

## Annual Report 2021 – 2022

Tēnā koutou katoa

On behalf of the Trust Democracy Committee, I am pleased to present our 2021 – 2022 Annual Report. Following on from our establishment year, in 2020 – 2021, the Trust Democracy team worked to develop relationships, collaborate with other organisations, and take on work to strengthen democracy in New Zealand through research, education and demonstrating different ways of making democracy work as it should.

During 2021 – 2022, the impact of Covid-19 resulted in Trust Democracy learning to work more effectively in a digital space to increase our reach and interact with a greater range of groups. Our regular Committee meetings are now via Zoom, and this will make it much easier for people from other parts of NZ to join the Committee.

We will be saying farewell to Dave Henderson from the Trust Democracy Committee at our Annual General Meeting on 12 April 2022. He has worked tirelessly for the community and voluntary sector for many years. In 1998-2001, he was Secretary General of Rehabilitation International, based in New York with members in over 120 countries, focused on disabled people's rights and inclusion. His projects involved civil society organisations and governments in countries on every continent, plus United Nations agencies including Human Rights, WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and Commission for Social Development, also the World Bank, OECD and Commonwealth. Together they initiated the successful global push to create the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

From 2004-2014, Dave coordinated the Association of NGOs of Aotearoa (ANGOA), a national network supporting civil society to advocate to the Government. When it dissolved, he formed Hui E! Community Aotearoa. He was active in CIVICUS, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation, and was a founding member of the NZ Social and Civic Policy Institute, the fore-runner of Trust Democracy. His recent work with Sue Barker on the reform of charities law was under the banner of Trust Democracy. Together they involved 650 people and organisations throughout New Zealand to inform the Charities Act review. Their efforts played a part in the Government's decision to pause the review and reconsider its direction. Dave also wrote the Trust Democracy Constitution. We thank him for his tireless commitment and wise counsel as a Committee member, and look forward to working with him as a Trust Democracy member.

I wish to acknowledge the work of the Trust Democracy team, that is, Simon Wright, Andrew Ecclestone, John Pennington, and Dave Henderson. During the year, Paddy Plunket left the Committee to pursue other work. I would also like to acknowledge the generous financial support provided by Yvonne Curtis and the grant we received from the Hutt Mana Charitable Trust (see below for further details).

# Our work in 2021 – 2022

## Zoom Events

Trust Democracy organised the following Zoom events and subsequently created and published video and other resources on its website. We were heartened to see strong interest in these events.

- Helmut Modlik, A vision for democratic governance in Porirua, 12 April 2022
- Lyn Carson, Democracy 'after' COVID, 2 November 2022
- Max Rashbrooke, Overcoming obstacles to deepening democracy in Aotearoa New Zealand, 14 April 2021

## Submissions, briefings and letters

- Letter to the Chair of the Local Government Review Panel offering Trust Democracy's *Our Local Councils* choicebook as a basis for deliberative public engagement, 9 March 2022
- Joint letter and briefing with 7 other civil society organisations to the Minister responsible for the Open Government Partnership with ideas and issues for NZ's fourth National Action Plan, 6 December 2022
- Submission to Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs about its Long-Term Insights Briefing on Participatory Democracy, 19 November 2021
- Submission to Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission about the development of the Fourth National Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership, 28 July 2021
- Letter to the Chair of the Local Government Review Panel recommending the consideration of deliberative democracy, 8 June 2021
- Submission to the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Select Committee on the Incorporated Societies Bill with a focus on issues for small societies, 28 May 2021

## Deliberative workshops on the future of local democracy

Trust Democracy received a grant from the Hutt-Mana Charitable Trust to develop resources to support, and to pilot, some National Issues Forum-style deliberative workshops in Porirua on democracy. When the Government announced its review into the future of local government, the topic was changed to local democracy. After reviewing relevant literature and engaging with a range of local experts, John Pennington and Simon Wright wrote the choicebook that will be used to support the workshops: *Our Local Councils: Are people having enough say on what happens in their area?* This was published on our website on 18 December. We intend to run the deliberative workshops in 2022 when Covid-19 is less prevalent.

## Articles and other media

Members published a number of articles on the Trust Democracy website and, in one case, on stuff.co.nz.

- Andrew Ecclestone and Simon Wright, *How the media can improve the toxic dynamic with government*, Stuff, 18 February 2022<sup>1</sup>
- Andrew Ecclestone and Simon Wright, *Open government, the media, and democracy*, 18 February 2022
- Simon Wright, *A quarter of the electorate are not represented in NZ's Parliament: What should we do?* 14 February 2022
- Simon Wright, *Have local councils helped us enough to help ourselves?* 17 December 2021
- Simon Wright, *Could there be a seismic shift in democratic politics 'after' COVID?* 6 November 2021
- John Pennington, *On the path to democratic renewal*, 15 September 2021.

Simon Wright's interview with Paul McGregor from Business Lab on mass digital participation, deliberative democracy and the reluctance of NZ authorities to use either of these approaches was published on the 'Beyond Consultation' podcast on 23 March 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## Collaborating with other civil society organisations

### Open Government Partnership (OGP)

The OGP is an international initiative that aims to enhance democracy by improving participation, transparency and accountability. A number of Trust Democracy members have been actively involved in the process of developing New Zealand's 4th National Action Plan with a range of other civil society organisations.<sup>3</sup> This included meeting with Chris Hipkins, the responsible Minister, and writing a joint letter and briefing for him (see the list of submissions, briefings and letters above).

### Te Reo o nga Tāngata: The People Speak

Trust Democracy has provided information and support to Te Reo o nga Tāngata: The People Speak as it has learnt about deliberative democracy and worked towards a local citizens' assembly on climate change that will probably happen in Porirua with the support of a wide range of organisations.

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<https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/127798835/how-the-media-can-improve-the-toxic-dynamic-with-government>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.businesslab.co.nz/beyond-consultation-podcast/41>

<sup>3</sup> Hui E Community Aotearoa, NZ Council for Civil Liberties, Environment and Conservation Organisations of Aotearoa NZ, Internet NZ, Transparency International NZ, Network Waitangi Otautahi, Volunteering NZ.

### **CAB – Citizens Advise Bureau**

Trust Democracy supported the CAB's Petition and campaign to address Digital Exclusion in NZ.

### **Kettering Foundation, USA**

Members participated in the Kettering Foundations deliberative forums with people from other countries to learn and share global experiences of community participation in deliberative decision making. Members also attended the inaugural forum for the Kettering Foundation's Pacific network to strengthen shared learning in the region. The impact of changing global economic and climate on all communities in the Pacific and how people will be involved in guiding local solutions is of interest.

There is a growing interest in democracy in New Zealand and we are inspired and encouraged by the collaborative work in pursuing the joint democracy agenda in 2022.

## **Disclosures**

No conflicts of interest were disclosed by Trust Democracy committee members during 2021-22.

On behalf of the Trust Democracy committee comprising Maureen Gillon, John Pennington, Dave Henderson, Andrew Ecclestone and Simon Wright.

Ngā mihi, nā



Maureen Gillon (Chair)