

TŪTIRA

MAI



# TŪTIRA MAI

## Making change in Aotearoa New Zealand

**Edited by David Belgrave and Giles Dodson**



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# Ka pū, ka ao He tira hou ka tū Tū tangata, pakari te tū Tū tapatahi, kia kotahi rā Mā te tini, mā te mano Ka oti te mahi

Haere atu rā ngā mate, haere atu rā ngā tūpuna o te wānanga. Ka moe roa koutou i te pō, ka ū ki ō koutou kāinga tūturu; ka rukurukuhia e mātou ō koutou mōhiotanga, kia kawetou i te kaupapa nā koutou i whakaara.

Ki ō māua nei hoa mahi, tēnā koutou. Nau mai, arotahi mai koutou katoa ki te pukapuka e pupuri nei. Ngā kupu i roto i wēnei whārangi he mea kia whakahīhiko i ngā whakaaro nui o ngā tauira me ngā kaipānui katoa. Ko te tūmanako ia mā ngā whakaaro o roto nei e akiaki ngā tauira kia eke taumata. Ko te tino kaupapa o te pukapuka nei ko te whakaatu i ngā momo whakaaro, ngā momo mahi, ka mutu, ngā momo hua o te mahi ngātahi me ngā tū kōtahi. Inā, ka āhei rātou katoa ki te haere atu, mai i te whare wānanga ki te ao whānui ki te whakaaweawe, ki te poipoi i ō rātou ake oranga, ō rātou ake ao.

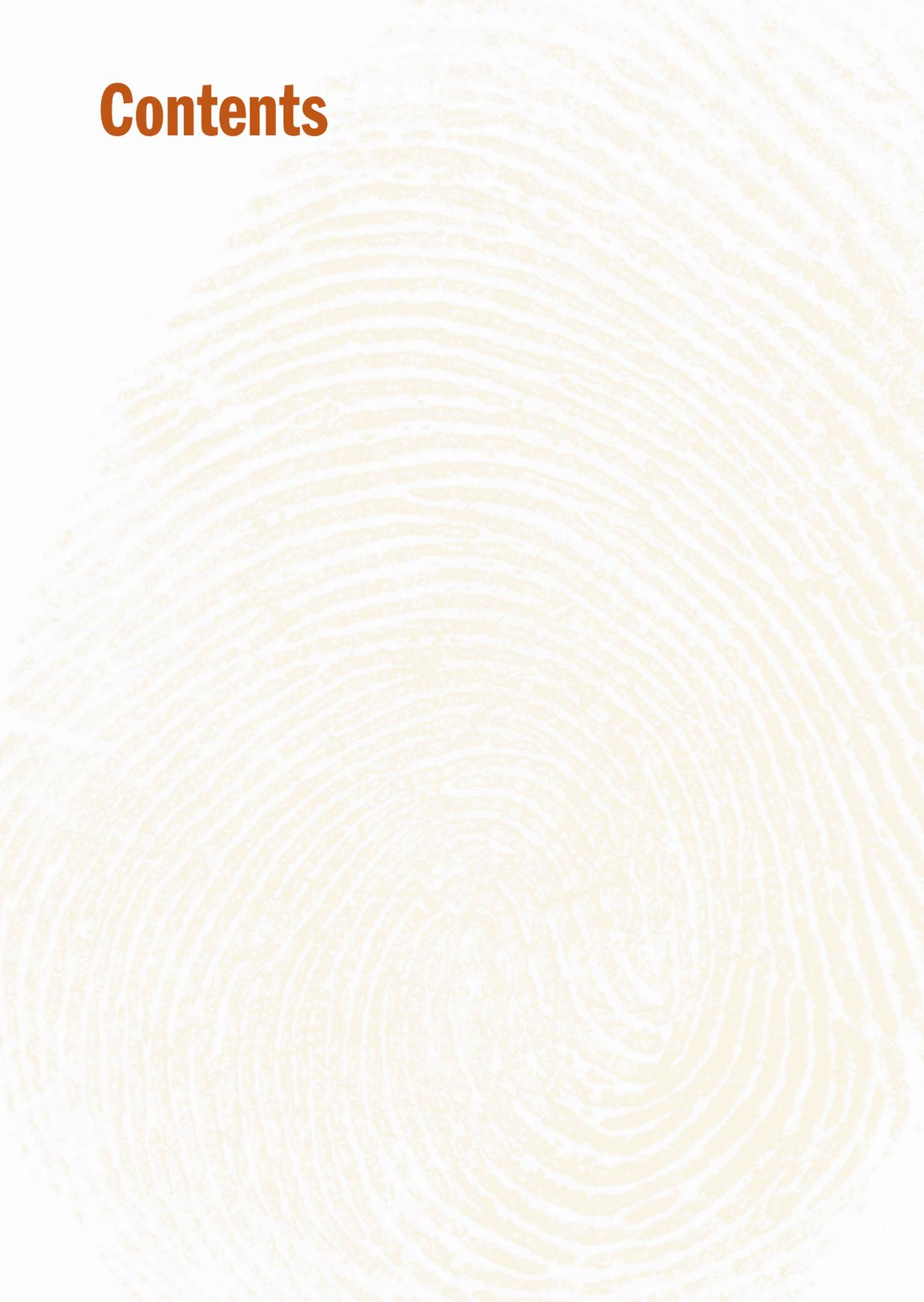
Ka whakaohooho tātou i te mauri me te wairua o te waiata rongonui 'Tūtira Mai'. E heke iho mai ana te ngako o ngā kupu o te waiata hei ārahi i ā tātou kaupapa me ō tātou whakaaro.

Nā, ka nui ā māua mihi ki te kaitito, ki a Wiremu Te Tau Huata me tōna whānau. I tuku iho mai ia i wēnei kupu kāmehameha, ā, ko tā mātou te whakamahi tika me te whakanui ake i te wawata. Nō reira, ki te whānau Huata, ngā hapū, ngā iwi, ngā waka me ngā tūpuna kāhore i ārikarika ngā mihi.

Ka whakawhiti anō ā māua whakamahi ki a koutou, ki ngā huhua tangata i āwhina i a māua ki te whakarite i te pukapuka nei — ki ngā kaimahi manawanui o MUP nāna nei i tautoko, ki ngā pou tikanga i ārahi, ki ngā kaituhituhi atawhai manawa tītī i tuku mai i ngā whakaaro, ka mutu, ki ngā tauira ka whaihua i wēnei mahinga tahitanga — ko koutou mā ngā whītiki o te kī, ngā whakaniko o te kupu! Tēnā rā koutou katoa.

Giles Dodson  
David Belgrave

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# Introduction

## The complexities of active citizenship

*David Belgrave and Giles Dodson*

### **The active citizen**

Change — as the saying goes — is hard. When we look at our communities, our workplaces, and even the wider world, it is easy to see problems that need to be fixed. It is harder to come up with workable solutions and harder still to convince others to implement them. As citizens of a liberal democracy the people of Aotearoa New Zealand have, in theory, the ability to engage with one another to promote new ideas, lobby the government to change policies, and convince others to make positive change. Indeed, a promise of citizenship is that a citizen can make a positive impact on their fellow citizens and society. Nevertheless, this can seem a daunting task. A major global problem such as the climate crisis can seem so complex and intractable that it has been dubbed by some researchers as a ‘super wicked problem’ (Levin et al., 2012). Even addressing relatively simple community-level issues can leave the average citizen mired in frustrating bureaucracy.

Active citizenship is the practice of engaging with others to overcome these challenges. Broadly, we conceptualise active citizenship as activities undertaken in public by individuals and groups to improve the life of the community. Positive change in the community and the world is, therefore, the product of active citizenship. As the European Commission (1998) puts it, active citizenship is when citizens ‘create the experience of becoming the architects and actors of their own lives’ (p. 11). A wide range of skills and institutional knowledge aid the practice of active citizenship in a vast number of areas. This book seeks to examine just some of the areas where active citizenship is being expressed and some of the approaches to making change in Aotearoa New Zealand. In addition

to the main chapters, there are case studies written by individuals participating in diverse citizenship activities to make positive change on the ground. Readers of this collection should gain an insight into the varying ways issues are wrestled with in Aotearoa New Zealand, regardless of what kind of change is being attempted.

Making any kind of social, economic, political or environmental change will always require some degree of conflict and co-operation with those who hold opposing values and interests to our own. Yet, despite our many differences and disagreements, positive change can be achieved by citizens and collectives in small and sometimes significant ways. Even if we worry about the huge number of challenges that regularly and consistently confront us, progress is made. Laws are passed, institutions are reformed, business practices are amended and societal attitudes evolve. Long-term structural change can be a painstaking process, involving complex long-term strategies and broad coalitions. With a clear sense of purpose, enough organisation, the right communication, appropriate methods, persistence (and, let's face it, obstinance) citizens can and do band together to successfully generate positive change in government, business, civil society and in each other. Doing so requires some understanding of the dynamic interrelationships that occur between active citizens and institutions, as well as the various possibilities for civic engagement. It also requires the ability to navigate the differences in values and interests that cause conflict. This is not to say that the goal of active citizenship is to produce a harmonious society, more that differences can be worked through and ameliorated (if not overcome) to achieve practical solutions to societal problems.

It is not easy to pin down a precise definition of making change. Within discourses of community organising, activism and advocacy, 'change' largely stands in for more combative concepts such as 'activism'.<sup>1</sup> This book defines change broadly to encapsulate many different contexts, methods and spaces. Citizens engage with society to make positive change in an exceedingly wide range of ways. They do so as volunteers for organisations in their communities, as experts providing context to public debate, or simply as ordinary people expressing their desires in a range of forums; citizens operate co-operatively and collectively to achieve shared goals as well as in competition with one another to achieve rival goals. These activities are a vital part of democracy, and vital for the maintenance of a social order in which democracy and its institutions and freedoms are understood to operate justly. Liberal freedoms, such as those of conscience, expression and association, support and reinvigorate the institutions of democracy. Free expression facilitates the balancing of competing groups in society and good decision-making by those who

1 See, for instance, [thechangeagency.org](http://thechangeagency.org)

wield power.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, active citizenship, supported by effective institutions and mechanisms of engagement, is the basis for civil society and, in turn, sustains liberal democracy and further active citizenship.

The final shape of our democracy is never complete; it is an ever-evolving response to the challenges and politics of the day. At the same time, liberal freedoms in themselves are insufficient for successful change-making. Being free to pursue civic activities does not alone produce active citizens or equip them with the capabilities required for effective engagement. Grappling with complex problems requires an understanding of the socio-political context, the distribution of power and resources, and the role of the state in public life. In addition, having good communication strategies and an appreciation of how appropriate solutions can be implemented is vital to successful change-making. This book hopes to introduce these elements in the following chapters and case studies.

## **Navigating differing values, stakeholders and civil society**

What one person desires to change depends heavily on their values. Values determine what each of us sees as desirable outcomes and acceptable methods for making change. Managing differences in values is the primary challenge of building popular support for change efforts. Solving major problems such as the climate crisis will involve instituting significant social and political change to halt carbon emissions and mitigate its effects. Tackling climate change will involve prioritising it as a problem and accepting trade-offs. Which trade-offs are accepted by the public will depend on what we value most. Air travel, agricultural production and fossil-fuel-based transportation are all greenhouse gas-intensive activities that New Zealanders may have to give up (or at least choose between) in order to reduce emissions. Wider Pākehā attitudes towards Māori culture and identity have evolved over time, but realising a future based on authentic Treaty partnership will require power-holders in New Zealand to value sharing power to a much greater extent. Equally, the challenge of reducing inequality in society is dependent on value- and interest-laden choices. Solutions to inequality are largely a choice between higher taxation and accepting a degree of poverty. This choice asks us whether we value individual freedom and property rights or a more equal society. Economic forces do have an impact on the choices made by governments and individuals to collective challenges, but a never-ending contest of values is the other primary driver. Pursuing change involves understanding these values and the interests that reinforce and are reinforced by those values. These chapters

**2** See Chapter 1, 'Sustaining democracy'.

should help the reader come to grips with some of the differing values at play in Aotearoa New Zealand today and how they are transformed into political action.

Not all civic engagement is about making positive change; it is also about preventing negative change. Change-making tries to preserve what we value while alleviating what harms us. Differences in values can help guide the extent of change. Conservative calls *against* change can remind us that constant change can endanger the positive elements of the status quo. Edmund Burke (1790; Stanlis & Kirk, 1999) witnessed the chaos of the French Revolution and argued that change must be gradual lest it run away and cause the breakdown of society. Too much change (or too little) might lead to the violence and disorder of revolution. Conservatives today can provide a valuable check on those who might take change too far and too fast and thus generate new problems. Similarly, conservationists warn us of the dangers to our natural and built heritage from rampant development. Voices calling for the protection of nature can be seen as preventing change, but put another way, environmental movements ask us to change the way we engage with the natural world in order to preserve it. Cultural preservationists meanwhile can be accused of preventing development, but they also try to conserve some of our links to the past through the preservation of important sites such as historic buildings, wāhi tapu, and other places of cultural significance. Maintaining and protecting what is held precious in the face of significant change is discussed in chapters by April Bennett, Anna Palliser and Willie Wright.

Individuals have desires for change, but individuals do not make change on their own. Civil society encompasses the totality of non-profit, non-governmental organisations, but the term also refers to how these organisations organise, coordinate and compete with one another to promote their values and interests. Civil society in New Zealand is diverse and dynamic, and myriad organisations represent a great complexity of interests across the country. Kalym Lipsey's chapter on prison reform groups demonstrates how multiple competing groups can exist on a spectrum from radical to moderate to reactionary. Stakeholders — those with an interest in a particular place or issue — often establish civil society organisations to represent their interests. In this sense, civil society is the result of stakeholders organising themselves into structured groups for active citizenship. Civil society greatly aids the public conversations and ongoing dialogues — in community halls, marae, local and online forums, protest spaces or via the news media — that form the key actions of civic efforts. The amount of civic engagement civil society organisations take part in depends on their purpose, whether their interests need to be advanced or protected, and the resources they have available for action. Civil society in Aotearoa New Zealand might be vibrant but this does not mean that all

groups are equal. Some organisations have much greater resources and ability to act than others. Understanding how to engage with stakeholders and operate in civil society are important skills to learn and this is the basis of David Belgrave's chapter.

## **Many different practices for many different aims**

This book does not aim to provide a comprehensive guide to all the various methods for civic engagement. Such a book would be unwieldy. Nor can this book be a complete how-to guide for activists and community organisers; but it does hope to be useful to such readers. There is already a particularly rich literature on praxis (translating theory into political action) that goes back to Aristotle. The twentieth century saw examinations of praxis by political philosophers (see, for example, Arendt, 1998; Gramsci, 1971; Sartre, 1976) and educationalists (for example, Freire, 1993) looking to explore how ideas could be realised to make positive change. In recent years a modern practice literature has emerged as activism and advocacy have globalised and specialised, and the reach and intensity of global communications has developed (see, for example, Barnard & Parker, 2012; Holbourn, 2020; Kanter & Fine, 2010; Ricketts, 2012; Robertson & Robertson, 2019).

However, in this text we are not restricting ourselves to the goals and discourses of progressive activism. This book does not try to make wide judgements on what change needs to occur. Discussion of progressive demands for social justice are a significant part of this book, but the attempt here is to look at a wide range of civic engagement activity from different parts of the political spectrum.

In recent years social change has also come from areas like business. Anne de Bruin and Loren Stangl show the growth of social enterprises that are motivated by the dual desires for profit and change. These enterprises demonstrate that the inventive potential of capitalism can be harnessed for social change. Grace Stratton's case study details how she is adding to the visibility of people with disabilities by creating a for-profit talent agency for her community. Positive change comes from many kinds of effort for many kinds of aims. Therefore, we take a broad and inclusive approach to the methods and objectives of change-making. We examine broad historical experience, as well as contemporary issues and cases. The book provides a diverse set of discussions and examinations of citizenship, trends and changes over time in order to provide a fuller account of *how* active citizenship can be understood, rather than limit our interest to certain kinds of political organising.

In addition, the past two decades have seen the emergence of an extensive

global network of secondary NGOs focused on training and advising activists and advocates, drawing on the specialist knowledge of project management, strategic campaign communications, community engagement and the uses of technology. Such organisations are typically associated with ‘progressive’ causes, but the tools of active citizenship can be used for many different purposes. Conservative activists have shown themselves to be adept at using the same techniques and approaches as progressives, oftentimes with the advantage of well-funded supporters (Schradie, 2019). Conservative and progressive groups alike have utilised online organising to supplement the narrowing range of voices in ‘traditional’ media. Organisers and activists who seek generic campaign planning and guidance and technical know-how are these days provided with a cornucopia of online resources.<sup>3</sup>

How should these tools be used? Our contention is that effective active citizens should be equipped with a broader awareness of the currents of social, cultural and political change (especially in Aotearoa New Zealand) rather than with globalised campaigning tools which can view political and cultural communities as homogeneous. Such generic approaches often emphasise the applied skills of communication and one-size-fits-all strategic planning, at the expense of adequate analyses of power, institutions and longer-term patterns of social and political development, and a sound understanding of the local context in which change is being pursued. As Duncan Green (2016) cogently argued, in the international development context, effective change emerges when active citizens and their communities are possessed of *both* an awareness and sound analysis of institutional power and the complex systems in which power is embedded, as well as the capacity for self-awareness, curiosity, flexibility and the ability to learn by doing in the context in which they are operating. Although there are important skills related to organising and campaigning that effective citizens require — and this book covers a few of them — it is important to remember that skills are honed from experience. Change does not occur as a linear response to the application of toolbox skills. Active citizenship, not unlike entrepreneurship, requires practice and often repeated failure before success can be found.

This collection is intentionally multidisciplinary. As such we are not grounded in specific disciplinary concepts relating to civic engagement and activism, nor are we concerned with securing precise definitions of ‘change’ and ‘change-making’. The strength of this approach is that we can draw upon a diversity of voices and topics in exploring our concerns and themes, which are illuminated in part through the conceptual discussion and in part through the case studies.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, [trainings.350.org](http://trainings.350.org), [neweconomyorganisers.org](http://neweconomyorganisers.org), [beautifulrising.org](http://beautifulrising.org), [diytoolkit.org](http://diytoolkit.org), [mobilisationlab.org](http://mobilisationlab.org), [thechangeagency.org](http://thechangeagency.org)

The cases and examples that our contributors present illustrate the variety of considerations when contemplating civic engagement in Aotearoa New Zealand. We see considerable value in looking beyond the disciplinary boundaries of social movement politics, strategic campaign management or community development. Here we incorporate diverse perspectives such as those from the fields of planning, theatre studies, philosophy, writing studies, Māori studies, environmental management and business studies to illustrate the complexity of the contexts in which active citizenship is pursued and the methods and experience of civic action. These contributions are interwoven with those from disciplines more conventionally associated with issues of acting in civic life and politics, such as political science, history and sociology. There is value in demonstrating how these varied disciplines can illuminate the problem of civic engagement in novel and unexpected ways, such as April Bennett's discussion of the use of cultural capital within resource management consenting, or Andrew Dickson and Roger McEwan's take on critical organisational studies, which suggests that 'change-makers' need to delve below the surface of their change efforts, lest they be disappointed by their results and the persistence of deep structures and patterns of social behaviour that resist their efforts.

We recognise that the specific context in which civic engagement is taking place matters deeply. In doing so, we are intentionally avoiding overarching definitions or frameworks into which the abundant varieties of civic engagement must somehow be shoehorned to achieve conceptual order or instructional clarity. Rather, we acknowledge that local conditions, specific community contexts or historical experiences, and differing values and worldviews, are all highly relevant in understanding how change occurs. We are not so naïve as to think that this is all that matters, but rather that very often successful civic engagement is about institutions, structures and power formations interacting with local conditions, historical circumstances, the resources at the disposal of actors and, ultimately, the individuals involved.

Accordingly, our approach is also tempered with a sense of ambivalence towards 'making change'. As noted, this change-discourse is closely associated with a globalised genre of 'progressive campaigning'. Change for our contributors is something less certain, less well-defined and more complicated than progressive campaigners or organisational leaders would have us believe. If we consider contemporary approaches to stakeholder engagement in environmental issues, as do Anna Palliser and April Bennett, taking statutory processes as their focus, or the continued presence of active neo-fascist and far-right citizens in Aotearoa, as does Paul Spoonley, or if we consider the complexities of the experience of

Māori citizenship in Aotearoa, as Fiona Te Momo surveys, we see that the experience of citizenship can be fraught with complexity and contradiction, as much as it is about the positive work of like-minded citizens advancing shared interests in public, or deploying sophisticated campaign strategies. We can also see how contemporary campaign organisations are offering citizens, particularly young citizens, new ways to be involved in civic life and politics, yet are themselves implicated in the ambivalent development of ‘networked individualism’ and of campaign products as objects of consumption and lifestyle politics. Sharon McLennan’s exploration of the ‘voluntourism’ sector clearly shows there can be benefits when international volunteering is pursued responsibly. Crucially, though, she also demonstrates there is a clear market imperative that has successfully positioned voluntourism as an attractive consumer activity that is of questionable value to host communities. McLennan cautions that the desire to ‘do good’ must be for the right reasons and in the right ways, lest we end up doing harm.

## Ngā raraunga e rua

For Māori, active citizenship involves more distinct conceptual and experiential strands than for most citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand. Ngā raraunga e rua — there are two citizenships — acknowledges the tensions in and complexity of Māori citizenship. On one hand, tangata whenua are, of course, the first ‘citizens’ and ‘owners’ of this country. On the other, the post-Treaty experience for many Māori has been one of dispossession and a sustained intergenerational effort to reclaim and restore mana Māori. Māori citizenship-identity takes as its primary definition an intrinsic identity as tangata whenua, with a focus on collective identity and action. This fundamental orientation stands in contrast to Pākehā (or Western) liberal conceptions of citizenship, with the individual as the central actor and focus of civic rights and obligations. Yet Māori citizenship is also characterised by an ongoing determination to constructively engage with te ao Pākehā. This is done to participate fully in the post-Treaty Pākehā citizenship regime, but to do so with an unwavering commitment to recovering, maintaining and developing mana Māori.

Fiona Te Momo shows us how Māori have creatively engaged with and responded to the changes that colonisation and its long aftermath have produced. In the long run of history this is a story of determined resilience and survival. Nevertheless, Māori successes are tempered by the experience of cultural loss and adaptation, and by economic marginalisation — and the hard, sustained work of revival. Since the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori have actively and resolutely demanded

and engaged their citizenship of Aotearoa, yet fundamentally Māori conceptions of citizenship-identity are centred on the institutions of whānau, hapū and iwi. While Māori participate fully and energetically in the realm of bureaucratic, legalistic citizenship and in civil society, the experience of citizenship is dual. They are both members of New Zealand's civic community and live within the whakapapa networks of te ao Māori.

Māori can and do draw on resources that exist within the Māori world (such as cultural knowledge and mana) to engage in political contests firmly grounded in the bureaucratic and legalistic world of government and public affairs. April Bennett's chapter discusses exactly this contest in relation to freshwater management in Manawatū. Although resource management legislation contains recognition of Māori practices and concepts, the political contest is played out in the distinctly Western arena of local government applications processes and commissioner's hearings. As Bennett shows, disadvantage in this arena in terms of economic or technical capital can be countered by drawing on the cultural resources and capitals that are only accessible from within te ao Māori.

Willie Wright's discussion of the work of the Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group extends this example further. Wright describes how mana Māori — Māori authority and influence — and distinctly Māori ways of working can harness community and governmental energy and participation in matters of national concern. In the Kaipara region uniquely Māori approaches and resources are being deployed to address significant environmental and socio-cultural challenges resulting from decades of environmental exploitation and neglect. Importantly, here we see mana whenua values, knowledge and leadership achieving important change where governments, regulatory agencies and other community interests have been unable or unwilling to act. In contrast to these accounts, Yuin Khai Foong's case study of integrating outdoor education and mātauranga Māori discusses how non-Māori are able, when appropriately guided, to experience and learn from the Māori world. This example focuses on the emerging citizenship of new New Zealanders by introducing them to Aotearoa's outdoor environment through uniquely Māori ideas and values in relation to the natural world.

Taken together, these contributions make clear the critical centrality of Māori experience and knowledge in advancing change in Aotearoa New Zealand and show how tangata whenua values and perspectives can be powerful resources when deployed appropriately within the arena of civil society and political contest.

## Liberal freedoms, neoliberal constraints

One theme that runs through these chapters is the ongoing effects of the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. These effects can limit and complicate the practice of active citizenship. This is perhaps initially surprising to some as liberal enlightenment ideas form the basis of modern Western democracy, individual freedom and civil society, all crucial for active citizenship.<sup>4</sup> Yet the philosophy of neoliberalism, which developed in the 1970s, took these ideas a step further; it sought to limit the power of the modern state to regulate the economy and provide the economic security that many countries had experienced since the end of the Second World War.

For New Zealand the shift was sudden and extreme. During a brief period between 1984 and 1996 the relationship between the state and the individual was radically reshaped in favour of neoliberal values favouring individual responsibility, property rights, the free market and a minimisation of the role of the state in society. Long-standing economic protections for local industry were removed, taxes and welfare payments were reduced, unions were disempowered, and the civil service was restructured along corporate lines. Many chapters, most notably those of Janine Cook and Toby Boraman, highlight the ongoing impacts of these reforms and how the neoliberal legacy can make practising active citizenship more difficult.

Active citizenship requires time, energy and skills. The neoliberal social contract that emerged from the mid-1980s places value on self-reliance and thus the need for financial independence. Time and energy are not as readily available as they once were for those in study or low-paid work, those suffering poor health or those caring for others. Boraman's analysis of contemporary social movement politics and union-led direct action highlights the challenges for those in low-paid precarious employment. Here we see how the neoliberal reforms (in Boraman's terms a *social movement from above*) produced an abeyance in 'materialist' politics just as it was intensifying the exploitation of labour (by undermining the union movement) and increasing the power and freedom of capital (via deregulation and market-led reform). Yet the same period has seen a rise in 'postmaterialist' social movement politics, such as that of environmentalism, identity movements and indigenous politics. Boraman shows how the union movement can be reintegrated into the study of social movements in New Zealand. He recounts how the sophisticated and agile borrowing and merging of social protest repertoires by relatively small numbers of dedicated union activists can produce significant pro-worker results in previously unorganised industries that would traditionally have

4 See Chapter 1, 'Sustaining democracy'.

relied on mass movement organising. Yet while the impact of social movement *symbolic power* (i.e. using shame and threatening the public reputations of business) can be seen in contemporary union campaigns, as Boraman points out, meaningful, long-term and substantial political and economic change requires the application of *structural power* (i.e. coercive economic power) to change the behaviour of business and government. For complex reasons, such structural power continues to elude social movement activists and organisers.

At the same time, the neoliberal revolution allowed for much greater accountability by the state, with state institutions generally becoming more efficient and more answerable to both political leaders and the public. The ability for new groups (including Māori organisations) to challenge methods of service delivery and win contracts to provide public services generates a greater level of innovation than occurred under the monolithic bureaucracy of the mid-twentieth century. Nevertheless, this greater accountability has its limits. Janine Cook shows that the need for mental health providers to constantly demonstrate evidence for their practices limits mental health practice to what can easily be measured at the expense of holistic approaches to wellbeing. Certainly, the corporate structure of today's civil service has its flaws as well as efficiencies.

The influences of neoliberalism can be seen in many areas outside unionism and healthcare. It has had a strong influence over social service delivery (Peter Lineham, Margaret Tennant), environmental management (Bennett, Palliser, and Wright & Dodson), Māori political and tribal organisation (Te Momo, Bennett, and Wright & Dodson), the growth of social entrepreneurship (de Bruin & Stangl), evaluation (Robin Peace), and institutional organisation (Dickson & McEwan). Making change is aided by understanding the institutional and ideological structures, such as neoliberalism, that dominate public life.

## Democratic tensions

From our perspective, processes of change and of active participation in civil society are grounded in values, and acknowledging that those values can differ from person to person and group to group. In this sense the ongoing effective operation of liberal democratic society depends on the possibility of there being ways and mechanisms of citizens registering their values and having them recognised in public. Here we approach the concept of 'voice' (Couldry, 2010; Hunt et al., 2019; Senecah, 2004), the multifarious ways in which citizens can be heard and recognised by others, by power-holders and decision-makers. While such recognition is critical for successful change — voice must be listened to

— the most important factor can be the recognition of one's legitimacy, despite perhaps not achieving change. This is a basic tenet of democratic politics. Our side or issue may not win, but we accept the result as legitimate. In Aotearoa we are currently effective in our electoral politics in avoiding political conflict and violence. Yet events elsewhere in the world remind us of the fragility of democratic institutions and the continued maintenance they require through shared and co-operative engagement in civic life. The recent rise of populist, anti-democratic and violent political movements in well-established democracies is an existential threat to liberal democracy. As Karl Popper (1945) noted during the Second World War, the survival of a tolerant peaceful society, paradoxically, relies on intolerance toward those who seek violence and intolerance. The Christchurch mosque attacks in 2019 remind us that anti-democratic, fundamentalist violence lives in our society, and although it is the strength of civil society and our institutions that create democratic resilience, as Paul Spoonley points out in this volume, New Zealand far right cultures are resilient too. There is nothing inherent about New Zealand political or civic culture that will prevent the emergence of chauvinist, authoritarian politics, other than our communal commitment to diversity, tolerance and mutual respect.

Running somewhat counter to the violent movements that have sprung up overseas, the national response to the Covid-19 pandemic has produced remarkably high levels of community buy-in and national solidarity. The year 2020 saw the country demonstrating a high degree of public trust in government and scientific advice, with the majority of the population adhering to lockdown restrictions. This community spirit appeared in stark contrast to the large-scale anti-science and anti-lockdown protests that occurred in the United States. The pandemic and the national response have, at the same time, exposed social and economic divisions. While some sectors of the economy were devastated, such as international travel and tourism, and inner-city retailers, other sectors continued to do well. Existing socio-economic inequalities, particularly associated with the housing sector, continued to be amplified and deepened as monetary and fiscal policy flooded the economy with cheap money. It remains to be seen whether the current levels of community solidarity will endure this stress test. Tackling 'wicked' policy problems, such as the housing crisis, will inevitably alienate some at the benefit of others. Active citizens can take heart from the fact that there is still enough common ground in Aotearoa to face a national crisis collectively, but there is also a danger in too much consensus. Critical voices always need to be part of the national conversation, even during a crisis.

## Consultation, engagement and power

The ways in which different values and perspectives are publicly expressed — especially when those expressions are in tension with each other — are productive sites for thinking through the complexities of effective civic engagement. In the discussions of community and stakeholder engagement,<sup>5</sup> it is often the case that consultation and decision-making processes are driven by power-holders, such as state agencies or elite groups. Notification dressed as consultation does not fulfil the purposes of consultation. Real community engagement builds political support for proposals, allays unfounded fears, and provides local information to decision-makers. Poor-quality consultation can often leave participants dissatisfied, potentially leading to unsatisfactory outcomes, such as policy measures which lack legitimacy or initiatives that go nowhere. As Anna Palliser points out, deliberative, discursive methods in which different knowledges are recognised and combined hold greater potential than top-down approaches, which often elevate and prioritise elite and technical knowledge, such as scientific expertise, over the values of local people. Knowing how to communicate across different groups, cultures and values aids in bridging disparate communities. As Hannah Gerrard shows, there is not one public but many ‘publics’ that need to be thought of when communicating ideas to a wide audience.

Effective engagement involves a degree of power sharing. Willie Wright’s account of the Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group shows that genuine community engagement processes can work well. The success of this case was due to the inclusion of diverse community perspectives in relation to the Kaipara Harbour and the inversion of ‘consultation’ norms. Differing community values were united in a shared vision under the long-term leadership of mana whenua, rather than by sources of legal authority such as government or councils. However, power is rarely shared willingly. April Bennett’s chapter describes more naked power relations. She shows how mana whenua can marshal various ‘capitals’ as alternative sources of power — of mana — to successfully secure positive community outcomes and to contest elite or entrenched power.

## The importance of context

We are also concerned with how social, political and economic changes over recent decades (and longer) have shaped the conditions in which civic life takes

5 See Chapter 1, ‘Sustaining democracy’, by David Belgrave; Chapter 12, ‘Conflict and complexity in environmental decision-making’, by Anna Palliser; and Chapter 13, ‘From the maunga to the moana’, by Willie Wright and Giles Dodson.

place, and to which active citizenship responds. As Margaret Tennant makes clear, volunteering was and remains a deeply gendered activity. In an earlier era, voluntary community work provided women with an outlet for civic engagement beyond the confines of home and family. It also provided the basis for community and political organising and was one of the few avenues available to women interested in being involved in public life and civic affairs. While the temperance movement provided the focus, it also gave civic-minded women the platform for raising and advancing other issues, albeit with a strong dose of maternal medicine, in areas such as home economics, hygiene and Māori welfare. Later, these same active women citizens led campaigns for women's suffrage and political representation, making significant contributions to the expansion of women's citizenship. In an entirely different, modern era, Tennant shows us how contemporary women's civic engagement, this time via Women's Refuge, responds to new issues and a changed socio-political landscape, yet the new pattern resembles the old, with Women's Refuge providing a platform for wider action and engagement on a variety of issues.

Janine Cook's discussion of changes within the mental health sector illustrates the interplay between social and cultural values, in both the diagnosis and institutionalisation of the mentally unwell and the changing political and public policy paradigms. Here we can see how changing attitudes and policy prescriptions combined to spur the closure of psychiatric hospitals throughout Aotearoa. Yet, in turn, the shift to community-based, consumer-oriented mental health provision has produced new sites of focus for mental health advocates and reformers. We can clearly detect the impacts of pared-back state provision of health and welfare, including on overburdened community services. However, greater diversity and responsiveness among those services have provided some communities, such as Māori, with more relevant, useful support despite chronic underfunding sector-wide. In a complex and contested area such as health service provision this chapter further emphasises the critical importance of taking a broad, historically informed view of the policy space and the complex interrelationship of stakeholders before undertaking difficult civic and political action.

## Thinking about method

The question of how to approach the challenge of active citizenship has many answers, and what kinds of action active citizens should take forms another cross-cutting theme of this volume. Active citizens are confronted with a wide variety of possibilities as they seek to engage their stakeholders and constituencies. Yet, as

we have suggested, effective civic engagement emerges from carefully developed and well-considered knowledge of the institutional, policy or community spaces in which one operates, as well as a degree of self-awareness as to the possibilities for achieving realistic change.

The contributions by Rand Hazou, and by Alice Beban and Trudie Cain, present distinct but related examples of academic practitioners seeking to stimulate forms of institutional change through their practice as teachers and artists.

Hazou describes how prison theatre can be taken inside the institution it seeks to reform, as a means of both engaging prisoner creativity and providing them a voice in the debate over the purpose and nature of incarceration. By contrast, Beban and Cain throw open the creation of an academic sociology course focused on gender to a workshop of students, to empower diverse student voices and concerns and to create a new civic and deliberative space. In doing so they generate critical conversations about gender and redefine the academic–student binary, as well as relationships between workshop participants, in productive and surprising ways. Beban and Cain effectively turned pedagogy (their method of teaching) into a practice for change-making.

Madeleine Holden's case study suggests a very different method for disrupting notions of gender. Her website flipped the gender power dynamic by reviewing unsolicited lewd images sent by men as if the pictures were fine artworks. This generates a new narrative which uses humour to empower the receivers of unsolicited nude photos instead of the senders.

Other contributions take a more conventional outside-looking-in academic perspective as they consider different approaches to 'making institutional change'. In another chapter focused on criminal justice sector reform, Kalym Lipsey surveys the advocacy and organising efforts of different groups within this crowded space. This chapter clearly describes how ideological differences can hinder reform efforts. On the one hand, the groups Lipsey surveys appear distinct and at odds with each other; the Sensible Sentencing Trust generally supports a more punitive treatment of offenders, whereas People Against Prisons Aotearoa is a radical movement intent on prison abolition. However, as Lipsey shows, in practice justice reform advocates ultimately converge an incrementalist middle ground, perhaps best represented by the JustSpeak group. Lipsey found groups tend to use their energy and resources inefficiently as they contest and claim 'territory' as their own, when in fact co-operation and collaboration between advocates could be a more effective means to justice reform.

Ella Kahu's case study detailing her efforts to stop a school closure shows how power-holders can divide communities and pit them against one another in order

to limit opposition. Clearly successful active citizenship usually requires hard-headed determination, but a careful and considered analysis of the policy and advocacy space is also required, so ideological, personality and petty differences do not prevent the achievement of commonly held long-term goals.

Challenging those in power requires good information and knowing where to find it. Roger McEwan's case study demonstrates how power-holders (and, in this case, money-holders) can use secrecy to keep critics at bay. Tools like the Official Information Act can be used to open the lid on information that some might prefer was secret. However, holding power does not necessarily make instigating change any easier. Power-holders are, in organisational theory at least, the best positioned to achieve effective change, but institutional forces can still hinder progress. In organisational contexts the issues of public political and economic power or effective public engagement and participation are not normally at stake. Instead, deeply embedded norms of behaviour, culture and human psychology present critical obstacles for those seeking to unfreeze and reorganise organisational life. In this account the purveyors of change consultancy services (who constitute a substantial sub-industry of commercial services) specialising in guiding business and organisational changes have told themselves and their clients a highly simplified story of how change occurs, which results in the complexity of the deep patterns of institutional functioning being overlooked and oftentimes leads to unsatisfactory (and expensive) results.

Again, our attention is drawn by Dickson and McEwan to the complex, non-linear and very human circumstances of change efforts. They argue that despite the change-makers of the business world frequently peddling a simple fantasy of straightforward prescriptions, these efforts must confront the (im)possibility of organisational and institutional change that depends not on a change-formula and cause and effect actions, but on a careful, nuanced understanding of the human and deeply complex institutional relations and culture that exist beneath the surface of organisational form. Without this insight, and an acceptance of the very long-term requirements of real change, short-term change-making will almost certainly be ineffective.

We have focused on making change through issues people care about, or at least have interests in, but this book also discusses various ways individuals and groups utilise their passions to make change in other areas. Religious faith and sport play a significant role in the lives of New Zealanders and this role can be used for active citizenship. Rochelle Stewart-Withers and Jeremy Hapeta's chapter shows how organised sport can be used to improve the lives of its participants and make social change. The case study from Luke Rowe shows the inverse can also

be true. By improving the cultural knowledge and behaviour of a disunified rugby club, he was able to improve their on-field performance. Peter Lineham's chapter explores the role faith plays in New Zealand and how that faith translates to active citizenship. The many strands of faith have differing attitudes to volunteerism, political activism and deciding what should be the focus of their efforts. Since the 1970s several religious groups have engaged in innovative social service delivery, including counselling and social work. Other efforts are timeless. In 2020 the Auckland City Mission celebrated a century of supporting the needy. Tennant's chapter reminds us how some religious and political ideas can come together at some points in time and diverge in others. The social and political activism of the Women's Christian Temperance Union had mainstream appeal in the late nineteenth century when religious virtue developed into a desire to win votes for women and defeat the scourge of alcohol. The WCTU still exists, and its efforts to achieve women's suffrage are widely celebrated, but its membership is now small and its views on alcohol and morality are no longer part of the political mainstream. Regardless of the particular values being expressed, the organisational ability of faith groups continues to be a considerable force that can be used for active citizenship, be it for charitable, political or social efforts.

## Ethics and evaluation

Active citizens must also reflect on the potential risks of their practices. Simply believing in the righteousness of your cause does not permit you to undertake any action to achieve your aims. It is clearly not advisable to take action that causes as many problems as it solves, and even if you do not intend to cause harm with your civic engagement, you still must accept that any action has risks that need to be mitigated and managed. Harms to yourself and others might be unintentional but that does not make them any less real. Publicly revealing private information about someone, taking over someone else's issue for your own ends, imposing inappropriate solutions on other people, or putting someone's health (or even life) at risk are all common ethical pitfalls that active citizens need to acknowledge. Analysing what could go wrong with your plan of action and what impact you might have on others is not just about being a decent person, it is also about succeeding in your endeavours. Actions that alienate stakeholders, disempower those you try to help, impose unfair burdens on others, or prove unsustainable in the long term should clearly be avoided, not just because they are unethical but because they undermine your own aims.

Deciding what actions are acceptable in what context is not an easy question to

answer. Simple suggestions to ‘just obey the law’ are not necessarily useful. Many forms of civic engagement involve actions that overstep the bounds of legality. Graffiti, civil disobedience and many forms of direct action are illegal, but still commonly practised by social movements. Where someone should draw the line is not always obvious. It is an open question as to whether violence can ever be justified in the pursuit of civic aims, even when violence is being used against you. Recent political violence in the United States shows how political radicalisation can erode peaceable civic values even in a well-established democracy. Active citizens clearly need some grounding in basic ethical principles to guide their civic engagement. Unfortunately, as Vanessa Schouten demonstrates, there is no one set of guidelines that can simply be picked up and applied. We must constantly and consistently re-evaluate our actions and readjust as new risks and opportunities present themselves. Equally, we must also return to our past actions and assess their successes and failures. Failure in active citizenship is more common than success, so failure must be our teacher for the next civic engagement. Robin Peace provides a background on how to think like an evaluator and take a constructive approach to project evaluation.

## Conclusion

Active citizens in Aotearoa New Zealand are (to varying extents) part of an ongoing debate about how society should operate and are agents of change to improve their own lives and those of others. In our view, active citizenship is about public affairs and collective interests, not about change for the sake of change. Nor is it simply about the politicisation of the populace. A degree of tolerance for opposing viewpoints and a willingness to work constructively with others, including opponents, is still required for maintenance of democratic institutions. Active citizenship is about acting within the bounds of liberal democracy, but not necessarily in the bounds of orderly institutional processes. Protest and most forms of direct action still sit within the bounds of active citizenship as we define it. The importance of active citizenship could not be greater given the violent challenges to liberal democracy seen recently in countries comparable to Aotearoa New Zealand. Intolerant extremism does not produce positive change. Historically, revolutions have more often than not led to the breakdown in the systems that produce constructive change and left the next generation with authoritarianism. Radicalism, reactionism and revolution will only devour their children.<sup>6</sup> This is

6 Jacques Mallet du Pan (1793) wrote during the French Revolution, ‘like Saturn, the Revolution devours its children’ (p. 80).

not to say that significant structural change is neither necessary nor possible. The great challenges of the day require swift and significant change to many facets of life. The warning here is simply that active citizenship must continue the renewal of democracy, lest it stall and make change impossible.

At the same time, apathy, cynicism and disengagement will silently corrode democracy rather than smash it. Citizens need to have the agency to act and this book hopes to give them examples, concepts and a few tools to help them find that agency. By learning, engaging, trying, failing, and trying again, we build confidence in our effects and become better active citizens. By employing a constructive set of approaches to make positive change, the individual can empower themselves and their community for greater civic engagement. Understanding that there is a range of values in the community and a range of methods for civic engagement will aid in this practice.

The Covid-19 response demonstrated the importance of scientific knowledge in informing policy and social practices. However, these chapters show that top-down technocratic solutions often ignore local conditions and values. Scientific and other expert knowledge needs to be applied in support of the desires of the community rather than constrain it. It is important to recognise Māori practices in particular. Māori citizenship can take on a different meaning and involve different goals, causing Māori to have to work simultaneously within Pākehā and Māori citizenship norms. There are broader inequalities as well. Active citizens need to recognise that the playing field for civic engagement is not level. Some have much more time, energy, money and skill to engage than others. Active citizenship by as many as possible will ensure that grassroots democracy is not dominated by an elite few.

Change is indeed hard, but it is also necessary to fix problems, improve our collective circumstances and renew our democracy. Citizens can and do instigate change despite opposition and the fact that power-holders do not easily share their power. Many political and social forces have made power more diffuse (for instance globalisation, the internet, government transparency, stakeholder engagement and Treaty settlements) but other forces have concentrated it (most notably economic inequality). We hope the examples, discourses and concepts in this book build agency in the reader to be an active citizen; to challenge power-holders and cut through inertia. Our times have significant long-term problems that require difficult solutions. We do not know how and when they will be fixed, but we do know that doing nothing is not an option.

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