

Workshop 3



Building knowledge

How do we ensure a well-informed, civically engaged New Zealand in 2030?

Thursday, 19 November 2015

Writer:

Sally Hett, McGuinness Institute

McGuinness Institute Reporters:

Hannah Steiner-Mitchell

Callum Webb

Ali Bunge

Francesca Ancillotti

Lachlan McGuinness

Annie McGuinness

Madeleine Foreman

The third and final workshop, which was held at the Royal Society of New Zealand, saw over 60 diverse participants come together to develop potential responses to the focus question for the workshop: ‘How do we ensure a well-informed, civically engaged New Zealand in 2030?’ The goal of the workshop was to spark a national conversation and document contemporary thinking around these issues.

The workshop PowerPoint presentation is available [here](#).

Peter Griffin, manager of the Royal Society of New Zealand’s Science Media Centre and co-host for Workshop 3, welcomed participants and established the responsibility of the day, which was to synthesise the speakers’ ideas into recommendations of ways to achieve the overarching vision: to ensure all New Zealanders in 2030 have an accurate understanding of the world they live in, and the ability and skills to bring about change.

Dr Peter Thompson, senior lecturer of media studies at Victoria University of Wellington, reminded us of the nature of the problem and of what we learnt from evidence presented at [Workshop 1](#). **Dr Gavin Ellis**, senior lecturer in Media, Film and Television at the University of Auckland, then outlined the nine visions for 2030 produced at [Workshop 2](#) and summarised John Campbell's conversation with five intermediate school children on how they see New Zealand now and in the future.

Wendy McGuinness, chief executive of the McGuinness Institute and co-host for Workshop 3, explained the proposed outputs for the project and the structure of the day. She described this workshop as a way to crowdsource recommendations for making progress and contributing to the national conversation. Wendy then introduced the session, which was titled '10 speakers, 5 minutes, 1 slide'.

10 Speakers, 5 minutes, 1 slide

The first formal speaker of the day, **Dame Dr Claudia Orange** – head of research at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa – used the lens of education to identify her three ideas to improve civic engagement. Her first idea addressed the lack of knowledge around democratic institutions and parliamentary systems in high school students, and suggested a visit to the capital for every young New Zealander as part of their practical learning. This tied closely to her second idea – a Waitangi visit for every young New Zealander, to better their understanding of the histories and relationships of New Zealand. This would inspire a shared appreciation for our growing multicultural society, embedded in our bicultural history. Dame Dr Claudia's third idea was based on how she herself was taught – see issues, judge what you can do, and act. She proposed a leadership course from senior primary to high school, which would ask for commitment to New Zealand values as per her first two ideas. The goal would be to inspire leadership and kiwi pride by providing space for difficult conversations to be had and for young people to become empowered to make a difference.

Dr Carwyn Jones, senior law lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington, reminded the participants that significant change is needed before meaningful civic engagement can take place. He argued that government institutions currently disempower citizens from using their voices and calling for action. Carwyn's first idea proposed teaching young people how to create a respectful conversation by making their voices heard in new and different ways. This respectful conversation would call out inappropriate content and prioritise reliable information on issues of climate change, peace and equality. If we do not have these ideas as priorities, we could be steering citizenship in the wrong direction – away from a sustainable, engaged society instead of towards it. His second idea was to establish an independent organization to make this reliable information accessible. His final idea envisioned a new model of citizenship through grassroots changes to the power structure from the outside.

Jane Wrightson, chief executive of New Zealand On Air, spoke from a broad media perspective. Her first idea – pro bono with a twist – focused on industry collaboration. She

proposed creating a competition-free hub for a specialist news audience – a new joint venture. This could take the form of a curated news report targeted at school students with the aim of growing appetites for future news consumption. Her second idea was to address the need for democratic organizational coordination in the media industry in order to overcome the current silo structure. This could be done by creating a combined multimedia council for an online democracy initiative each election. Council-member organizations would commit three months per year to the initiative. Her third idea called for yearly journalist think piece projects that would follow a major world political event from a New Zealand perspective. This kiwi lens and research-driven work would engage audiences with better quality content. A trend that emerged in Jane's ideas was the importance of working together and supporting other media companies. The business enemies are no longer each other, but global media organisations.

Dr Helen Sissons, senior journalism lecturer at Auckland University of Technology, addressed the issues of growing journalism talent and of protecting 'big J' public journalism. Her first idea suggested teaching journalism students transparency of reporting processes to ensure accuracy of information. This would help journalists become a trusted and credible source of information, which is crucial to public journalism. Supporting this was the idea of fostering a willingness amongst journalists to interact and build connections with the audience, by allowing the audience to be co-writers and researchers. Her final idea emphasised the importance of building relationships within the media industry. For public consensus around journalism funding, the public should be reminded that democracy doesn't just happen by itself and that New Zealanders will continue to need the media to hold power to account.

Dr Siouxsie Wiles, senior lecturer in medical sciences at the University of Auckland, opened by stating that the current science system is fundamentally broken. Her first idea called for the removal of algorithms embedded in our web browsers. These algorithms generate online personalisation that creates echo chambers we are unaware of, limiting our access to a range of information and opinions. Her second idea – open science projects – would connect communities, schools, academia, CRIs and industry with transparent data. Her third idea – teaching critical thinking from pre-school – would teach children how to spot logical fallacies and would boost society's understanding of how conscious and unconscious biases affect our decision making.

Louise Green, president of the New Zealand Educational Institute, presented her ideas from an educational standpoint. Her first idea – for every school to teach the New Zealand curricula as intended – argued that there is room in the curriculum for soft skills to be taught, which would help to grow actively engaged life-long learners and citizens. These soft skills are currently pushed aside in favour of subjects that are measured by national standards. Her second idea was for teachers to help develop student agency – by encouraging them to articulate who they are as part of their school, family and community – which would enable them to develop their own voice and take action on things that are meaningful to them. These are skills that would grow creative problem solvers in our communities. Her third idea aimed to establish low-decile schools as community hubs to address disparities between deciles. These would provide coordinated cross-agency

support to ensure equity of access, opportunity and success. Putting Louise's ideas in action would mark a significant step towards achieving the education system's overall goal – to level the playing field.

Terry Burrell, teacher at Onslow College, called on us as educators and community members to stop stifling innate curiosity. Somewhere between five years of age and the end of our schooling, our curiosity is being suppressed until it is lost. We need to explore and probe students' own knowledge in order to foster their personal curiosities. Terry's second idea was a recurrent one throughout the workshop – that of teaching philosophy and critical thinking to school children. This would help young people to develop effective bias detectors and to think about thinking, reasoning ability and argumentation. The current system pre-digests information for students, stifling the development of these skills instead of acknowledging their increasing importance in navigating the internet and all its information. Her final idea was to replace level 1 NCEA with an extended civic and scientific investigation, which would connect every school with a research institute or museum and a local conservation project. Through current modes of assessment, children are funnelled into academia, but we need a broader, more liberal approach to successful learning with less assessment and more engagement and dynamic learning. This could take the form of long-term participatory science platforms, the length of which would allow for mistakes and feedback to build resilience and perseverance in children.

Tara Ross drew on her education and journalism backgrounds – being a senior journalism lecturer at the University of Canterbury and research associate at the Pacific Media Centre. Her first idea was to build a range of inclusive media models to meet the needs of all people by diversifying personnel and content and by increasing collaboration. When Tara discussed mainstream media with Pacific audiences she repeatedly encountered the sentiment 'it's not my news,' indicating a strong sense of alienation and a serious lack of fair representation amongst those whose voices we need to hear the most. Her second idea proposed supporting news media innovation in the online and social media space. This is where young people are looking for their news, so we need to match this demand with quality news information online. Her third idea encouraged media to prioritise, fund and celebrate quality journalism by and for ethnic minorities by collaborating and engaging directly with communities.

In the next presentation **Sylvia Nissen** developed her ideas from her PhD research at the University of Canterbury. Her first idea recommended a charter for broadcasting that would enable rich public content across multi-platforms, helping us to move beyond deficit and diet models of citizenship. Sylvia argued that the new generation of university students have high democratic aspirations but growing frustrations with existing processes and with the lack of opportunities to evoke meaningful change. Her second idea was to establish a new role for the Broadcasting Standards Authority – to track the extent to which diverse audiences feel listened to, with the hope of identifying inequalities and regional disparities in the public conversation. Sylvia's third proposition was to empower young people by developing platforms and reforming existing organisations in order to provide the resources – time, space and mentoring – for young people to bring about change. We

need to treat young people as actors, not understudies, in shaping the direction of New Zealand's future.

The final speaker of the day, **James Dunne** – chief executive at the Superdiversity Centre for Law, Politics and Business – advocated that compulsory voting, coupled with a particular focus on enrolment of and communication with groups that have poor participatory rates, would drive a better understanding of the parliamentary system. This would encourage political parties to engage with a more diverse range of people who would otherwise choose not to vote. His second idea focused on building inclusiveness into our multicultural society by requiring every government agency to adopt a formal multicultural and multilingual plan on engaging with all New Zealanders. This would be a direct push to involve all New Zealanders in our public institutions. The final idea of the day was to implement a compulsory course on citizenship for high school students and new New Zealanders to teach our core New Zealand values.

A panel session followed the presentations, where all the speakers had the opportunity to elaborate on their ideas and have them stress-tested by participants. The key challenges identified were those of funding and of how to rebuild the public's trust in quality journalism as being vital to our democracy and civic engagement.

Over lunch the ideas that had emerged so far were written up on the wall. Each participant was given five stickers, which they placed next to the ideas they wanted to explore in the afternoon. Working in self-selected groups, participants then further developed six ideas of collective interest, each relating to an overarching theme of the workshop series. These ideas are the means to achieving the nine visions from Workshop 2.

Group one began by discussing the need for a joint venture between broadcasters for quality civic journalism. It was felt that this collaboration between 'big J' (public service) journalists should include existing organisations, journalism schools, faculties and freelancers. This discussion led to the idea of a Media Summit. The Media Summit would have three pillars: Advocacy – giving journalists a united voice; Standards – creating a media-wide regulatory body of ethics; and Collaboration – promoting valuable content and quality 'big J' journalism. Discussion in the report-back session highlighted the need to rethink the funding of public service journalism and focused on a marginal levy model. The main goal of the summit would be to repurpose journalism and reconstruct its reputation to be trusted by and valuable to all New Zealanders. It would also promote a fiscally neutral marginal levy of either 1% or 0.5% on a wide range of media services and products across the value chain (including networks, software and hardware). This would collectively contribute to current market failures so all sectors could help collect revenue to off-set the gaps in the market. A 1% levy could potentially raise an annual fund of up to \$160m and would be insulated from inter-ministerial budgets and inflation.

Group two dived straight into developing Sylvia Nissen's idea of a charter for broadcasting that would enable public content across multi-platforms. They debated creating a new media operator or reforming TVNZ, but consensus grew around Radio New Zealand because of its reputation and the lower cost of adapting it. Both mainstream and niche

models of operation were discussed, but a public service publisher (with NZ On Air) was the decided model. The next challenge was to work out a funding strategy and how funds should be spent. The idea of an indexed tax lost support due to the possibility of subsequent governments cutting funding. The levy discussion by group one would prove viable for the charter to fund the restructuring of RadioNZ into a public service multi-platform operator. The quality of programmes and production would need to be high for public support of the charter.

Group three quickly reached agreement on the value of lowering the voting age to 16, as this would allow for greater school involvement. It would provide students with information and a forum for discussion before their transition out of school. The group also felt that teachers should encourage students to partake in mock parliaments and Model UN education programmes. They then brainstormed around the idea of a no confidence vote to distinguish 'can't be bothered' from 'disillusioned' non-voters. The discussion then addressed how the media currently focuses on entertainment politics and the polls, rather than issues during elections. The group wanted to see the media responsible for informing, not entertaining, the public. The media should work hard to make information digestible for the public, for example by publishing Hansard as a cartoon. The group then looked at how parliament works internally, and saw the possibility of moving away from the bipartisan structure towards a more inclusive circular arrangement as a step in the right direction. To represent the diversity of New Zealanders in parliament, one idea put forward was to implement a MP quota system. This would help create a more inclusive New Zealand.

Group four's focus on open-source science came out of the ideas put forward by Siouxsie Wiles. The group's discussion aimed to establish the different aspects of open-source science. Their first idea was to ensure open access to scientific publications and transparency of all data. This would allow data to be reused to reaffirm another scientists' findings, minimising costly repetitive research. The group saw a role here for public media: to interpret academic work and to publish it in a way the public can understand. This would help to build relationships and trust between scientists and journalists. The group's second idea was to open up the whole scientific process to the public who could participate by both collecting and interpreting data, there providing a space for community engagement. Improving the existing participatory science platform would anchor communities in the collaborative open research process. The discussion then turned to how we might make this happen. The roadblock to open-source science is the way scientists are currently assessed and rewarded. The group recognised the need to reform incentives, which they proposed achieving through a new funding model with extra grants to make the research journey public, as mandated by government. This would reinforce the democratic principle that publically funded research should be freely available to the public. In addition, an outreach dissemination fund would incentivise the promotion of public participation in the scientific process. This funding could come from multiple agencies and be managed through an open access action station. This idea led the group to discuss policy in terms of how we can encourage government and MPs to get involved. To address this, they proposed a practical business plan showing the benefits to community and science. Another idea to encourage public engagement with science was to build it

into the education system at the university level – teaching the realities of funding and the accessibility of data to students.

Group five looked at growing a stronger idea of citizenship, with consensus around Louise Green's idea of refocusing the school curriculum away from national standards in primary schools. More attention needs to be placed on teaching civics and critical thinking at the frontend of the curriculum. It was recognised that additional government funding would be needed to educate teachers on civic responsibility and critical thinking. This realignment of the front and back ends of the curriculum would encourage classroom connections and help create a safe space for conversations where students feel empowered. The group built on the idea of this safe space by proposing an inclusive network of community hubs around schools. This would strengthen personal connections and extend engagement to parents and the wider community. Sharing stories and skills in a safe environment would make the communities more resilient. Suggested hubs were community gardens, citizen projects and bird count programmes. A new idea that emerged from the group discussion was an immigrant-mentoring project. Volunteers and new New Zealanders would partner to discuss the public conversation and what it means to be a New Zealander, and to learn about each other's culture. The forum for these conversations would vary from phone calls to monthly meetings, with the aim of building connections across New Zealand and creating a sense of attachment.

The lack of freely available, high-quality online resources led group six to focus on the idea of creating access to online resources that contain the kind of content needed to meet the goal of improved citizenship. Inspiration was drawn from the Ministry of Education's 'Pond' website but the group recognised a need for more robust curation in order to ensure good quality resources that teachers, students and the wider public can trust. To ensure that it is used, it would need to be appropriately promoted. Out of this consideration came the idea of creating a space for sharing stories across New Zealand to promote place-based learning for school children. This could take the form of online collaboration via skype to connect people of different cultures and locations, as well as first-hand learning experiences such as free visits to heritage sites. These visits could be paired with a mentoring programme between young adults and children, with a focus on citizenship education. A continuing theme in the discussion was inequality and the lack of connection with New Zealand, particularly for minority groups. The group recognised the relationship between a feeling of attachment to New Zealand and a desire for public engagement and civic participation. To address this, the group proposed using online resources to create an environment that fosters belonging. This could be through resources that encourage volunteering and social action as well as targeting disengaged groups such as Māori, Pacifica and the disabled community. The use of online decision-making platforms such as Loomio were also suggested as a way for citizens to make their voices heard and to know they were having an impact.

Hannah Bartlett and **Sun Jeong** presented the illustrations they developed over the day – The Body of Society and The Civics and Media Wellness Report. These are illustrations of how society's systems need to work together to reach our vision for a civically engaged New Zealand in 2030.

Todd Krieble, Strategic Adviser at the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, shared the next steps for the project and **Peter Griffin** closed the workshop series by thanking participants for joining the conversation and acknowledging the sponsor organisations for their efforts throughout the workshop series.