGOs and UN-Habitat as 'facilitating partners' to design and deliver the programme.

Facilitating partners contact villages and help them run elections for Community Development Councils (CDCs). The Councils have variable numbers of member positions (but must have a gender balance) and voter eligibility criteria, as determined by the community itself in a process overseen by a pre-cursor elected committee. The election process usually takes six months. The CDCs then lead a co-design process with their communities to submit project proposals, supported by the technical assistance of the Facilitating Partners. The proposals are funded out of the community's Block Grant, which is calculated at \$200 per family and capped at \$60,000 per community.

The initiative is widely considered a success, especially given its difficult operating conditions, being recognised as "the central policy instrument for Afghan state building and development".<sup>114</sup> A second phase evaluation found both direct and indirect forms of economic development as a result of the programme, in addition to improved quality of life in rural areas, and capacity development across all levels of participants.<sup>115</sup>



## Collaborative governance<sup>116</sup>

This is a more formal way of partnering with the public than many other models but shares similar deliberative and consensus-oriented elements. It's often used as an alternative to more adversarial interest-group processes, sometimes explicitly when these have failed. Collaborative governance arrangements are often longer term than other models and can involve other participatory elements within them.

Participants in a collaborative governance arrangement will usually be selected by the government agency initiating it. Depending on the specific issue, participants are likely to have already been identified based on interests or relevant expertise. If there are concerns about the legitimacy of the arrangement, a more open process for identifying participants may be required, although it is less common for the general public to be involved in this model.

One of the most significant challenges to successful collaborative governance is preserving clear lines of accountability within the collaboration. If government parties remain purely accountable for the outcomes of the arrangement, this can undermine the legitimacy of the collaboration and reduce buy-in from other parties. However, if decisions resulting from the arrangement are truly and meaningfully collaborative, this raises the question of where accountability for public resources will sit.

## Representative deliberative processes<sup>117</sup>

Unlike most of the other methods described in this chapter, representative deliberative processes are a broad category of method. They encompass models such as consensus building and citizens' juries and assemblies (discussed later in this chapter). Deliberative methods are most commonly applied to significant, complex issues that will benefit from constructive, thoughtful debate and consideration of different perspectives. Generally, the role of government in these methods is focused more on resourcing the process (often through another organisation to indicate independence from the government sponsor), providing expert advice, and receiving the final recommendations or other outputs from the process. This collection of participation methods has been receiving substantial attention internationally, both in academia and in practice.

There are two key characteristics that mark these methods (which can fall anywhere on the spectrum from 'involve' up to 'empower') as being part of a distinct category. The first is their emphasis on ensuring that the participating group is representative of the general public in the relevant area. Representativeness can be sought in terms of several different characteristics, usually related to demographics like age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. The purpose of seeking representation is ultimately to provide a balanced sample of differing views on the topic, which becomes important for the second defining characteristic of these methods: deliberation.

Deliberation refers to well-informed, high-quality public discussion where participants listen deeply, respect the views of others, and give reasons for their own positions. Deliberative processes are designed to tend towards consensus, or at least lessen polarisation of views, and therefore to provide better advice and/or recommendations to government. However, even where consensus is not reached, records of unresolved trade-offs and further questions, along with the capability-building impacts of public deliberation, are still worthwhile outcomes.

## Consensus building<sup>118</sup>

Consensus building is a representative deliberative method specifically designed to deal with contentious issues where there may be significantly varying views and competing or interdependent interests. The outcome of a consensus building method is not necessarily that all parties get exactly what they want, but rather that all parties come to a level of compromise. The success of this method relies on good-faith participation and the interests of all participants being heard and understood, possibly beginning right from the stage of problem definition. This model is likely to be more effective if it involves a competent and neutral facilitator.

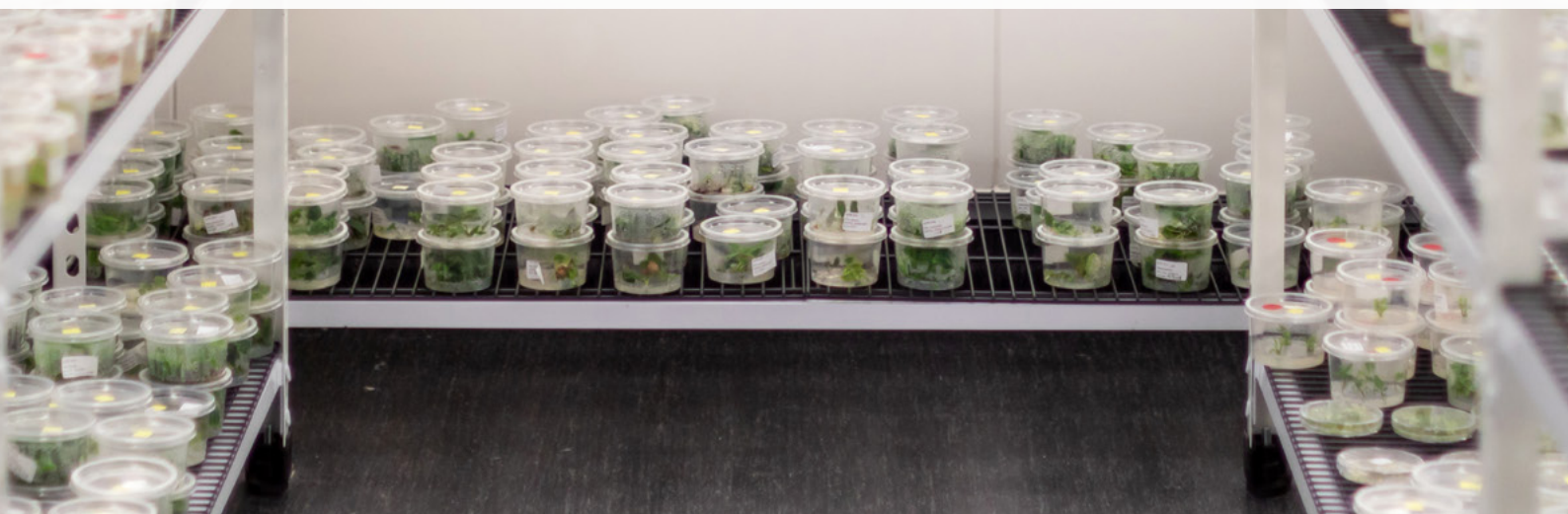


### Case study: Norwegian Consensus Conference on Genetically Modified Foods (1996 and 2000)<sup>119</sup>

The 1996 conference was organised by the National Committees for Research Ethics and the Norwegian Biotechnology Advisory Board in recognition of the need to gather the perspectives of non-experts on the genetic modification of food. The panel was to produce coordinated advice, foster dialogue between experts and citizens, and contribute to public discussion. The initial conference took place over four days after significant preparation, with expert presentations, questions, and preparation and presentation of the Panel's report. The 2000 follow-up (due to a reappearance of the issue on the parliamentary agenda) took place over two days in November with the same group of participants.

The 16 participants for the lay panel were selected from the 400 people who expressed interest in response to newspaper advertisements. The selection criteria allowed for an even split of men and women, and for a range of ages (between 18 and 72), regions, and backgrounds. Participants also had two weekend seminars of preparation in August and September. A facilitator played an important role in the development of consensus among the panel.

It is difficult to assess the conference's impact on decision-making, as it was not well-coordinated with parliamentary activity and its fairly conservative recommendations largely aligned with proposed official policies. However, the conference was considered impactful in terms of contribution to public debate, measured by high levels of media interest.



## Citizens' juries and assemblies<sup>120</sup>

Citizens' juries operate much like juries in court, with a relatively small group of participants (usually 12–25, although there are examples of larger juries) randomly selected on a representative basis to meet over several days. Members of the jury receive background information, listen to expert testimonies, and then make a judgement based on the information available. Juries are best-suited to well-defined issues with no public consensus. Although previous commentary on the method suggests that it is not well-suited to technical issues,<sup>121</sup> the time allowed by the deliberative elements and the ability to cross examine expert 'witnesses' suggest that citizens' juries can be applied to technical issues. Furthermore, policy processes surrounding technical issues will still have stages that are appropriate for non-expert engagement. For example, South Australia's Royal Commission on the nuclear fuel cycle used a citizens' jury to help identify key issues from the technical report that should be the focus for broader state-wide consultation, and then again to help review

the public feedback.<sup>122</sup> As a deliberative method that works to build consensus, citizen juries are time and resource intensive. A relatively small group of participants (usually 12–25, although there are examples of larger juries) are randomly selected on a representative basis and meet over several days. Commitment of the convening body to act on (or at least respond) to the outcome of the jury process is an important factor in the success of this model.

In the field of representative deliberative democracy there is some variation in the use of terms 'citizens' juries' and 'citizens' assemblies', as well as sometimes with 'citizens' panels' and 'consensus conferences' (the latter are discussed elsewhere in this chapter). The former models are both deliberative mini-publics, and therefore share similar methods for selecting participants, gathering information, and deliberating on a matter to inform public debate and opinion. The only commonly identified difference is that assemblies usually involve more participants than juries.

## Case study: Irish Citizens' Assembly (2016–2018)<sup>123</sup>

The assembly was established by a Resolution of both Houses of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) to consider five largely unrelated issues (abortion, ageing population, referendum processes, fixed-term parliaments, and climate change) based on agreements made in the formation of a partnership government.

The first meeting was in October 2016, with subsequent meetings across single weekends. The Assembly was to have concluded in July 2017 but was extended until 2018 due to need to greater preparatory work. The format for the meetings included expert and interest group presentations, question and answer sessions, and debates.

Facilitators and notetakers were present at each session, along with 99 randomly selected participants (and one chair appointed by the government). Participants were broadly demographically representative (based on census data – age, gender, social class, occupation, regional spread, etc.) and eligible to vote in referenda. Participants (and experts) had their costs covered (including contribution to childcare) but were not otherwise reimbursed for their time. In total, the Assembly cost 1.5 million Euros.

Recommendations were submitted to parliament for discussion and the government provided a response to each recommendation. The ultimate outcome was that the government called a referendum on abortion and declared a climate emergency.





## Case study: Te Mātāwai

Te Mātāwai is an independent statutory entity in which representatives of iwi, Māori organisations, and the Crown act on behalf of iwi and Māori to revitalise, protect, and promote te reo Māori across the whole of Aotearoa New Zealand. Established under Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Act) 2016 (the Act), Te Mātāwai has a board of thirteen members: seven representing kāhui-ā-iwi, four representing Te Reo Tukutuku (Māori language stakeholder groups) and two appointed by the Minister of Māori Development.

The purpose and functions of Te Mātāwai reflect a partnership approach, strengthening relationships between the Crown and iwi and Māori by supporting, informing, and influencing Crown initiatives as well as developing iwi and Māori leadership in relation to te reo Māori. The Act establishes a clear set of legislative functions, providing Te Mātāwai with “full capacity to undertake any business or activity, do any act, or enter into any transaction” and “full rights, powers, and privileges” necessary to perform its functions. Members of the Board can only be removed by the appointer of the relevant member (i.e., either iwi, Te Reo Tukutuku, or the Minister), implying accountability of iwi representatives to the relevant iwi groups and Crown representatives to the Minister. Te Mātāwai itself makes decisions in respect of the exercise of its functions under the Act.

## Empower

Empowerment leaves final decision making in the hands of the public, or a segment of the public. Although there is still space in some of these models for the government partner to reject the recommendations of an empowered public, this is likely to significantly undermine the success of the initiative and may also erode trust that would otherwise provide a solid foundation for a future engagement. Keeping participants in ‘empower’ methods to medium or even small groups enables greater time and effort to be put into the relationships and support mechanisms that allow them to function. Empowerment may be achieved through statute or through delegation from public authorities.

## Participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting is a model that devolves funding decisions to the people the funding is intended to help. Common features of this model are shortlisting and developing options, open decision making, and a defined level of funding to be allocated by participants. Participatory budgeting can be used on the individual level but is more commonly in specific regions. The model relies on well-understood issues and options.

## Case study: Porto Alegre, Brazil<sup>124</sup>

Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting initiative was implemented in 1989 to reduce corruption. By 2006, 19.8% of residents had participated in the budgetary process at some point.<sup>125</sup> At its peak in 2002, it involved 17,200 citizens, who self-selected their involvement at public meetings.

Debates take place over nine months, beginning with presentation of the accounts from the previous year and investment plan for the current year. Debates are split into the 16 neighbourhood districts, citywide assemblies, and meetings of the Council of the Participatory Budget. The Council is made up of elected delegates from each of the 16 districts (proportional to the number of residents present at the election meeting), giving the process a strong deliberative element. Delegates meet for two hours a week and “can only serve for one year at a time”.

Over-representation of disadvantaged groups compared to the general population resulted in a redistributive and “more effective allocation of resources”. Successive years saw an increase in the proportion of the city's overall budget included in the participatory process. Other tangible effects include more water connections, school construction, and public housing. Although the initiative was considered to have become “embedded in the institutional structure of municipal government”, it has been vulnerable in more recent years, firstly to the reduction of funds and then to suspension in 2017 following a change of administration.

### Delegated decisions

Historically, delegated government decision making has meant privatisation and contracting out. However, in the context of the IAP2 spectrum, delegated decision-making refers more to decentralisation and community empowerment through networked and local governance. It involves the transfer of decision-making (often in relation to a particular issue or desired outcome) from one party (usually a public organisation) to another (usually a non-governmental entity, but sometimes an entity at a different level of government). This method is most likely to be successful when the parameters of the delegation are clearly communicated and where the party being delegated to is seen as legitimately representative of those affected. In some cases, the delegation will need to be structured by legislation, particularly where there are questions of accountability. Characteristics of the initiating organisation such as capability, resources and political context will also have a bearing on the outcome of this method.<sup>126</sup>



## Case study: Social Sector Trials

The Trials were a community-based approach that transferred the control of resources including funding, decision-making authority, and accountability for youth social services to a Trial lead in the local community. They operated across New Zealand, starting with five in rural communities in 2011 and increasing to sixteen by 2016.

A Joint Venture and Board of social policy agencies provided national oversight and contributed funding for a separate appropriation. Operational direction was provided by a director in the Ministry of Social Development.

Trial leads (either from an NGO or a government agency) established local governance groups made up of young people, the local mayor, school principals, iwi, police, council representatives, government agencies and other community leaders. Trial leads and their governance groups consulted the community to create action plans detailing problems faced by local young people and possible solutions. Each Trial location took a different approach, using a ‘local solutions to local problems’ philosophy.

According to the evaluation report, “Trial locations valued the opportunity and flexibility to shape a government initiative [to] fit local needs, resulting in pride and ownership.”<sup>127</sup> The Trials improved community collaboration, increased responsiveness to issues faced by young people, and changed behaviours and attitudes of the young people involved. Transparency, leadership, and credibility were identified as important to collaboration and the Trials’ success.

## Using the IAP2 Framework

While the IAP2 Framework is familiar in New Zealand, it is not consistently adopted and applied across all government agencies in their interactions with the public. Formally adopting a common framework could be a first step towards improving public participation practices across government. The IAP2 Framework is not entirely sufficient to account for New Zealand’s unique context and the complexities of facilitating appropriate participation by (or delegating and devolving to) Māori as individuals, whānau, hapū or iwi, or a combination of these. Over time, the framework could be tailored over time to acknowledge the specifics of the Māori Crown relationship under te Tiriti, building on the work Te Arawhiti has already done in their *Guidelines for engagement with Māori*.<sup>128</sup>

New Zealand’s experience is weighted at the ‘consult’ end of the IAP2 spectrum, as these are well-established methods for the Public Service to seek a wider range of views and expertise in framing advice to ministers. Despite some examples of co-design and delegated decision-making, New Zealand lacks a depth of experience in the later parts of the spectrum. Some under-utilised models include representative deliberative processes like consensus building and citizens’ juries, participatory budgeting and editing, and digitally enabled democratic innovations (especially

compared to digital efforts for transactional government services).<sup>129</sup> Feedback from consultation for both the Open Government Partnership and this long-term insights briefing support this view, revealing an appetite for more deliberate use of a wider range of public participation processes.

However, the method of participation and where it falls on the spectrum are not the only factors that dictate the value of that engagement. Many of the markers of a quality public participation process, regardless of its place on the spectrum, have been touched on in previous sections, particularly Chapter 4. For example, the ‘information’ section in Chapter 4 outlines the importance of transparency and openness as an enabler of good participation. Chapter 2 outlines the democratic belief that the public has a right to be involved in decisions that affect them, recognition of which is another marker of quality participation.

Accessibility and inclusiveness are key for any participation method. It is vital that all stakeholders have equal access to the process and that they are supported to fully participate in it. One of the ways to achieve this is to seek input from participants into the design of the method – in effect, co-designing the engagement itself. The digital angle of accessibility is touched on in both the macro trends



section of Chapter 3 and in Chapter 4. Inclusiveness is a core aspect of securing a representative process, which should be pursued proactively among affected individuals, organisations, groups, and communities. For major policy issues, and complex issues affecting the whole society or large parts of it, representativeness is ensured through measures such as the randomised invitations to participate used for ‘mini-publics’ overseas. Being equally inclusive of a representative sample may require supporting and resourcing those who are willing to participate but would otherwise consider themselves unable to. As discussed in Chapter 4, achieving this quality in participation will also require a properly resourced, capable, and diverse Public Service workforce that can relate to New Zealand’s varied communities.

Clarity over the public’s role in and the parameters of a participation process are essential to avoid the possible erosion of trust that results from a mismatch between the public’s expectations and the eventuality of an engagement. As a starting point, this requires a good faith expectation that the public’s contribution will

have some impact on the decision-making process in some way (and the engagement is not just a ‘tick box exercise’). Regardless of whether that impact is to take over the decision-making or to simply having their views considered as one input into the policy process, it should be clearly indicated from the outset (probably with reference to the IAP2 spectrum). Crucially, that requires the Public Service to be honest and pragmatic about the level of power-sharing that is possible in the specific authorising environment (see also Chapter 4). Having set clear expectations for involvement and impact at the start, participants should also be informed about the impact of their input at the end. Ideally, this would include monitoring information about the implementation of any decisions and a transparent evaluation of the whole process.





WĀHANGA 6.

**Te Ahunga Whakamua**

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CHAPTER 6.

**The Direction of Travel**







## Te Ahunga Whakamua | The Direction of Travel

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**S**o far, this briefing has explored the factors contributing to greater demand for, and government interest in, public participation, including its significant benefits. Collectively, these have made the case for building Public Service capability to support governments' engagement with the public in future. We have also discussed enablers and challenges that will affect a shift to greater public participation in government. Many of those enablers and challenges are associated with ongoing work across a range of departments and portfolios to improve use of, and practices and capability for, public participation in government in New Zealand.

### Work already underway

New Zealand's largely supportive authorising environment is exemplified in the Public Service Act 2020, renewed commitment to the Open Government Partnership and social cohesion work programme responding to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack. Treatment of information is underpinned by the Official Information Act 1982, moving towards a modernised approach to proactive release that is better able to account for relevance and useability for the public into the future. Public and community capacity (in terms of awareness of opportunities, ability to shape topics, and access to appropriate avenues) is supported by Regional Public Service Commissioners and population agencies that advise the government on issues affecting specific

communities. Public Service capability is being built including through Policy Project guidance and Te Arawhiti frameworks and guidance for engagement with Māori. Digital technology, which is discussed at greater length in the Department of Internal Affairs' long-term insights briefing, has significant potential for overcoming scale and distance, improving accessibility, and enabling collaboration.

### Future direction

The question is, what should be the vision for participation? The vision is of a future that offers greater positive opportunities for participation, with processes that build relationships of trust and support social cohesion including through the priority placed on building the relationships between Māori and the Crown. All participants – public, community and Public Service – should know what form of public participation is proposed for issues, what to expect by way of behaviour, process, and safeguards, and whether they are being asked to provide information for a decision, collaborate in a decision, or make a decision. Participation should be underpinned by an attention to accessibility, inclusivity and respect for all participants, and enabled through active exploration of innovative approaches and by the development of Public Service capability.



Our assessment throughout this briefing has identified current issues with the lack of a common framework for public participation in New Zealand and the need to develop Public Service capability to work in novel ways. Moreover, Chapter 5 illustrates gaps in experience in the use of important tools and models for public participation. Given the benefits of public participation discussed in Chapter 2, and the drivers of expanded public participation in contemporary societies, there is a clear case for New Zealand undertaking a more deliberate exploration of a wider range of public participation models and techniques.

Below we set out the elements of a future direction that, when combined with other work already underway, would better enable public participation in government.

## Element 1 – Common framework and measurement

To realise a vision for the future focused on ensuring clarity around expectations and processes for public participation, we could adopt a common framework for classification. Over time, we could tailor the framework to our own specific context and needs, or even develop an entirely unique framework. In the meantime, the IAP2 framework has the benefit of availability, strong international comparability, and the existence of extensive guidance from the Policy Project on its application. The engagement framework developed by Te Arawhiti and the Policy Project’s community engagement tool developed in response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain both provide examples of how this framework can be adapted for different contexts in New Zealand.

Agencies could be required to identify which engagement approach they have taken in developing policy or designing services with reference to this framework. A simple reporting mechanism could involve a requirement for Cabinet policy decisions or decisions on the delivery of services to include information about the participatory approach pursued and why, with reference to the relevant framework. This information would be made publicly available under Cabinet’s current policy regarding proactive release of Cabinet material and could also be collated and reported by a lead agency with responsibility for oversight. More extensive reporting regimes could involve such a lead agency collecting more detailed information directly from agencies.

As with all three of these elements, there is a capability development challenge involved. The implementation of a common framework and reporting approach would likely require a minimum standard of capability for all public servants working in policy or service design. There is also, as discussed earlier, an organisational dimension of capability relating to policies and prioritisation around development of partnerships and community relationships. The Policy Project has already developed the collateral necessary to support this development, and the nominated lead agency could offer training courses to support the dissemination of this information.

## Element 2 – Innovative approaches in priority areas

While New Zealand does have examples of public participation at various levels of the IAP2 spectrum, there are opportunities to trial new approaches that allow for deeper and more meaningful involvement of the public in decision-making. In particular, representative deliberative approaches (where representative groups of the public are tasked with analysing and making recommendations on an issue) have received significant focus internationally but are relatively unfamiliar in New Zealand. There are also opportunities to use technology to make it easier for a greater number of New Zealanders to participate in decision-making.

There are a range of options for both approaches and topics for participation that might be trialled. Complex areas such as climate change, where radical policy responses may be necessary, are likely to be good candidates, and it will be crucial to follow processes that build and maintain the trust of communities who will be affected. Internationally, issues fundamental to democratic systems such as constitutional or electoral reform have been the focus of deliberative approaches like citizen assemblies. In the first instance, it will likely be appropriate to pick one or a few important issues to focus on as we build capability and expertise.

There are also opportunities to continue to learn from and expand on innovative approaches to participation domestically, such as partnership-based arrangements intended to give effect to the Treaty of Waitangi. Adapting to the unique New Zealand context is an important consideration for getting the best results from any model. For example, citizen assemblies are traditionally representative of the demographic makeup of a particular society. In New Zealand, if the subject area involves or affects the rights and interests of Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi, consideration will need to be given to whether that model could be appropriately adjusted, or alternative innovative approaches pursued.

This element and Element 3 constitute considerable capability challenges for the system. Priority capability development needs relate to ensuring transparency, cultural competencies, workforce diversity, whole-of-government approaches, and outreach/facilitation skills.<sup>130</sup>

### Element 3 – Broader shift to collaborative approaches

Supported by the implementation of a common framework and measurement (as described in Element 1), expectations could be set for where agencies should be operating on the framework. Initially, this might involve requiring more consistency in the approaches agencies take to consultation. Over time, it should involve an expectation that agencies are improving the quality of their engagements and looking for more opportunities to explore approaches on the ‘collaborate’ or ‘empower’ end of the spectrum (such as co-design or devolved decision-making).

This element would be the most challenging and costly to implement of the three proposed, for several reasons. First, it will require a significant increase in the capability of public servants. As discussed earlier in this briefing, effective community engagement requires a particular set of skills that are not common to all government officials. While a targeted approach to deepening participation as described in Element 2 could leverage expertise already present in government, a broad expectation to facilitate greater public participation across all areas will require many public servants to develop new skills and engage in unfamiliar processes. This would require a more significant investment in Public Service capability and a clear strategy for delivering necessary training. Supporting initiatives such as a standard qualification for public servants could also be considered.

Second, it will require communities to have the resources and support necessary to participate. There are significant costs in terms of both time and money to the individuals and organisations in communities who participate in government processes. If an expansion of the government’s approach to participation is to be sustainable, it will be important to ensure that communities are as well-equipped and have as much capacity to engage as the Public Service. Increased expectations to facilitate public participation should not result in a programme of engagement that places undue burden or stress on the public. The risk of overload on community representatives is a real issue, and government agencies will need to coordinate and prioritise their approaches for issues that are of the greatest importance to communities.

Finally, it is important to note that greater involvement of the public in decision-making will require strong support from political decision-makers as well as public institutions. As we have discussed earlier in this briefing, in our representative democratic system, the views and decisions of ministers will be decisive in authorising and enabling progress towards greater participation in the work of government.



The page features a decorative border of light grey Maori-style scrollwork. The border is composed of four main sections: a top section, a bottom section, a left section, and a right section. Each section contains intricate, symmetrical patterns of curved lines and spirals, characteristic of traditional Maori art. The central text is positioned within the white space created by these decorative elements.

**Ngā Āpitihanga**  
**Appendices**



# Āpitianga 1. Ngā Whakamārama | Appendix 1. Definitions

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## The scope of the ‘Public’

While our topic refers to ‘public’ participation, we also refer to and are interested in ideas such as ‘active citizenship’.<sup>131</sup> However, ‘citizenship’ often refers to the legal rights and obligations that come with membership of a nation state. This is challenging for the context of participation, where involvement of residents who are not legal citizens is equally important. We are interested in supporting all members of the public to participate in government, regardless of their citizenship status. That is why when we refer to the public as citizens, ‘citizen’ is not used in a legal sense but is understood in the broad sense of referring to all people in a society or country in an inclusive and non-discriminatory way.<sup>132</sup>

Also, ‘public’ in this briefing is intended to be understood as all components of New Zealand society including individuals and groups such as whanau, particular communities, interest groups, and representative groups including business organisations and professional associations.

Work undertaken by the Policy Project in this area refers primarily to ‘community engagement’. Community engagement and public participation in these contexts are, for practical purposes, synonymous.

## The scope of ‘Government’

In defining government, we refer to the relevant functions of the Commission to scope this topic. The Commission’s functions relate mostly to central, executive government. In this sense, we consider other branches of government – Parliament and the Courts – out of scope. At this stage we are also excluding actions or decisions by local or regional government, which other Public Service agencies have oversight of.

Within central, executive government, we expect to be focused on Public Service agencies (i.e. Government Departments) and Crown agents. This is because this topic is focused on how to involve people in government decisions that affect them – such as policy design or how services will be delivered (including services contracted out by these agencies). Public Service agencies and Crown agents are the key agencies making these types of decisions. This would include both decisions that affect New Zealanders at a national level, as well as those affecting local communities.<sup>v</sup>

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<sup>v</sup> For example, place-based initiatives, or regional decisions coordinated through the Regional Public Service Commissioner model.

## Āpiti hanga 2. Te Whakawhiti Kōrero | Appendix 2. Consultation

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This Appendix outlines the consultation process, including the two statutory periods of consultation on the subject matter and draft briefing, as well as additional stages beyond that.

### Consultation on the subject matter

In August and September 2020, we published a consultation document and invited submissions from members of the public to help us identify which of five topics we should focus our draft briefing on. The five topics were all about how the Public Service could better serve society with options around innovation, social media, joined-up government, Public Service capability, and public participation in government.

We sought submissions through a range of channels. We received 53 submissions in total, 11 of which were from organisations.

The importance of public participation was touched on by 34 submissions, making it the most popular topic we received feedback on. It was closely followed by innovation, which received particular attention from a New Zealand organisation leading on innovative programmes.

Feedback from submitters highlighted relationships between the topics, which was also acknowledged in our consultation document. For example, some submissions commented that public participation can enable innovation, but also that successful public participation requires a capable workforce, an informed public, and a joined-up Public Service.

Our broad public consultation was supported by a handful of conversations we had directly with some of the Commission's expert stakeholders from academia throughout September 2021. Following selection of the topic we also held two further workshops online in March 2022 to gather insights from the public to feed into the development of the draft briefing.

### Deciding the topic

All five possible topics that we consulted on were relevant to the Public Service Commission's specific role and functions within the Public Service.

Matters relating to public participation raised in the submissions included:

- benefits for
  - trust and legitimacy,
  - democracy, and
  - outcomes;
- barriers in terms of
  - lack of information,
  - digital exclusion and misinformation,
  - Public Service capability, and
  - quality of civics education;
- methods of participation such as
  - co-design,
  - citizens' assemblies,
  - local engagement; and
- Treaty of Waitangi / Tiriti o Waitangi considerations.<sup>vi</sup>

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<sup>vi</sup> All submissions are available in full on our website, along with our summary analysis: [www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/our-long-term-insights-briefing](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/our-long-term-insights-briefing).

Before and after selecting the topic for this briefing we initiated some discussions that were in addition to those required by the Act. First, our broad public consultation on possible topics was supported by a handful of conversations we had directly with some of the Commission's expert stakeholders from academia throughout September 2021. Many of the matters raised by the experts also came up in parts of the public consultation. Some of the key points are presented below:

- necessity of greater public involvement and engagement in light of significant periods of change, crisis as the new normal;
- threats to democracy;
- importance of civics education;
- position of social media in relation to the Public Service and traditional media;
- misinformation and echo chambers, especially state-mandated misinformation and implications for human rights and civil liberties, relationship to social cohesion;
- the role of local government and localism more generally, narrowing the gap between the public and decision-makers; and
- equity of participation.<sup>vii</sup>

## Developing the briefing

Following selection of the topic, we held two further workshops online in March 2022 to gather insights from the public that would then feed into the development of the draft Briefing. Participants were asked to address two questions:

1. What could public participation in government look like in the future? (In terms of an ideal state); and
2. What are the barriers and enablers for getting there?

We are extremely grateful to the workshop participants who gave up their time to contribute. A range of perspectives were represented, and valuable discussions sparked between participants. Common and recurring themes across these discussions are set out below:<sup>viii</sup>

- Relationships between the public and government: ongoing, inclusive, listening, resulting in change, shared understanding of purpose, people rather than process focus, co-created measures of success.
- Accessibility: relevant information communicated so that everyone can understand (simple language, sign language and interpretation, other languages).
- Deliberative and participatory focus: an objective of building consensus from disparate views, not exacerbating divisions, also requires consideration of the relationship to representative democracy and possible tensions given that participants are not elected but may still be representative of the public's viewpoints.
- Question of when various kinds of participation are appropriate: focus on the most important issues for the most involved processes, business-as-usual or time-sensitive decisions are probably less suited for participatory mechanisms, participation also in challenging decisions that have already been made not just at the start of a process.
- Resourcing: for Public Service capability, for participation processes themselves (especially as deliberative models can be time- and resource-intensive), and for civil society or communities with otherwise limited capacity.
- Public Service capability: for engaging with diverse communities, different risk profiles and power sharing, standards of behaviour in participatory work, valuing contributions, and facilitation and framing.
- Cultural leadership: a more expansive view than even the local/central discussion, looking out to the Pacific and New Zealand's range of different relationships in that region.

<sup>vii</sup> [www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Long-Term-Insights-Briefing-notes-from-discussions-with-expert-stakeholders.pdf](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Long-Term-Insights-Briefing-notes-from-discussions-with-expert-stakeholders.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> A full summary of the discussions is available on our website: [www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Long-Term-Insights-Briefing-Public-Workshop-Notes.pdf](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/SAPG/Long-Term-Insights-Briefing-Public-Workshop-Notes.pdf).



- Institutional arrangements: questions of independence, challenges of a centralised system, institutions should be enabling, Crown obligations to Māori as citizens and as tāngata whenua sometimes encapsulated in specific legislation.
- Process considerations: diverging practices due to the absence of an all-of-government standard, need for feedback loops, risk of consultation fatigue, who is participating, is the scope right.
- Examples to investigate: Pacific Youth Parliament, PYLAT (Pacific Youth Leadership and Transformation) Trust iSpeak model, and Te Reo o Ngā Tangata – a citizen’s assembly on climate.
- Steps to reach the vision:
  - diversify the Public Service;
  - address accessibility barriers, e.g. through civics education and multilingualism;
  - support innovative forms like citizens’ juries and delegated decision-making;
  - more bespoke and localised Public Services;
  - review constitutional arrangements to give effect to Crown Māori partnership; and
  - integrated whole-of-government IT system and information sharing with adequate data sovereignty controls.

We also benefitted from the insights of a workshop held by the Public Service Futures Group – an employee-led network of young public servants.<sup>ix</sup> They covered the following points:

- Benefits of participation in terms of improved policy outcomes, social licence, fulfilment of Treaty obligations, and its democratic value independent of outcomes.
- Role of public servants as conduits for the process and stewards of the Public Service.
- Vision for the 2050 Public Service’s engagement with the public:
  - Dependent on the relationship between ‘government’ and ‘the public,’ and the future system for commissioning and delivering public services;
  - Participation as a way to fill knowledge gaps;
  - More localised and tailored services in different regions;
  - Different ways of working enable a more diverse Public Service workforce;
  - Communities are empowered and barriers to their accessibility are removed; and
  - Iwi/Māori have self-determination for their engagement as Treaty partners.

### Consultation on the draft briefing

Once we had shaped up our content into a draft briefing, we published this on our website and opened for comments on it in our second round of statutory consultation under the Act. The responses we received from that consultation helped us further develop the document into this final version. Some of the key changes made to reflect this feedback are outlined below:

- Ensuring the briefing is explicit about the conditions required for participation to be effective or good, including qualities such as inclusion, equality, and respect.
- More clearly defining deliberation and emphasising its importance in terms of contribution to participation that is good/ useful/effective.
- Being clearer about the defects of the New Public Management model of public administration. In particular, the shift from treating citizens as citizens, towards treating them only as consumers.
- Strengthening the vision of the future beyond clarity for participants about the kinds of participation to expect, to include greater opportunities for participation and improved quality of participatory processes.
- Recognising the distinction between involvement of Māori in general public engagement processes and engagement with Māori as Treaty partners, and that the former should not be seen as a substitute for the latter.
- Recognising that while capacity in the public sector for engaging with mana whenua is increasing, there is still some distance to travel.

<sup>ix</sup> The summary notes of the workshop are available on our website: [www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/our-long-term-insights-briefing](http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/our-long-term-insights-briefing).

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