

NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Long-term Insights
Briefing:
Initial consultation
document
October 2021**



**Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs**



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government**

Whakapuakitanga a te Hekeretari mō Te Tari Taiwhenua | Secretary for Internal Affairs foreword

**Kia tuia te rangi ki te whenua, te whenua ki te rangi
Mā te mahi tahi e rangonahia ai te whanaungatanga
Mā te whanaungatanga e tō mai i te manaakitanga
Nā te manaakitanga ka pupū ake te kaitiakitanga
Māna e rarau ake, kātahi ka puta te kotahitanga
Tau, tau, tau ana e!**

At Te Tari Taiwhenua, our mahi is focused on many aspects of what it means to be a New Zealander and how people get involved in the life of their communities and democracy at all levels, including in rural areas, towns, and cities, and across the motu.

We've chosen to focus our Long-term Insights Briefing on community participatory democracy and how digital technology could influence this in the next 10 years and beyond.

Te Tari Taiwhenua works across the community and voluntary sector, including with charities, we help deliver advances in digital government and we support the work of local and central government. Through the National Library of New Zealand and Archives New Zealand we protect our nation's and our government's memory. We also look after identity services – including births, deaths, marriages, citizenship and passports.

All these elements of our work help to build the fabric of community and how people participate, or don't, in our system of democracy and in their communities.

The roles people play in communities are increasingly important as we face new global and local challenges. At the same time, digital technology continues to evolve at pace and shape the way we live our lives and interact with each other and government.

Over recent years we've seen the importance for everyone to work together and be involved in their local communities, as Aotearoa has faced multiple events including the Christchurch terror attacks, the Whakaari / White Island disaster, floods, fires and other extreme weather events and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. And we know we will need to continue working together to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing New Zealand in the coming 10 years.

This is why we think this is important enough to find out more. What are the reasons some people do not participate in civic life or democratic processes? How could central and local government's use of technology create opportunities and new challenges in the future?

We are looking forward to exploring this Long-term Insights Briefing topic with you and to hearing your views as we develop our advice.



Paul James

Secretary for Internal Affairs

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Introduction

Kupu whakataki | Introduction

Welcome to our public consultation on the proposed topic for our Long-term Insights Briefing. We are interested in your views about the topic itself, whether it is of interest to you, and where you think we should focus.

He aha te Puka Whakamārama i te Pae Tawhiti? | What is a Long-term Insights Briefing?

Long-term Insights Briefings are a new requirement for the New Zealand public service. Introduced in the Public Service Act 2020, the briefings need to be submitted at least once every three years.

Chief executives have a statutory duty to produce the briefings independent of ministers. They differ from the advice that the public service provides ministers, or the accountability and planning documents prepared for Parliament.

The briefings are think-pieces on the future – they are not government policy. Their purpose is to develop:

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

If you want to learn more about these briefings, please visit the [Policy Project website](#).¹

He aha te take kua kōwhiria e mātau? | What topic have we chosen?

Our proposed topic is:

What is the future of community participatory democracy² in New Zealand, and what role could the government’s increasing use of digital technology play?

Our Briefing could investigate:

- the ways people participate in: their communities (including through charities, non-government organisations, volunteering); local and central government decision-making; and groups with shared interests – as well as how this could change in the future;

¹ <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/policy-project/long-term-insights-briefings>

² For the purposes of our Briefing, we define participatory democracy as “participation by citizens or groups in political decisions and policies that affect their lives, both directly and through elected representatives.”

- what are some of the future challenges to participation and opportunities to enhance this; and
- the role digital technology could play.

Although they are important influences on our topic, we are **not** proposing to investigate options around the role of social and mainstream media and forms of local and central government.

He aha te āhua o tēnei i te ao ia rā? | What does this look like in daily life?

Community participatory democracy is important to everyone and plays out all around Aotearoa every day. Here are some examples of what this looks like:

- *A local rugby club applies for a liquor licence. They meet and agree that the chair and committee will meet with the council to put their case. Their neighbour objects to this application. She kept an eye on the library noticeboard and saw the notified application, so was aware it had been lodged. She catches up with her other neighbour across the fence to discuss the End of Life referendum. They're thinking of appearing before the select committee because they feel so strongly about the topic. The local member of Parliament is holding a meeting in the local community hub tonight to hear people's views.*
- *A marae kāinga and hapū are getting together to think about how the decision of regional governing bodies might be impacting on their cultural relationship and whakapapa to the taiao (environment). They are aware that access to these governing bodies to make submissions is now online. The drivers of hapū development take advantage of the many whānau, kuia and koroua who arrive home from afar for tangihanga to canvass their ideas to help inform their marae and hapū submission. Much of the ideas are played out on the marae atea and in te reo Māori.*

He aha e hira ai tēnei take e marohitia ana? | Why is this proposed topic important?

As we develop this briefing, we want to learn more about how people participate in their communities, how they have a say in democratic processes, and the role digital technology plays. We want to explore the influence future trends and changes in technology might have on this, and how we could shape how we respond.

The points below set out why this is important, some key facts that provide context about our current environment and future trends, and what we hope to learn.

We want to better understand the forces that will shape how people participate and to build options around how government can work with communities across New Zealand to encourage participation.

It is important that people can participate in the life of their communities and in their government

Community participatory democracy goes to the influence that citizens and communities have on decision-making and policy-setting through exercising their democratic voices. It's about having your say in decisions that might affect you or your community.

Obligations under Te Tiriti go further than community participatory democracy

When we talk about communities, we use this term broadly, recognising the obligations of the Crown-Māori relationship enshrined in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the special status of tangata whenua.

Government agencies are increasingly giving effect to their obligations to Māori and honouring Te Tiriti through mana ōrite relationships, which commit to equal partnership, rather than solely focusing on participation in decision-making.

Our population is becoming more diverse

New Zealand's population is becoming increasingly diverse, with more than 27 percent of people born outside of New Zealand and more than 80 ethnicities with more than 1,000 residents each. This trend is predicted to continue over the coming decades³, and it is unfolding in the bicultural context of the Crown-Māori partnership. A more diverse population creates additional challenges and opportunities in facilitating community participatory democracy.

We need to work together to be resilient to future shocks

The last two years have seen countries tested by a devastating global pandemic, the growing impact of climate change, and the continued rise of misinformation. We expect challenges like these to be a regular feature of our future. As tough as these times are, they also present us with an opportunity to work together – we need the ideas of many, not a few, to help us come up with innovative solutions that help our communities to thrive. Greater participation in democratic processes will help decision-makers source more ideas from more people and build innovative thinking about our road ahead.

Volunteering levels remain high, but fewer people are doing more

More than one in five New Zealanders volunteer. Recent estimates are that 21.5% of New Zealanders undertake formal volunteer work and contribute 159 million hours of volunteer labour each year.⁴ While the number of people who volunteer has fallen significantly in the last decade – from 462,179 in 2010 to 223,619 in 2019 – the total number of hours in voluntary work has remained steady.⁵ Volunteering strengthens people's connections to their communities, encouraging them to get involved in democratic processes like making a submission, attending a council meeting, or seeking a leadership role in a community group.

³Statistics New Zealand <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-zealands-population-reflects-growing-diversity>

⁴Volunteering New Zealand, State of Volunteering Report, 2020, https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/F_SOV-Report2020_Single-Pages_1July.pdf. Informal volunteering rates are estimates at a much higher rate of 49.8% of New Zealanders age 15 or over, Statistics NZ, NZ General Social Survey 2016.

⁵Charities Services Volunteer Week 2021 infographic: <https://www.charities.govt.nz/assets/Charities-Volunteer-Week-infographic-2021-v2.pdf>

People are interested in having regular dialogue with government about things that are important to them...

What needs to change in the future to support regular dialogue and engagement between communities and government?

In 2017 Te Tari Taiwhenua surveyed citizens (195), NGOs (nine) and government agencies (20) to understand experiences and look for opportunities to use digital channels to support people's participation in democratic processes.⁶ Forty-one percent of respondents told us they would like to see existing government channels improved or new channels opened to have their say on issues that mattered to them. People told us they wanted government to shift away from short term engagements toward an ongoing conversation.

...and at the same time, voting patterns are uneven

New Zealand has traditionally had high levels of voting in general elections, with turnout in the 2020 general election the highest since 1999 (82.24 percent of enrolled electors).⁷

However, there is growing anecdotal evidence that community engagement in local issues is falling. Voting for local authorities is declining, and rates of participation in local elections are mirrored by low rates of engagement in council processes, such as submissions on annual plans and long-term plans.⁸

We want to understand the role that digital technology could play in supporting community participatory democracy and ways in which it could have a negative impact.

Government is increasingly digital...

Government agencies are growing their online presence, and the variety of services offered online is only expected to grow. Currently it includes everything from DigitalNZ, which is home to a vast online resource for New Zealand's heritage, to myIR, which enables you to file your taxes online, to Te Tari Taiwhenua's online passport renewal service.

...however, access to digital technology is not evenly distributed

In an increasingly digital world, digital inclusion has become essential to fully participate in our modern society and economy. It is estimated that up to one in five New Zealanders are digitally excluded in some way.

⁶ [Report: How digital can support participation in government](#), Department of Internal Affairs, 2017.

⁷ The proportion of the voting age population estimated to have cast votes in general elections has declined from 89% in 1984 to 72% in 2014. Source Social Report 2016 <https://socialreport.msd.govt.nz/civil-and-political-rights/voter-turnout.html> but more recent evidence suggests an gradual increase with 79% of enrolled people voting in the 2017 general election.

⁸ Local authority voter turnout has declined from 56% in 1989 to 42% in 2019. Local Authority Election Statistics 2019 are at <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Services-Local-Elections-Local-Authority-Election-Statistics-2019>

Digital technology presents many opportunities as well as challenges

Digital tools and platforms bring people together, allowing for greater collaboration, connection and knowledge-sharing than previous generations could have imagined, and this is going to continue to expand. But we have also seen the rise of online harm.

We know that emerging technology will continue to generate ethical, moral and philosophical questions for society – even though it is difficult to anticipate what these are from where we stand today looking out to 2032 and beyond.

We need to consider what good digital engagement with government looks like in New Zealand in the future

We understand that New Zealanders have diverse cultural backgrounds, interests and needs, so government needs to think about, and plan for, meeting people’s needs in ways that make best sense for them. This includes how easy it is to participate, how government seeks community participation in decision-making, and how effective this is at uncovering diverse perspectives.

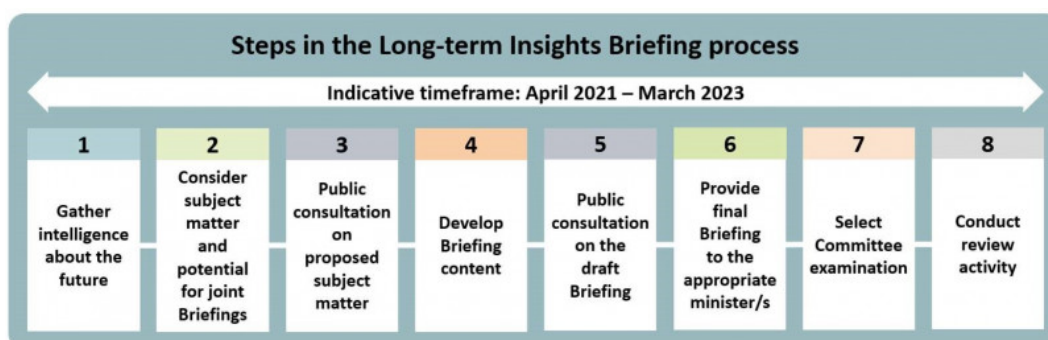
Te āhua o tā mātau waihanga i te Puka Whakamārama i te Pae Tawhiti | How we will build our Long-term Insights Briefing

We will formally seek feedback at two stages as we develop our Briefing.

We will use this consultation document to seek feedback on the subject, scope and focus of our Briefing (Step 3 below). This will help us develop the first draft.

We will continue engaging with stakeholders as we develop the draft Briefing (Step 4). In early 2022, we will seek feedback on the draft Briefing from the public (Step 5).

The final Briefing will be presented to the Minister of Internal Affairs (Step 6), who will present it to the House of Representatives. This is expected around 30 June 2022.



Te āhua o tā mātau mahi tahi me ētahi atu | How we will work with others

We are working with other public service agencies whose topics are aligned with ours where it makes sense to do so. We will look for opportunities to work closely with non-government organisations that can share with us their insights or challenge our topic areas.

For the initial public consultation with Māori and non-Māori we will be leveraging our existing relationships, networks and advisory groups. In shaping our approach, we are mindful of other priorities across the sector, the significant consultation already underway on other issues, and the current focus for many on COVID-related issues.

For more information on the topics other agencies have chosen for their briefings see the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission [website](#).⁹

⁹ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/long-term-insights-briefings/public-consultations/>

Ngā pātai kia pai ai tō tuku whakaaro mai | Questions for your feedback

These questions relate to the proposed topic below for a Long-Term Insights Briefing.

What is the future of community participatory democracy in New Zealand, and what role could the government's increasing use of digital technology play?

We would like your feedback on these questions:

Please note: the questions are included here so you can read them alongside the discussion document. The full survey will also include some optional questions that will allow us to see if we are receiving feedback from a diverse range of recipients.

1) Please respond to the following statement:

“This proposed topic is worth exploring in a Long-term Insights Briefing”

- a) Strongly Agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly Disagree

Optional: explain your choice

2) What aspects of this proposed topic are most important to you or your organisation? Choose from the following options:

- a) How to increase people's participation in their communities
- b) How to increase participation in democracy – for example making a submission on a government proposal
- c) The impact of the increasing use of digital technology by government
- d) Other

Optional: explain your choice

3) Do you have any information or insights you think should be used in developing this Briefing? Yes/No - If Yes please provide more details.

4) Do you have anything else to share (relating to the topic or in response to a previous question)? You can add a document or image.

5) If you want to receive updates on this work and opportunities to engage with it further, enter your email.

Me pēhea te tuku whakaaro mai | How to give feedback

There are three ways you can provide feedback:

- through our online survey you can find at www.dia.govt.nz/long-term-insights-briefing
- by emailing LTIB@dia.govt.nz
- by posting to Department of Internal Affairs, Attn: Long-term Insights Briefing, PO Box 805, Wellington 6140

The deadline for making a submission is 5pm, 18 November 2021.

Ka pēhea tā mātau whakamahi i ō mōhiohio | How we will use your information

1. The Privacy Act 2020 contains principles about the collection, use and disclosure of information about individuals. Any personal information you supply to DIA in your submission will only be used for developing advice relating to this discussion document and DIA's Long-term Insights Briefing (LTIB).
2. After this first consultation is complete, we will publish a Feedback Summary based on the submissions. This summary will be anonymised.
3. If you are concerned about being identified, please be mindful of this when responding to questions. We won't use quotes or other information that we think could identify an individual or organisation, but we can't guarantee that a person analysing responses won't be able to identify you or your organisation from the information you provide.
4. Please note that your submission is also subject to the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). This means that other people may be able to obtain copies of submissions by making a request under the OIA.
5. If you think there are grounds for your information to be withheld under the OIA (for example, that the information is commercially sensitive), please note this in your submission. We will take your reasons into account and may consult with you, if you provide contact details, when responding to requests under the OIA.
6. There are some optional questions in the survey that will help us capture views from a diverse group of respondents.
7. You can also choose to be notified when the Feedback Summary is published and for us to inform you about any other opportunities to be involved in this work.
8. We will keep your submission secure and you have the right to access it. If you have any queries or concerns about this survey or the privacy of your information, or you are experiencing any technical issues with the feedback process, please email the Long-term Insights Briefing team at: LTIB@dia.govt.nz