



Survey: Seeking a youth voice

Introduction

This survey was undertaken to create a resource for the *LocalNZ* workshop, which ran from 16–19 November 2014. The workshop connected 35 New Zealanders between the ages of 18 and 25, providing a collaborative space for them to identify existing and emerging opportunities and challenges. This initiative formed part of the McGuinness Institute's *TalentNZ* project – creating an informed, focused and networked group of young New Zealanders able to engage effectively with government and the communities in which they live. Participants explored the question: *How do regional goals align with national goals, and how might these goals need to change in order to aid regional growth?*

Quality resources are a crucial component of the workshops we run. For *LocalNZ*, it was important that the participants were not limited to their own experiences and opinions on youth and local government issues. Therefore, we designed a survey with questions that anticipated the issues the participants would soon be discussing. We also asked broad questions that allowed respondents to identify the issues they find particularly important. The response was excellent. Exactly 100 people took the survey, ensuring depth and variety to the answers that were given. We acknowledge that this is not representative, as many respondents were friends of the Institute or were involved with youth councils. The survey is a probe to gauge what issues young people (who are generally interested in civics) want addressed. Therefore, it is intended only to provoke discussion and is unsuitable as a reference for any academic endeavours.

The survey's answers can be divided into two categories: numerical and written. Numerical responses are the ones that can be represented statistically, such as the respective ages or home towns of respondents. This category also includes questions with multi-choice or yes/no answers. Numerical responses are presented as a series of graphs and charts. Written responses are listed under broad sub-categories that cover all of the issues raised. Respondents' answers are not all given in full, as this document aims only to summarise the responses given, and spelling errors and minor grammar issues have been rectified.

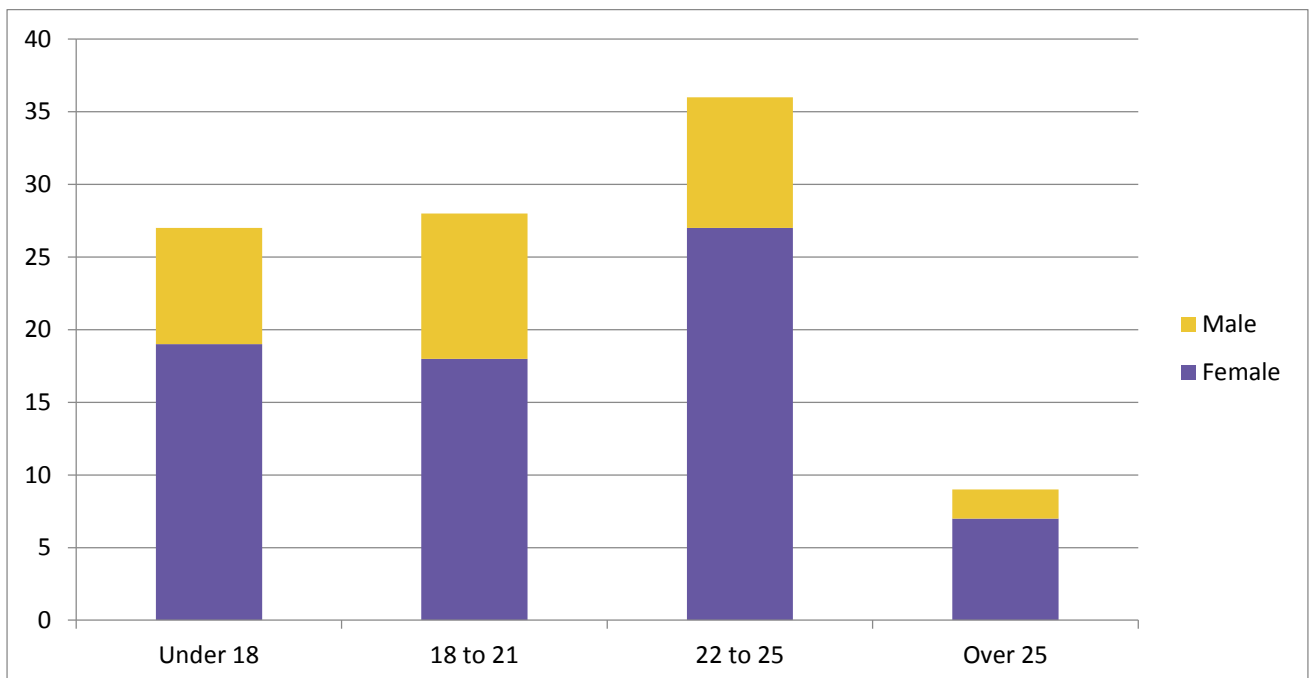
In collating the responses, it became clear that there are common issues that concern/interest young people. Recurring areas that respondents focused on were issues relating to civics, housing, youth representation, transport, employment, education, community organisations/activities and the environment. It is unsurprising, therefore, that these topics generated a lot of discussion during the workshop.

Youth Survey Summary

Numerical Responses

A. Respondent's Age and Gender:

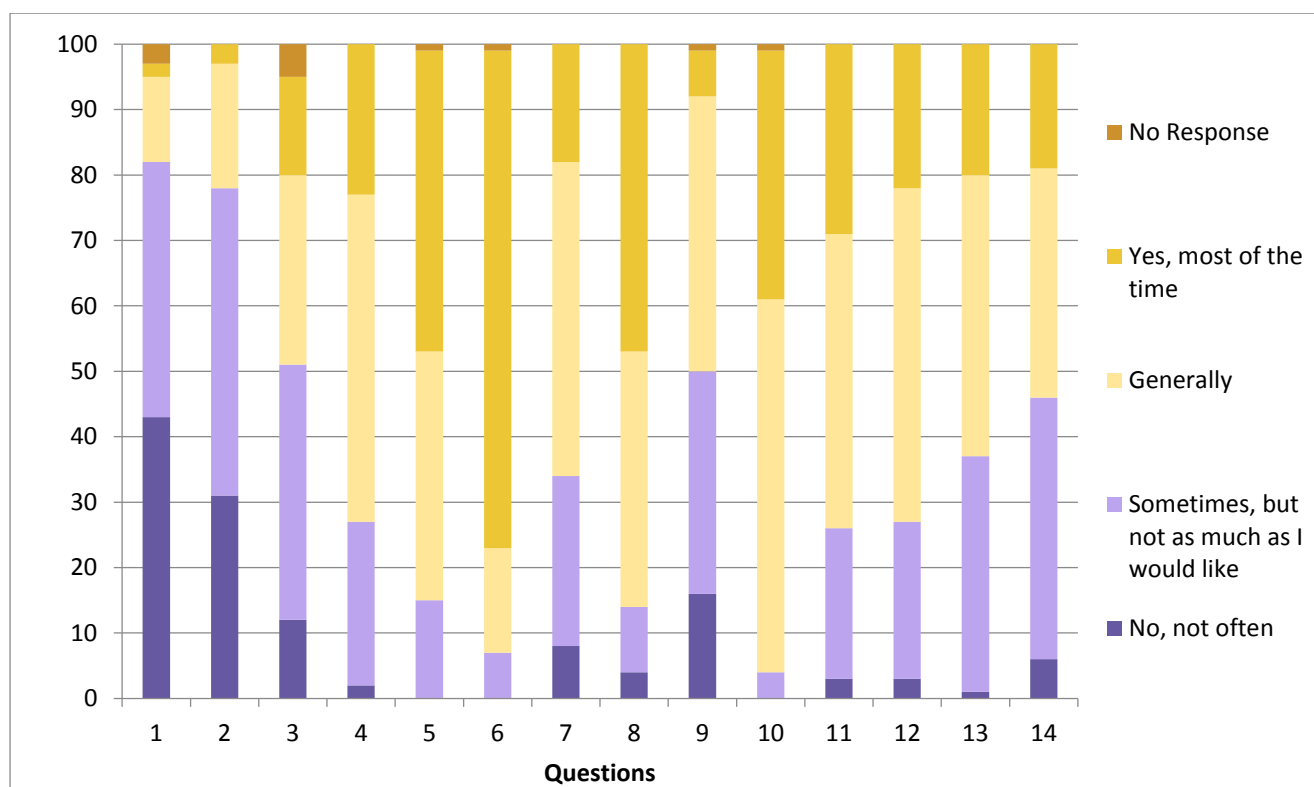
Age	Male	Female	Total Responses
Under 18	8	19	27
18 to 21	10	18	28
22 to 25	9	27	36
Over 25	2	7	9



B. Respondent's Region of Inhabitation:

Region	City (above 50,000)	Town (between 1,000 to 50,000)	Rural setting (below 1,000)	Total Responses
Northland Region	0	1	1	2
Auckland	10	0	0	10
Waikato Region	4	0	2	6
Bay of Plenty Region	1	0	0	1
Gisborne District	0	2	0	2
Hawke's Bay Region	0	0	0	0
Manawatu-Wanganui Region	1	2	1	4
Taranaki Region	2	1	0	3
Wellington Region	35	4	3	41
Marlborough District	0	0	0	0
Tasman District	1	0	0	1
Canterbury Region	15	5	1	21
West Coast Region	0	3	1	3
Otago Region	2	1	0	3
Southland Region	1	2	0	3

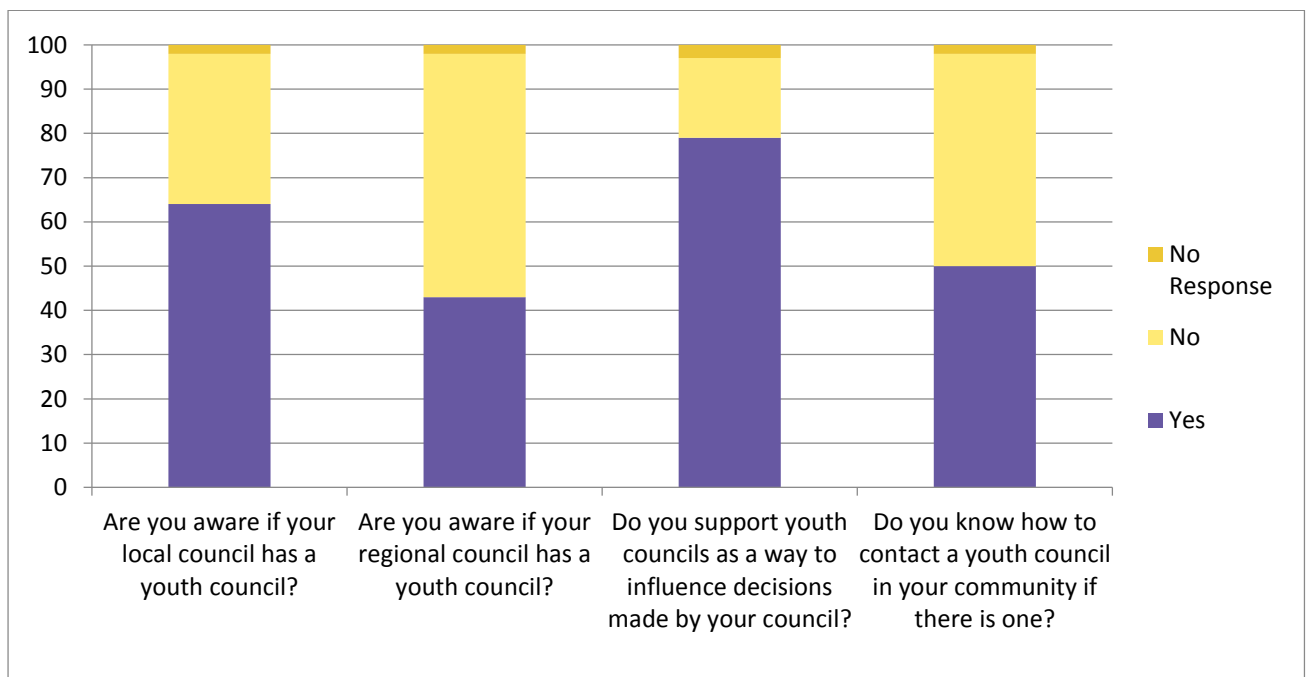
C. Respondent's Opinions on Their Community (see questions below):



Do you think youth...	No, not often	Sometimes but not as much as I would like	Generally	Yes, most of the time	No Response
1. ...Are sufficiently educated in civics (e.g. the constitution, citizens' rights and responsibilities and governance)?	43	39	13	2	3
2. ...Have opportunities to influence decisions?	31	47	19	3	0
3. ...Feel welcome to express their views?	12	39	29	15	5
4. ...Participate in family, community and social life?	2	25	50	23	0
5. ...Receive basic services such as health care, education and shelter?	0	15	38	46	1
6. ...Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation?	0	7	16	76	1
7. ...Are protected from exploitation, violence and abuse?	8	26	48	18	0
8. ...Feel safe walking in their community during daylight hours?	4	10	39	47	0
9. ...Feel safe walking in their community at dusk and during nighttime?	16	34	42	7	1
10. ...Meet friends and socialise?	0	4	57	38	1
11. ...Have green spaces (i.e. with plants and animals)?	3	23	45	29	0
12. ...Live in an unpolluted environment?	3	24	51	22	0
13. ...Participate in cultural and social events?	1	36	43	20	0
14. ...Are treated as equal citizens with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability?	6	40	35	19	0

D. Respondent's Awareness Regarding Youth Councils:

	Yes	No	No Response
Are you aware if your local council has a youth council?	64	34	2
Are you aware if your regional council has a youth council?	43	55	2
Do you support youth councils as a way to influence decisions made by your council?	79	18	3
Do you know how to contact a youth council in your community if there is one?	50	48	2



Written Responses

Challenges: What, if any, are the challenges or risks in your community that you would like resolved or managed ...

By Local Council:

- ↳ Youth Representation:
 - Tokenism
 - Communication/youth voice
 - Youth involvement/present disengagement
 - Would benefit from engaging with youth, not treating youth as a problem to be dealt with
 - Investing more money in youth participation and development
- ↳ Transparency
 - Transparency of what happens in council
- ↳ Employment:
 - Better job opportunities, availability and security
 - Youth Employment
- ↳ Inequality:
 - Social mobility
 - Access to social, educational, cultural and business networks, for youth in lower income brackets
 - Smaller towns feel forgotten, all the money goes to the bigger towns.
- ↳ Health/Safety:
 - Sexual violence and safety at night time and in the bar environment
 - Drinking culture
 - Getting people off the streets
 - Dark areas for safety against rape and sexual violence
 - Alcohol policy, restrict off licence alcohol availability
- ↳ Business:
 - Growth opportunities
 - High levels of debt/loan sharks
- ↳ Environment:
 - An effort towards growing green spaces and safety of the city
 - Clean waterways
 - Earthquakes
 - Pollution
 - Climate change consideration regarding long-term developments.
 - Graffiti
 - Keeping parks in good condition
 - Litter and recycling; rubbish bins that are colourful and encouraging
- ↳ Transport/ Mobility:
 - Roads (Traffic/congestion)
 - Public transport (lower costs & to rural places)
 - Cycle safety and lower cost of public transport (including more environmentally friendly forms of public transport)
 - Long term planning
 - Bike safety
 - Infrastructure
- ↳ Housing:
 - Homelessness

- Quality
- Affordability
- ↳ Culture:
 - Community events
- ↳ Retaining youth post university:
 - More things for youth to do, focus more on youth.
- ↳ Ageing Population:
 - Ageing demographic and no political willingness to involve young people

By Central Government:

- ↳ Youth Representation:
 - Youth issues seem to be overlooked
 - Youth input
 - More of a youth voice at upper levels of central government
 - Too many disengaged youth in NZ
- ↳ Transparency:
 - Consistent information flow and accessibility for all
- ↳ Employment:
 - Equal opportunities
 - Creating more jobs especially for young people, helping to lift the bottom 20% of workers
 - Minimum wage to for good living standard
 - Income inequality
 - Promotion and investment in creating jobs within regional and rural New Zealand
 - Skills training
- ↳ Education:
 - Improved access for youth in lower income brackets
 - Should make more opportunities
 - Cost of education/student debt
- ↳ Health/Safety:
 - Domestic violence/women's issues
 - Preventing the excessively drunk abusive people
 - Human rights issues
 - Safer services for suicidal youth
 - Stopping people becoming alcohol dependent
- ↳ Environment:
 - Direction for mitigating the effects of climate change
 - Eco friendly rebuild of Christchurch
 - Effects of climate change – loss of land via sea-level rises, storms, etc.
 - Plan for emissions reductions
 - Sustainability (& assisting our Pacific neighbors)
- ↳ Transport/ Mobility:
 - Safer roads, around schools in particular
- ↳ Housing:
 - Shortage for growing population
 - Homelessness
- ↳ Resources:
 - Lack of access
- ↳ Finance:
 - Money needed to fix problems or start new programs, or more support and government-run programs
 - Get rid of secondary tax

- ↳ Poverty:
 - A centralised effort towards mitigating poverty and the creation of civics in the curriculum
 - Intergenerational
 - Child poverty
 - Cost of living
- ↳ Crime:
 - Access to justice
- ↳ Animal Welfare

Ideas on resolving these issues:

- ↳ Youth Representation:
 - On local council one youth seat available. On central government 2-4 youth seats available
 - A youth voice and public voice in the rebuild
 - Younger people on local council (all of the Councillors at New Plymouth District Council are aged over 40 years old)
 - Youth participation and innovation, political willingness, involvement in the issues, create genuine action not empty rhetoric
 - Follow through and not just ideas then no action
 - More active sharing of knowledge between youth and adult spheres creating a more cooperative and collaborative environment
 - All politicians should start to listen to what young people have to say, as it is them that will be paying their wages in the future
- ↳ Transparency:
 - More transparency on behalf of all councillors and leaders
- ↳ Employment:
 - Creating more jobs simply come from increasing the amount of production in an economy so increase spending on research and development to help expand our economy
 - Raising minimum wage
 - Nat party focused on economic growth, but what's the point if the majority of the population experiences the effects of negative growth? Also reducing inflation is important to maintain the value of wages, correct manipulation of the OCR is important
 - Grow businesses that will provide jobs for skilled workers
 - Minimum wage: aim for a living wage, begin with government employees, lower GST
 - More skills/on the job internships and work placements between high school/tertiary and employment
 - Get the local businesses involved, and attract businesses to our region to bring in jobs
- ↳ Education:
 - Courses for training in different aspects of employment to hopefully make the youth more appealing to employ
 - Better education re how local government works (hardly anyone bothers to vote or understands the system)
 - Create a platform to share leadership and success stories and network with each other and share the learning
 - Establish (or strengthen) partnerships between leading business, education providers, social and cultural institutions, and low decile schools
 - Student loans: cap prices, make sure there are enough jobs, keep interest free

- ↳ Inequality
 - Redistribution of wealth through taxation, look towards Scandinavian countries for examples
- ↳ Health/Safety:
 - Increased price of alcohol (lessen the amount of underage drinkers & people being and becoming alcohol dependent)
- ↳ Environment:
 - Listening to scientists more about sustainability and long term impacts of nitrates on land and water
 - Climate change: a carbon tax
 - Incentives on sustainable businesses
- ↳ Transport/ Mobility:
 - Improve walking, cycling and public transport & reduce taxis without inconvenience (good for business)
 - Bike safety: more bike lanes, wider spaces for bikes
- ↳ Investment:
 - Government and councils less money focused
 - Money invested at the local government level in making the city feel safer for women. Bus timetables, lighting, the design of walkways and the by-laws regulating bars and restaurants could all improve women's experience of the city after dark ("city host")
 - Government puts more money into the growing future
 - More long-term planning, both for the development of the city with green spaces and services. More investment into things that will improve things in 10-20 years' time
- ↳ Housing:
 - Should promote planning laws that encourage greater intensification; a land tax.
 - Impose minimum housing standards on landlords
 - Lowering rates so that it is a realistic achievable goal for all youth to one day own their own home
- ↳ Poverty:
 - Greater redistribution towards young families, including those with parents out of work
 - Donating money to the boxes on Courtenay Place not effective and makes greater divide
- ↳ Animals:
 - Limit the extent to which animals can be used for human entertainment, food, clothing, research and profit
- ↳ Community Organizations/ Activities:
 - Offering groups for troubled youth- a group that perhaps has youth involved in running it in order to influence youth to join and must be easily accessible and approachable, etc.
 - More programs to be run more support given to local organizations
 - Need to put a larger effort into the funding of services such as youth organizations (suicidal help lines)
 - Greater co-ordination between community groups and central government is greatly needed. An agency should be involved to solve youth issues, or greater power should be given to the Ministry of Youth Development

Opportunities: What, if any, are the opportunities in your community that you would like explored or implemented ...

By Local Government:

- ↳ Youth Representation:
 - Ability for young people outside of the youth council to interact with council
 - More use of youth councils
- ↳ Employment/ Education:
 - Youth in local industry
 - More information and options regarding career and study opportunities
 - Environmental and Sustainable leadership programs for youth
- ↳ Inequality
 - A comprehensive study on the level of inequality within the community and the underlying factors
- ↳ Utilizing Talent:
 - Space for profiling amateur student art/music
 - Expose youth talent
 - Youth lead concerts/events to encourage involvement
 - Activities in communal urban spaces put on by youth
 - Young people willing to engage particularly through volunteerism
- ↳ Investment:
 - High-density development with well-planned layouts
 - Cycling-centric planning/infrastructure and more walking/cycling tracks
 - More green spaces for families to feel safe & enable community spirit
 - More environmentally friendly options of transport and living

By Central Government:

- ↳ Youth Representation:
 - More conviction from youth parties e.g. Green youth, Labour youth etc.
 - Youth policy (we don't have one, so let's start)
 - Lower the voting age to sixteen. Move from instruction to self-directed learning in education
 - Having real input into policies (before decisions get made)
- ↳ Employment/ Education:
 - Connections between schools and tertiary/education providers and businesses
 - Study and Career opportunities
 - Opportunities to seek higher qualifications and the living wage
- ↳ Inequality:
 - Comprehensive study of inequality within the country and the underlying factors
- ↳ Environment:
 - Encourage sustainable land use and ways to keep our fertile soil fertile
- ↳ Housing:
 - Housing development opportunities (housing trusts)
- ↳ Utilizing Talent:
 - Youth, immigrants and their talents that can build this country
 - Infrastructure/institutions investment required attracting talent
 - Flexible migration and education policies to encourage entrepreneurship
- ↳ Investment
 - Invest in local pockets of excellence and spread them across the country
 - Promoting sustainable energy sources/alternative land uses to animal farming

What would you like participants of the LocalNZ workshop to discuss with public servants, Councillors or members of Parliament?

- ↳ Youth Representation:
 - Youth voice at government level, the Christchurch rebuild
 - Barriers to making things happen, what they see as pertinent issues affecting youth and what they are (honestly) doing now to mitigate these, their previous engagement with youth on related issues, and how things have changed since they were young
 - Disengagement in political process and discussion
 - Voting age
- ↳ Employment:
 - Career pathways for youth
 - Job opportunities and ways to help youth transition into employment
 - Incentives to retain youth in employment
 - Youth wages/jobs
 - Unemployment
- ↳ Health/ Safety:
 - Prevention of sexual violence
 - Youth feeling safe about their identity (gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation)
- ↳ Inequality:
 - Redistribution of wealth through taxation
- ↳ Environment/ Sustainability:
 - Sustainability of government
 - Environmental/sustainable education
 - Importance of sustainability for our generation and those that will follow
 - Huge issues youth will inherit
 - We need to clean up our environment so that we can actually market ourselves as a 'clean green' country
 - Youth involvement, climate change and the impact on tomorrows youth – whether or not this is considered in today's plans
- ↳ Transport/ Mobility:
 - Public and regional transport (How this is connecting centers & provinces)
 - Potential transportation plans to be considered and the impact that this will have on the climate
- ↳ Local Issues:
 - The issues facing youth in each region and whether central policies currently address these issues?
 - Ways to increase opportunities for young people in rural areas (not just farming!)
- ↳ Cohesion:
 - How to bring forth a more cohesive local and central government
 - The existence, or lack of, shared values across NZ's population, inequality, community buy-in, etc.
- ↳ Community Organizations/ Activities:
 - Importance of encouraging and supporting cultural and community activities, particularly for helping newcomers to rural areas (newcomers network)
 - Recreational facilities
 - Leadership programs
- ↳ Hart's Ladder and its importance emphasized with the Minister of Youth Affairs

- ↳ Recognition of the regional and rural sectors contribution:
 - Declining population and wellbeing due to loss of infrastructure, jobs and opportunity
- ↳ Relationship between local/central government:
 - Moving some/more central government into the regions?
 - Central government needs to provide more for communities rather than business (The most vulnerable are being ostracized and becoming very displaced)
- ↳ Investment:
 - Needs to be less risk averse
 - Long term city planning to make cities greener, more sustainable and recognition that conservation and preserving the environment is equally as important as business growth and can contribute to jobs as well as the traditional historic industries
- ↳ Aging Population:
 - Retirement savings reform - the general range of policy issues, where NZ is captured by interests of the middle aged at the expense of youth
 - Raising the retirement age
- ↳ Voting:
 - Separatism between the Māori and general roll

NOTE:

This is not a comprehensive list of answers; it is simply a compilation of recurring ideas for the purpose of facilitating discussion.