

Can Auckland count on your vote? Why every vote counts transcript

- Good evening everyone, tena koutou, and welcome. Welcome to Auckland conversations. It's so lovely to see you all here this evening. My name is Matty McLean, and I'm going to be facilitating the discussion this evening. And it's genuinely a joy and an honour to be here. I'm not an Aucklander by birth. I'm relatively new, I think all things considered. I've been here for about 10 years, but I love this city. You know, I was walking, I lived just up the road and I was walking along K' Road earlier today. And I just thought, this is, this is Auckland. This is the best of Auckland, right? It's the vibrancy. It's the eclectic energy. It's the beautiful people, the diverse people. There's so much to love about this city. And, and I think that, that's what is so important about this conversation, because I know so many of you are passionate about this city as well. And passionate about how we can make it better, right? And so to do that, we need to have these conversations and we need to engage in local body politics. And it's so important to be here. So thank you.

Auckland Conversations, I think is going to be one of these places to provide an opportunity to hopefully inspire and stimulate your thinking a little bit about the challenges facing Auckland's Tamaki Makaurau, but also the way that we can make this city incredible. And there's so many people really passionate about doing that. Tonight, we're going to be joined by a panel of really passionate speakers who hopefully engage you and address why voting is so important and how we can really achieve amazing outcomes for Tamaki Makaurau, as well. Thank you so much for being here in person. It's great to see so many of your smiling faces and hello to those of you tuning in from home or from the office, wherever you're watching virtually. It's so nice to have you here as well. For those of you in the room, I just thought I'd go through some housekeeping notes. Bathrooms are in the foyers just through the doors, there. There is unfortunately, no smoking or vaping inside here. So if you do want to do that, you will have to exit the building and go outside. And in the case, in the case of an emergency, please just head through the doors here in the foyer, right outside and we'll assemble in Aotea square. And finally, if we can just make sure our phones are turned to silent, that will be fantastic. Don't want any of those like crazy Beyonce ring tones as I love Beyonce, but we don't need to hear it when we are having an important discussion, all right. But leave them on, don't you don't need to turn them off, 'cause we'd love for you to post to social media. And also we're using the Slido features so that people can ask questions as well, which I'll explain to you a little bit later on as well, before we get properly underway this evening, I'd like to introduce Richard Nahi from Ngati Whatua.

- Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Richard Nahi and I am from the tribe of Ngati Whatua, but from the Kaipa area. So it's a pleasure and honour to be here. I'm going to commence with a karakia to acknowledge the importance of the environment that we we live in here in Tamaki Makaurau. Acknowledging ranginui, rangiroa and also te



papatūānuku, and also to acknowledge the environment and the treasures that we have. That's been a gift for all of us to enjoy that has been created for us to be here in Tamaki Makaurau. I'm going to acknowledge also the very importance in terms of looking after papatūānuku. So let us pray everyone.

- Richard, thank you so much for that. This is going to be a fantastic evening. I'm really excited about it and I hope you are as well. We've got some amazing speakers. So the format for tonight will be a bit of a discussion, and a bit of a panel, so that we can hear from these speakers. And we'll have a bit of a chat, about why local body elections is so important. How we can possibly engage people to be more passionate about local body politics, and what some of the big issues facing the city are as well. And you'll have the opportunity of course, to ask questions of our panellists as well and hear from our amazing speakers. We do have of course, a limited time to get through everything. So when we get to the question portion, if you just try and keep your questions kind of nice and concise, and if you do want to specifically direct them to anyone, just make sure that you either let us know via the microphone, or if you are using the Slido feature, just write down who it is that you want to direct your questions to. Slido, for those of you who don't know is an amazing interactive Q and A tool, to be able to ask these questions, I'm going to have an iPad with me so I can look through the questions in real time as you're submitting them. If you've got a smartphone or an iPad or a tablet, whatever it is, visit [slido.com](https://www.slido.com). Enter the event code #elections. And then you can ask your question virtually on Slido. We'll obviously try and get through as many of them as time will allow, or if you are in the room with us this evening, please just feel free to raise your hands and we'll bring a microphone to you. And you can ask your question in person as well. Don't forget as well, like I said, leave your phones on so that you can post the social media. If you feel like doing that, we've got some hashtags already going #AKLconversations, #AKLelections and #voteAuckland as well.

This is obviously a really inclusive and accessible place for people. We want people to be engaged in this korero. So on demand viewing of the event, a full transcript and captioning will be available on the Auckland conversations website in the next few days. Everyone ready? Yay, fantastic. This is an exciting time, voting has opened. By the way, turn your heads and have a look at the back there. Give everyone a wave. That's our amazing elections team. You can go and have a chat to them. You can register to vote. You can actually vote in person, right? Yeah. They can come and see you amazing. Go and have a chat to them, they are amazing. Yes, round of applause. Voting has opened by the way. Hopefully you've got your packages in the mail or you are going to go and chat to the team to make sure that you get those papers in the mail. So don't forget as well to vote before midday on the eighth of October. Tonight, we're here to talk about why it is so important to vote, why it's important that Auckland's eligible voters help choose who our next local body politicians will be. And the future for this incredible city. I watched the, the boring tunnel go through the, um, it was amazing, it was so good. Don't laugh, Teuila, it was incredible. I loved watching it and it got me so excited because those are the things that are going to make my Auckland living experience a lot better. So it's things like that, that I think, okay, that's why I need to be involved and why I need to be passionate and why I need



to vote in local body politics. 'Cause those are the things that affect me. It's amazing, I think so many people get so focused on central politics, but local body politics affects us every single day. It's why we need to be involved, engaged, and it's why things like Auckland Conversations is so important. So thank you for being here today. There's about 170 positions that candidates are standing for, so there's a lot of people involved, really hoping for your engagement and votes as well. So make sure you do your research. There's some amazing tools online that you can use to find out a little bit more about the candidates. What they stand for. Who they are, and why they want your vote. Go and do that. Don't just tick the boxes, actually read up about these people 'cause they're the ones that are going to make your life a lot easier. Right, should we get into it? Let's introduce our panellists. We have some incredible panellists this evening and each of them comes from a really unique viewpoint as well. So it's going to be amazing. Our first panellist is Erin Temu. Give him a round of applause. Erin is the senior advisor for community engagement at the electoral commission. That's his team down the back there. Say woo, go Erin. He especially works really hard on the engagement work streams to reach our Maori, Pacifica, youth, and education and hard to reach communities as well. He's been very hard at work. We're going to talk to you a bit about the mahi you've been doing, Erin. Thank you for being here today, really appreciate it. Our next panellist is Julie Watson. Give her round of applause. Julie Watson is the programme manager for the silver rainbow and rainbow tech and member of the rainbow advisory panel at the Auckland council. She also worked for two decades. That's right, at the human rights commission. So she's going to be fascinating, can't wait to speak to you Julie, thank you for being here. Panellist number three is Latayvia Tualasea Tautai. I got that right? Awesome, welcome. Please, come on up. Latayvia is the project manager at YWCA. She's a second generation Auckland born Samoan. She's really focused on the engagement and empowerment of young people with a bit of a feminist lens as well. So it's going to be fascinating to get your point of view this evening, thank you for being here Latayvia. And finally Teuila Fuatai, a journalist who grew up here in Tamaki Makaurau and now works for E-Tangata, and is focused on Pacifica issues as a writer for the magazine, thank you so much. Thank you for being here. We've got a couple of microphones for you guys to share as well. I thought, first of all, the best thing I thought I wanted to get from each of you to start with is why you love this city so much. Why do you love Auckland, Erin?

- Well, I love Auckland because it's my home.

- Yeah.

- I was born here, I did school here. I got married here, have all my favourite people here. So, you know, home is where the heart is. So this is my home, Auckland, love it.

- [Matty] Beautiful, Julie?



- Yeah, what he said, all that stuff. And also, I really love the beach. And in Auckland you can be at the beach, any type of beach, within a nanosecond just about, well, not always a nanosecond 'cause of traffic, but you know, that's something else that we need to vote strategically for to get sorted out.

- That's the pain in the ass, isn't it, Julie?

- Latayvia, what about you?

- I love this question because I'm a jaffa through and through, I'm passionate about Tamaki Makaurau. I grew up in western, south Auckland. Anyone here from west side? Have we got south side in the room? Woo, okay, we need more of that. Something to work on for next time. So I'm really passionate about our people really. And I think as a Pacific person, this is the largest Polynesian city in the world. There's more Samoans here in Auckland than there are in Samoa. And I love it here, 685. But I think something a little bit deeper is that I'm second generation. So my grandparents came here when the New Zealand government invited us to work under paid work. So my grandparents put their blood, sweat, and tears into building Auckland's infrastructure. So it runs a bit deep, my love for Tamaki Makaurau. Period, yeah.

- [Matty] I love that, thank you for that answer. Teuila, what about you?

- So similar themes to everyone here. I grew up here and it's home, so I love it. And I also do like how it is a massive Pacific city. It's very diverse and I would love to see us move forward from that and make it probably a more inclusive city where it's less segregated. And we, everyone, gets to enjoy all the different parts about it, like the beaches, and the moana, and the parks, and the walks in a way that doesn't seem like you're going sometimes to the another part of the country.

- Beautiful, I'm going to, I'm going to, we'll talk more about that shortly, 'cause I'd love to unpack that a little bit more with you. Erin, I wanted to get an understanding from you because obviously you. This is, this is your territory, right? Local body politics and, and central government politics as well. But especially in this conversation, why is it so important that people are engaged in local body politics?

- Yeah. So how we try and connect the messages, we just create a story. So when you wake up in the morning, you have your little cup of tea, you have to appreciate the water that's coming through those taps. And when you, you know, put your, your plastic bottle into the recycled bin, you got to appreciate the bottle that will be recycled. And so everyday things, walk the kids down to school, take them to the pools for swimming lessons, the footpaths that we use, the road that we drive on the pool facility we use, you know? So when you connect the authority that is connected



to water, recycling, footpaths, roads, the pools, the parks, everyday services run by the council. They're important to us. But sometimes, you know, if they're not working, it matters more. But when it does work, you know, it does really matter to us and our everyday lives. So that's why I think it's really important to vote is because it really does affect our everyday lives.

- [Matty] Teuila, do you think people understand that? Do you think they understand how much it kind of permeates so many aspects of our lives?

- I'm going to be honest. I'm going to say no, only because I am probably not good at acknowledging all those links that you've just pointed out. I think when, when you were talking just then Erin, what I thought most about was lockdown. I mean, no one wants to think about lockdown, but just having access to the park, like a green space. And then it became really, really obvious how important it was to have that. Especially because it was so full. Like I live just down the road from Cornwall Park, Maungakiekie. And it was, I mean, it wasn't supposed to be, but it was like a train station the whole time. And parents were able to bring their kids out at like seven in the morning. So it was a lifesaver, really, yeah.

- Beautiful. Latayvia, what about you? I don't mean to, from a, a younger person perspective Because younger people, younger people get a bad rep, right. About their engagement, not just in local body politics, but central government as well. So why do you think it's so important that young people get involved? Because for them they might think, well, I don't own the house. I don't have to deal with paying rates or anything like that, this doesn't affect me, but it does, right?

- Yeah, so Matty, I'm 24. So I'm nearing the end of the youth space. So it's nearly time for me to give it up, hang it up.

- [Matty] You're youth adjacent.

- I'm really youth adjacent, but definitely youth on this panel. Nah, I'm joking. But anyways, I think it's important to acknowledge that young people at Tamaki Makaurau, we're not homogenous and there's so many different types of people, but amongst my community, I'm definitely not an exception. I'm just a reflection, of the amazing young people around me that are engaged, and they're engaged in different ways. Some of them on the front lines with protests, and some of them within the public sector working in policy. But we are also among the very lucky who have had access to education, and who have had access to like university. And that's also a very privileged group of rangitahi as well because we're already engaged in systems, right? But we're also a part of a group that haven't fallen between the gaps as well. And I just think of, especially like our young people who need to leave high school to support their families, you're talking about lockdown and everything. So when they're focused on keeping the lights on, it's hard to read a booklet with what different



councillors think about different things, especially if you've only seen them during election year. So it's really important, when we are engaging with the rangitahi that it's two ways, that it's reciprocal and that rangitahi also gaining things from those interactions and not just being used, I guess, for election photos and you know, and I just think of the incredible work that like Erin and their team do engaging rangitahi actually, by youth, for youth, the kind of work that they do. But then thinking of the other side on like council side and with government and everything. It's how are those systems actually engaging youth on a day to day basis? How we are not only at the table, but kind of dismantling those systems so that we can engage in ways that are accessible. Yeah, sorry, not the big words, but.

- No, I love that, but how do you do that, do you think? Because we know, I see that they get a bad rep, but we know how engaged young people are in the issues that matter to them. But like you say, if there's a lot else, if, if there's a lot of other things going on in their life, it's hard to get that cut through. So how do you do that? How do you engage with them?

- Yeah, I think we should, a prime example we can think of is during Covid. The way that we engaged communities and the way that we actually empowered and put resources behind community groups, and organisations, and young people that were already doing the work. So I think it's about youth led mahi, that has the resources, and has the money, because when we actually empower groups, for example, you could just think of South Seas out in Ōtara the way that they engage and mobilised our communities, but also acknowledging how hard it is to vote sometimes for some people, and how hard it is to get some places. Gas is expensive, period. It's wild out here. But then also if you think about public transport, a lot of my family work night shifts, so they can't catch a bus to night shift. They're using petrol, and having those kind of incentives like petrol vouchers, and grocery vouchers. I don't really think of it as like bribing people. I think of it as acknowledging their inequities and that for some people, it takes a lot more to get to voting stations or to get to places. But I know that they're doing a lot of work on that, but I think there's also not enough awareness around what's out there, but amazing work that is being done, but also acknowledging the inequities in our communities.

- [Matty] Wow, she's 24. God, amazing. Julie wanted to get your perspective though, I mentioned you work for the human rights commission for a long time, and now you work for the rainbow advisory panel. So I wanted your perspective on democracy and why it's so important, especially to those minority or marginalised communities as well.

- I think that the short answer is, is that a really good way to amplify your voices is to have people that you have elected, people who are standing up and representing people who are like you in those roles. And what was it, 170 different roles up for grabs. The voter turnout historically has been in such tiny percentage, the people who take on those roles, what kind of mandate is that for them? You know, how do



they know that they really have the people behind them, when so few people have come out to, to put their mark on the piece of paper. And I know that in some communities, the difference between one person and another, it might just be a very few votes, which, you know, that's, that's about democracy, you know, every single vote absolutely counts. And, and if you are wanting to get your people into those positions, to make sure that your communities are represented, you have to get out and vote. And I think that every person who makes a commitment to vote should also grab at least one other person and, and take them through the process, show them how the book works, how you fill it out, offer to take their papers to the local countdown. But like, if you are committed to voting, commit to just, you know, helping another couple of people who might never have engaged in that democracy to do it as well, and explain to them why it's so important.

- [Matty] And we need to make sure we have unique voices and a wide spectrum of voices in terms of our local body politics, right?

- Absolutely, absolutely.

- So do we have that at the moment, Erin, do you think in terms of, if we look at the candidates, do we have a good cross section of possible voices to represent such a diverse city as Auckland, as Tamaki Makaurau?

- Probably in, in this particular election, because it's run by the council, not by the electoral commission, they probably have all the data on the diversity side of things. So we're not really involved in that, but from what I've seen in the community and on the billboards, I've seen a lot more diversity this time around, and there's a lot more people standing, especially in our Maori and Pacific spaces as well as, you know, male, female. So yeah, from what I've seen, it definitely has represented.

- [Matty] Tell me about the work that you've been doing recently as well. 'Cause I know you've been on the ground working really hard to make sure that people get out and vote.

- Yeah, well, we have a shared work plan with the Auckland council to encourage participation. So at the moment we've got the one stop shop here, but we put those one stop shops where you can vote and enrol at the same time. Started this week at places that we can, that need that support. So we kind of have two po that we erect as communication and support. And so in doing that, we are placing our ones, stop shops at places like cinema admissions, soup kitchens at the MITs, the AATs, on marae. So we're going to places where they do need that support to be able to get out there and actually cast their votes. So it's been really good to have that partnership, and the great thing about it, like this morning, we had the student association join us. We've got MIT opening up the space. We've got the council doing the voting, and the electoral commission doing the enrollment. So that combination



is like, you know, any synergy, you get a lot more participation by having free food. Students love free food, and they are able to get educated as well as practically cast their vote and get enrolled if they haven't done that. So really good work. It has been over the last week or so with the council, but we've been planning that since last year. So it doesn't just happen overnight. There's been a lot of planning going into it. And even the popups that, that have happened this time around, because nobody knows really where the closest post box is, you can go to the countdown here, and anywhere in Auckland. And so, you know, that makes it more convenient and, and it just helps people out, go to libraries, go to the train stations and you'll see the boxes that you see over there and you can actually cast your vote. So convenience, support, and communication is really something that we're trying to increase in this particular election.

- Yeah. I only learned about the countdown boxes today. There's brilliant. And you've got to make it easy for people, right? And I wondered how important it is to get into those pockets, like at the City Missions and the soup kitchens and make sure that these are the people that are also engaged in local body politics who possibly have never voted before.

- Yeah, that's right. Because it's really hard to communicate to them. You actually have to be there. You've got to be there, you've got to offer the service straightaway. You know, you can't put up a poster, you can't send them a text, homeless people don't have those facilities, or those things, even students don't have access to the data. So we have to position ourselves where these people are so that we can actually get them to participate. So it's been a really good initiative.

- [Matty] And are they engaged Erin?

- Yeah, well, a lot of sausages went today, and yesterday in Ōtara as well as Manukau and before they had to actually go there, they had to visit our enrollment or voting station. So it's been really good to have those initiatives happen.

- Although Teuila, we know participation has been low over the last few years and kind of seems to be steadily declining often. Why do you think that is? Why do you think people aren't engaged in local body politics?

- I think it's probably some of the things that we've already covered where we are not actually sure, what say local council is responsible for. We're not sure of the role that they play in our everyday lives. And I suppose for me, when I think of what's most important and what I vote want to vote on. Housing always comes up, and that's like a central government issue. So housing, what else? Health services, where do I vote for that? So that's also central government. And those, I suppose, it's just kind of trying to bring back the importance of what council does. And we had this conversation before about rates like, oh, you know, I don't pay rates, but actually yes,



we do pay rates, so you pay your rates through your rent. So it's just kind of trying to tie together where, you know, where our contributions, that monetary contribution goes, and then what council actually can do with it, I suppose.

- Julie, when you think about why you vote in local body politics, what are the issues that are important to you? What are the things that affect you, that make you fill out the voting paper and tick the boxes?

- So I'm really ashamed to say that I was incredibly passionate about voting for central government, right from when I was a teenager, like I turned eighteen, seven days after the general election in that year that I turned eighteen. I was just bitter as, and you know, I, I came from a family that talked about general politics a lot. And I think really, my committed journey to being a voter in local body politics was when I became a panellist on the, rainbow panel for Auckland city council. And we, we each took different portfolios and I did two terms on the election panel. And then it's like, I just felt so ashamed of how infrequent, how, what a low emphasis I put on it. And I, so I really feel that my huge committed journey began then.

- I wonder though whether that shame actually discourages people constantly because they go, well, I haven't been engaged before. I feel a little bit embarrassed about that. So I don't know, know where to start or I, I don't feel like I can start because I've been so disengaged for such a long time.

- Yeah, and when Erin was saying that, you know about people who don't get things in their inbox and you can't text them and stuff. And I think, I also think about those people who have no head space left because they're just working so much, they've got so many things to think about and the booklet seems a bridge too far. And I think that that's why it's really awesome that you can go online and watch little videos and do other interactive things that help you get more information. It just, yeah, we really need to help out those people who just go, oh, you know, this is one thing to think about that I just don't have capacity for. So, you know, just reiterating again that idea of take someone with you, take someone on that commitment journey with you and make, make it seem so doable for them. Like I've got adult children and there's no way they wouldn't be voting in these elections, or the last ones, 'cause I just really wanted to take them on the journey. So they didn't grow up to be like me, and not have, have committed much earlier in their life.

- Latayvia, do you think we need to, to break down that, that shame, that embarrassment of possibly not being, having been engaged before?

- I think I don't know too much about the shame because I think it's more, I'm speaking from my community. But also I kind of represent an entire community, but I'm just speaking, like from what I've, the conversations I've had with my family, and my community is that we can only move at the speed of trust. And I don't think



there's a lot of trust between a lot of communities and local government. Because we don't actually, a lot of people don't actually know what they do, you know. I had to go to university and major in politics and international relations to kind of understand it. So what you've got to get thousands and thousands of dollars worth of student loan? That's a failure of our system to reach into communities. So I think trust is a massive issue, like yeah, of course there's shame and embarrassment because it's embarrassing having to ask questions that you think everyone knows the answer to. But also if I don't trust the person, who's just come into my community on this one day that I was like, I have never seen your name before my whole life. Who are you? But something exciting about this election is that I've seen names that I could vote for on the billboards and things that I've seen in my community over the years and it's people from our communities. And I think that's very exciting. It's small progress and it's great to see more ethnic diversity and I hope we can have even more diversity, not only in regards to Maori and Pacifica but more youth representation as well. And also in terms of our LGBTQIA+ community when it comes to the local elections. So yeah, I think trust is a really big one. And then based off what Erin said, as well as we can't engage our communities from our desks, and also like thinking about where we are holding events and where we are, 'cause, not me reading the little slider, that's not my job, sorry Matty --

- Go for it.

- You know thinking about where we're having our events, thinking about free parking, 'cause I've got a lot of family members that if there's no parking, they're not coming. Absolutely not, they're like, is it online? I'll zoom it, and I know they're not watching, but no, love you family, but you know, it's about making things as accessible as you can, and meeting people where they are. So I think we found from lockdown, like of course you want to have digital accessibility. Like if you could have online voting, that would be a dream. And I know a lot of countries are, you know, are putting, you know, trials in regards to that. But nothing beats kanohi ki te kanohi, face to face is so valuable and we all crave human connection. But I think it's about building those genuine relationships and communities over years. And also putting people forward from our communities to actually run. Run for these spots at these decision making tables, but also on the council side, making sure that they're safe places, once our people are elected and voted in.

- Amazing. Teuila, Latayvia obviously touched on diversity. How crucial is that to see someone that feels like they would represent you, represent your community, represent who you are as a person, how crucial is diversity?

- I think it's really important. It brings it back to actually wanting to engage. I think that's part of it. I actually think, well this round of local government election has, it feels a lot more local as in, like you mentioned, you can see the people, you know that they're from where you live. So their engagement in the community seems a lot



more real. So yeah, I think it's good. I think it's good for engagement and it encourages people to actually try and find out what the council does.

- Yeah. How can we do better though, Erin, in terms of making sure that people know what is, what is done through local body politics, why they should be engaged, why they should vote?

- Yeah, I think we can always do better, right? And I think we just need to change the narrative and to give them a narrative to actually believe in, to build their trust and confidence. And you know, sometimes we have to walk backwards to actually move forwards and you know, the past kind of, the people that have paid the cost for freedom and democracy, like on Monday the 19th, one hundred and twenty nine years ago, back in 1893, women won the right to vote here in Aotearoa. So world first, today, almost half of MPs are women. So if you don't have a say, then you, you're not only giving up your right, but real privilege I believe to vote, because the people who have gone before us paved the way. So, you know, voting is a great way to honour the past. And you know, those are the types of things that we have to have on our minds when we're actually talking to people to, to build their trust and confidence. Because there has actually been a lot happened in our, in our past to actually bring into our future.

- Surely these are, I'm using extreme examples here. But if we think of the likes of President Trump and Brexit, for example, big decisions that were made that were voted in that a lot of people didn't necessarily agree with. That kind of shows how important it is to have a voice, right?

- Absolutely, I mean that, yeah. High, high end example. Sorry, what was the question, again?

- Just, it goes to show the importance of having a voice when you're talking about democracy.

- Absolutely, and how local body politics works too, is that you have to campaign and use, you know, you can fundraise and things, but you use your own putea to do that fundraising. And I think that means that we have to be really discerning, you know, we don't just vote for the person who has the most billboards, or actually has an ad on television. We, we have to really be thoughtful about, you know, if we are going to get people that look like us, will they necessarily have as many resources at their disposal to make a big splash. So, being really thoughtful about that, and thinking about what the costs of all that is as well too, I think is important.

- And making sure that they, that you feel like they'll make a difference when they're actually there.



- Yeah, yeah. I think it's like your trust. What is the motivation of these candidates? And who, how do I pick the people who I feel have the motivation that aligns with my values?

- Mm, Teuila, I mentioned before, there's some amazing tools online that you can find out a little bit more about these candidates, but a lot of the onus is on you to do the work. Is that the right, right approach? Do you think, is that the right way to go about it? To put the onus on the voter to do all of the work, to find out about these candidates and what they stand for? Or does there need to be a lot more information given, you know, when, when people are going to make their votes.

- Both, I think. We should be proud of our democracy and our system, so yes there should be some responsibility on us to find out what's happening. At the same time, the low turnout rate shows that's just not working. So therefore, we do need more engagement and we need to find better ways to engage people because we are just not talking to enough people. And as to how we do that again, if we wanted to reach youth, we just have to talk to them and see what ideas do you have or what would you like to see done? Because otherwise we are just going to go around in circles I'm sure Erin knows what this is like when you're just trying to engage people and perhaps don't have the right tools or the right methods to do.

- [Matty] Yeah, Latayvia, how do you do that? Do the young people have an idea of how, how to, how to get more engagement?

- Yeah. Well, we've talked about it a lot. It's going to where rangitahi are. So thinking about our education system, and I know the teachers have so much to fit into the curriculum, but the fact that we don't teach civics at a level where people, because it's so important, like youth, the youth vote is so integral, not only for like the turnout today, but also it's been shown that your youth voting patterns as a young person reflects whether you're going to be engaged for the rest of your life. So you've got to get people early as well. Because like we said, a lot of the working poor are time poor, but we have a lot of young people and kids in schools when they're young and that's the time to kind of 'cause the first time I kind of ever thought about politics, you know, and how it affects me is when a teacher at my school got us to do a little like mock debate about like issues that kind of affected us, like whether we wanted a school uniform or not, you know, and which is, you know, very pressing, you know, but it really got me thinking about how important our voice is and like you said, voting for, the sacrifices of before and now. But like as a kid, it's just like, how did these things work? Who am I voting for? And also young people and children, even in primary school, meeting candidates and meeting politicians before election year, you know, and that they're consistently involved and that there are some who are doing incredible work and that needs to be highlighted, you know, in the media. So that's on you too-- and in spaces in mainstream spaces to acknowledge those people. 'Cause I know so many people on the front line who are putting in the work, you know, like



Erin's team and like, you know, bubblegum and south seas and like so many churches. Pacific people volunteer, not me going on and on about Pacific, but I'm proud. We volunteer over forty thousand hours per week in New Zealand alone, which is what, yeah -- put hands together for my people, you know but there's a lot to be said about unpaid work and that's a whole other panel. But, I just want to acknowledge like everything we kind of contribute to the frontline. So yeah, the onus shouldn't only be on the voter, but also on those on a systemic level to reach in as well. Yeah.

- Yeah, and so Erin, is that a big part of your mahi at the moment?

- Yeah, so, you know, we have to have a look at it in a way that it's generational and cultural change. And so it's not an easy fix. It's not a target for KPIs for this local body election. That's not how we approach community engagement, because you know, we have different generations of, of people coming into New Zealand. First, second, third, fourth generation Pacific Islanders. We have different generations in regards to Maori, and even other ethnic groups. And so we've got to approach them differently, but they're all wanting that better future. They're all wanting to build a better generation coming forth through. And this is our message is that you can do it simply by having a voice, casting your vote. Getting somebody that represents you standing, you know, in these local elections. And that's our message to our community to be able to increase success. And that's why I think there's a lot more buy-in into local body elections this year, then I've, I've seen in the previous two elections, which is really good.

- [Matty] Isn't that so inspiring. And hopeful, right. And we need a bit of hope, yeah. Julie, I was looking at some of the stats that the council sent me. There's been an increase in the number of candidates, age 35 to 44 this year. There's been an increase in middle Eastern, Latin American, African candidates, up by about 8%. What do you think that'll mean for voter turnout? Do you think that'll make a difference?

- Yes, I, I absolutely do. I mean, if, if you are in that 8% and you see people that are part of your communities who look like you who have the same issues in their lives, who have the same interests as you, I do think you will turn out and vote for them, yeah.

- Brilliant, so where do we go from here then, Erin, I'll start with you. How do we move forward and make sure that we are engaging the right people? Getting them motivated to get out and vote and making them care about something that affects them every single day?

- Yeah, well, we approach every community and community issues, require community solutions. We don't have the answer in government, it's all in the



community. And so that's what we do as we consult with the community, we talk to the community, because it's their generational change that they want. Of course we want it because you know, this is what we do for a living, but the reality is the benefit lies in the community. And so by mobilising the community and empowering them to have a voice, to be able to stand and to understand the past, that brings us into the future, I'm hoping that that will change the next generation of voters coming through. And I think the younger people are way more street than when we were young and they, they have a lot more access to knowledge. So I think that they are a lot more advanced than, and I'm sure they'll turn out more as we go along. So yeah, that's my hope and it is all built on hope. So.

- Yeah, Julia, are you hopeful? Are you hopeful that we can get this right? That we can get engagement to where it needs to be to make sure that we have a thriving democracy when it comes to local body politics?

- Yeah, I am. But I do think one of the keys would be to make it digital as well. I think that we need to take voting online, however risky it might be that, you know, overseas people with bad intent hack into our information, which, you know, actually I left my voting papers in the box for a whole day. My neighbours could have come and taken those and used them and voted. So I don't know, I don't know how real that risk is, but I think there's so many populations that would, that would use the online system. You know, it's how we work. You know, we sit at our computers and our mahi comes in, our messages, our lunch invites all come in through that way. If we could bring up our voting papers, click into who the different candidates are. I just know that it would increase engagement. So I would definitely like to see a more twenty first century approach, you know, to the whole voting mechanics.

- [Matty] Latayvia, what do you want to see? Here we go.

- Sorry, we got the right mic. 'Cause like, okay. So on one side, like systems don't inspire me. They weren't built for me. They weren't built for my community, but on a hopeful side, on a positive note, what does inspire me is seeing young people running. And so I'm going to use an example. They're not in Auckland, so I'm not, I'm not saying to vote for them or anything. So I'm going to use an example. So I've got a friend Talei Bryant, who's running for mayor in Whakatane, and seeing a young Fijian, Maori pakeha woman, who's been engaged in community from the get, engaged in rugby, engaged in youth empowerment. And who's also a young person running, you know, for a space at the table and to lead an organisation. And I guess it's the pro, that's what inspires me and seeing people back her and seeing people back young brown woman, it's just, it's exciting. And that's what I think gives me hope. So not only having a higher turnout in people using their voices, but also on the other side decision making tables, our people not being after thoughts. We also, we thought of as priorities as well because our voices matter.



- That's a really interesting point Teuila I think she made, we we've talked a lot about engaging people in terms of voting, but we need to engage people to actually want to be a part of local body politics and democracy, right?

- Yes, and I, and I think it is a tough gig to be quite honest. Like I, I agree with, I'd love to see digital Julie and I would love to see more candidates. The other one that I might throw into the ring would be, and this is kind of what you guys are doing with working with MIT and the universities is, is there a way to look at trying to get large workplaces involved in terms of the enrolling process? So that's a practical solution. Maybe not as big, big minded as what you've said, Latayvia, but yeah, it's just another, you know, another tool in the box.

- [Matty] And that's what we need, right. We just need as many tools as we can, as many, as many ideas that are going to drive people forward and get them engaged, yeah. Brilliant, you four, thank you. I've seen a lot of questions come through from Slido. So I'm just going to switch to the keypad. Does anyone in the room have any questions at this point, by the way? Fantastic, we've got, someone's put their hand up.

- [Audience Member] Thank you. I have a question in response to the issue about digital voting. I mean, I think it's a really good idea to have it as an option, but I worry that then you disenfranchise those people who are not familiar with digital devices and so on. And we've seen an experiment of this in the health system over the last three years with a lot of consultations being virtual and the nice pakeha people are getting their consultations, but those who are less fortunate are really struggling. So I just think it needs to be multimodal. And I'd like your response to that.

- I completely agree that, that you, there will have to be some system for people who are not connected digitally or don't, don't like engaging that way, who don't think, you know, their thought processes work in a different way yet we would absolutely have to have options, but it, but, but then, there's other people who are sight impaired, you know, to be able to do a, an anonymous vote and be empowered to do that, I think is incredibly important as well. You know, we are so diverse as human beings that it will require a diverse response.

- Yeah, yeah. A hundred percent believe there needs to be a hybrid model. We have our enrollments there. You can do that on paper, but in this particular election, 55% of people have responded digitally. So we still need to have that. And we understand that in our communities, especially in south Auckland, 15 to 25% of them don't even have access to the digital products. And so we understand you have to have that hybrid so that you can offer that service, that communication and that support.

- Do you know much about what, what work is being done in that space, you're in at the moment to look, to look at the digital aspect of things?



- No, it hasn't even come up, because of it, it starts in parliament first before, we just action, whatever they legislate. So yeah, it is not even an legislation.

- Oh no, this is my nerdy side showing. So the only country that actually has an online operational voting system in places is Estonia, and it's embarrassing, but I think we could also really learn from the Maori and Iwi elections. I know some of them are held online or maybe in, with hybrid models. And it could be interesting, I guess if that was community led, but still a bit to go when it comes to technology, but I'm also a big believer in hybrid having different ways to vote. 'Cause also if we think about like ableism and I think about my aunties with arthritis, like it's so hard for them to leave the house. So having options that actually don't really require you to like move and that are accessible as well as having that face to face, which is so important in communities is really integral.

- [Matty] Beautiful, I love that. I'll keep the microphone with Latayvia 'cause the question has come in specifically for you, they've said Latayvia mentioned acknowledging inequities. How do we make participation in the local elections more equitable?

- Yeah. I guess just thinking about the communities of which you serve and whether it's led by them really, but also whether they're engaged in your organisations 'cause at our job YWCA, a little plug, we look at intersectional feminism, which is just a big, fancy way of saying the different ways in which power interacts. So we think about feminism that only, that doesn't only look at women, but also thinks about women of colour, women with disabilities, those living in poverty, classism, racism, you know, homophobia, and you think of all those different intersections and how different communities may be impacted, but you can't guess, like Teuila was saying, just ask people, and get people to lead their own solutions. Because every time the community's going to have a better answer than academics who are just guessing based off research. So I think just going into your communities and just backing people and sometimes like also, you don't have to be the person leading things sometimes. Like I look around in this room and most people here are people who are already engaged, probably all of us are going to be voting, but it's about how do maybe, how do we use our understanding of politics and how do we use our reach in our communities and in our families to encourage those who may not be engaged and who may not trust and who may feel embarrassed, how do we use, I guess, our privilege and our voice to make more space for them and make them feel a little bit more comfortable and have conversations without expensive words. I think that's a big thing I've learned is when I'm having conversations with my family about politics, no one asks for my expensive words, you know, just keeping it simple and voting based on our values because no one cares if you've got a degree--



- Keep it real, right. Keep it real, do we think we ask enough questions, Teuila? Do you think we ask people enough questions about, do you know, or do, do we rely on what we on perceived knowledge or understanding?

- No, yeah, we have a top down approach. It's definitely perceived knowledge and understanding. I think in recent years, there's lots more, there's like a strong movement, not strong, there's more passive and multi academics that are trying to mobilise their research spaces towards what we want, like the information that we need for our communities. But yes, no, we don't, we don't ask enough questions and we don't seem to think we have the resources to start at the grassroots, 'cause it is a hard job, and it means going out there and actually doing the work on the ground. And we know we can do it because we did it in a crisis. We did it in Covid. So it's just a matter of sort of shifting that, that frame of mind and doing it for something like local body elections, which is huge.

- [Matty] Yeah, yeah. Julie, I wondered if I could ask you about your take on the, the addressing inequities question that was posed to Latayvia because you've had such huge experience with the human rights commission. How do we do that? How do we get that right?

- I think we've, we've already heard lots of really good answers, but I, I think in terms of inequities for representation, I go back to what I said before about that need to, to fund and mobilise people yourself in order to get people to know who you and get into the communities. And I think it was a great sadness for the rainbow panel in, in this last round that we've been in that we really wanted to find ways to empower people, to know that they could be a candidate, you know, that they could be LGBTQIA plus, and be a candidate and that they would get tremendous backing from all the different eclectic communities that are under those rainbows. But we just never, we never kind of got to the point of being able to think of a way through for that. And I, I think for those communities, I don't see them very represented. So yeah, I think we need to, we need to have a, a kind of ahi kind of system whereby people who can see gaps in who is represented sort of coalesce and, and find the people and then wrap, wrap around every kind of support. You know, it's a lot of emotional support too, you know. Again, if I use that example of LGBTQIA plus communities, they can take a lot of shit, you know, a lot of stuff gets thrown to them. And when you put yourself up to be a public figure, you know, you also invite invite a lot of that, that sort of behaviour. And we already know that council, people who work for council and elected members, you know, we know that elected members have not put themselves forward for election again, because of the hate that has come that way. And that just makes me feel so enraged 'cause you know, they work way harder than they're remunerated for, most of them.

- [Matty] Could you put your finger on why, why you didn't get that cut through, why people didn't feel like they could be a part of that process from that community?



- I think we wanted to go through a process, and I think partly it was Covid, and partly I think we didn't as a group of people fully get our heads around how we could do that. And also there are kind of some rules and regulations too. So, you know, we had to be very careful about our role as advisors to the council. You know, it could have been murky waters, helping people to get, to put themselves forward.

- [Matty] We have an audience question here. If we could get a microphone. Kia ora koutou

- I was just going to ask how useful you would think it would be to have sponsored ads on like TikTok and Facebook where celebrities make it look cool to vote. And people from even as interesting as celebrity treasure islander are putting their vote in showing how to tick the box. Is that a useful resource and what it affects the vote turnout?

- I'm holding a microphone right now, and I'm going to say yes, yes, yes, absolutely. We have a bit of a celebrity culture here in Aotearoa, and I definitely think, but I think anything that makes quite a serious thing also seem fun and like what the cool cats are doing, I think, yes, I think. And we saw that with Chloe Swarbrick. How, how many elections ago, was it two? My understanding is that her campaign was pretty much done, completely using social media and she had a very successful, I mean, she didn't win, but she came, she came close, much closer than a lot of people would've ever predicted and using those social media platforms.

- Teuila, do you have thoughts on that? It was kind of goes back to what you were saying, right? It's the tools in the toolbox it's whatever, whatever helps.

- Yes, I agree with what Julie said, summed up well.

- Perfect, Erin, an interesting question here. And we might as well address the elephant in the room. Lovely to see so many people here this evening, but there are quite a few empty chairs and someone online has, has noticed that and has said, does that speak to, you know, is that a reflection of where we're at? The fact that there are empty chairs here tonight and we didn't get as many people as we were hoping for, to engage and have a conversation with you guys and to listen to the conversation you were having. Does that speak to where we're at?

- Yeah, I think the world has changed post Covid. So it's interesting that person is engaging online and put this question, because if I had the option, I'd actually do this online too, instead of coming up, but you know, the world has changed and we are communicating differently and I don't see this as a reflection of the interest, but it's just, I think online's way more convenient, but you know, it's good to be here and have the free food and do all of those, all of those types of things. I'm sure people that



appreciate here, but also trying to get here and all of those types of things now that we're back into work and all of those types of things I can appreciate Auckland has been such the busy, productive people they are. Probably had other things, and guess what? Most people will probably catch up and watch this after the live. That's what I like about the digital platform. Because I'll go home and watch it as well, yeah. And so will my family, I'll probably share that, so this is the great thing about having something in person, which is my, you know, gold standard is always having something, seeing your guys smiles and having your support here today is really good. But also think the message goes out even further digitally.

- Yeah, well thank you for being here in person by the way. But we, we do appreciate our online audience as well. Teuila, someone brought up something that you kind of touched on earlier about how do you engage renters, because you mentioned it as a renter, you'd feel often like it doesn't really apply to you, right?

- Yeah, I suppose maybe I didn't make it clear. I had to think, you got to make the connection, right? Yes, so you got to make the connection that even though I am paying my money to a landlord, that landlord, that money of course is being is affected by rates, 'cause they're going to pass on the rates. Was that kind of what they asked? So it was just making the connection to actually where your money's going.

- Yeah, and making sure that they feel like that, that their voice is just as important as, as homeowners--

- Yes, knowing that yeah. It's knowing that my rates are actually okay. So I actually use the library. So it is going to be affected by that, by that money. Yeah.

- But can we do more to engage those people and make them feel like they're a part of this.

- Renters? Yeah, absolutely. I think, I think generally speaking, local democracy elections, we know we should just be doing more to engage everyone because it just, as you mentioned right at the beginning, the trend is going down.

- Erin, an interesting question here. Do you think voter turnout actually translates to engagement? You know, for example, for a lot of people, they get their papers, they vote, but do you think they're actually engaged in the process even if they are, even if they are turning in their voting papers?

- I think if you can get that far, you're definitely engaged. During this particular election, on the twelfth of August, when we closed off the role, we actually had 91%



of people enrolled. And so now all we have to do is get them across the line to vote. And so there is their engagement to that point. It's how do we now encourage them to come in and cross that line. And so there's a lot of things to think about, and what we were talking about tonight, hopefully that has encouraged people to actually get out and use their voice.

- Julie, someone's asked how influential is dirty politics in local politics? Do you believe it deters eligible voters away? Do you have a thought process on there?

- Wow. I definitely think it would be at the back of some people's minds. How prevalent that would be, I couldn't comment. I feel like that's above my pay grade.

- [Matty] That's okay, that's alright. Latayvia, someone said, and you mentioned this earlier, do you think engagement starts with educating the young about the role of local government through civics education? Do you think we need to do more in that space?

- I think once again, it's just one tool that we can use because children don't live alone, they live in families. And I think it's not only encouraging that civics talk, but also making sure that it's relevant. Like if you're talking to kids, like I never knew as a kid that when people are voting, it impacts my park, you know, it impacts, you know, my playground, like it impacts like, you know, I think of like, you know, growing up with my cousins and going to Starling park in Ranui, like your vote impacts whether the slides nice, or whether there's a pothole in the road on my way walking there, you know? And so when we are talking to kids, making sure it's like super relevant so that they can have those conversations with their families, but also ensuring that people are talking about their values as well. 'Cause a lot of people it's so hard to understand the machinery of like government, especially like local. So just keeping it really relevant and encouraging that narrative around your everyday and how local politics impacts our everyday like lives.

- [Matty] Erin, do you think we can be doing, be doing more in that space? You know, giving civics education, in schools.

- Yeah, absolutely. I used to be on the board of trustees for a primary school and yeah, you had civics alongside Maori, you had these extra curriculum on top of numeracy and literacy. And so you had to make a choice. And so ours, being a decile one school, we had to prioritise those things. And so civics got pushed aside. We'd love to have civics in, in the education system, but they, they just have to choose the priority at the time. And so I do recognise that there's a lot of pressure on schools. There's a lot of pressure in that space, but hey, if there's anyone listening and they can put civics in there, I can, you know, definitely encourage that. But this decile nine and ten schools, they have civics education. So that's where you can see that, you know, equality is such in different areas. And you can see that by participation is



because education does make a difference, right. But it's just because, you know, numeracy and literacy is at the top in some schools compared to say others, it's just the system that needs to prioritise it.

- [Matty] Latayvia, I know you had something.

- I just wanted to add something. So often when we are talking about things like civics education and financial literacy, we say, oh, we just need to put it in schools, but that puts the, the onus on the curriculum. So it's so important that it's a full community, full society approach to educating each other as well. Like, so I was presenting a financial literacy course and I'll be fast, in a decile one high school in south Auckland. And I asked the students, so 71 students, I said, close your eyes. Who's got an eftpos card? And only three of them could raise their hands. And then I said, I was like, who's heard of, and then I named a list of loan sharks and every person put their hand up. And I said, whose family struggle to put food in the pantry? And then nearly every child put their hand up. And this is like real life, you know. These are the inequities that are taking place. So the differences between high socioeconomic areas and our communities who are just trying to keep the lights on trying to keep food in the pantries, like the onus should not just be on them, as kids, they're just trying to survive.

- [Matty] The frustrating thing though about that is that for those people, for those communities, their the ones who would really see such a difference by voting for the people that are going to make a difference to them.

- Yes. And I think, I, I suppose when I think of it, like when we've had this discussion, my thoughts and it's come up a couple of times that we will definitely be going towards, it's not a matter of if we're going to have digital voting or digital accessible voting, it's when we'll get it. And it's not a matter of if we're going to have civics as part of the education system, it's a matter of when we'll get it. And so I suppose what we want to do is make sure that we don't make the same mistakes, which have led to all these inequities and representation when that happens and that kind of, that brainstorming needs to start now at the council or at local government, I mean, central government. So, which is kind of a, it's a side issue. But I do think we should think about those things now. So we don't have to sit in this panel again in another three years time and, and talk about the same thing.

- But isn't it beautiful that we're having this conversation? We can start to, we can be honest about it, right? 'Cause we have to be honest. Julie, someone said voting is a huge part in democracy and I see it not only as a right, but also a responsibility, which is such a beautiful sentiment. But they've said, and in the last few years there's obviously been, been a trend of shifting of power from local to central government. So how do you address that trend while saying every vote counts?



- Yeah. that's a complex question and I think it's, I think it's empowering, you know, getting, getting the right people empowered to bring back some of that power back to local communities and decentralising some of that. Because you know, a number of our other services, you know, like health and water are very much being centralised. So we have to really make sure that we can keep hold of the other things locally and influence and get the right people who are going to look at what communities need and ensure that they happen.

- [Matty] Yeah, brilliant. Erin, do you have thoughts on that? About the growing trend of shifting away from local body politics to central politics. I guess you're involved in both. So you might not want to answer that question.

- I am involved in both. And I think that's really, again, the representation that, that we're putting into these, these spaces determines where their power lies. And so, you know, it's about talking to those people that are empowered and giving them the opinions of the people is one thing. But, because we all have an individual vote before we actually put the people in power, the power is in our hand at that particular point in time. So there's a transfer of power, after the vote. So it's really about having to think about who we are putting into that space before we actually cast that vote so that we can have the outcomes that we need.

- We're going to wrap things up shortly, but I just wondered if anyone else in the audience had any more questions before we start to wrap things up this evening? There was one final question online for Latayvia. Are you thinking of running for office in the next round of elections?

- I'm just trying to pay my student loan I'm very lucky to work in a space where I can critique the system and it's hard to critique when you are within, but wow, you're really guessing me up online, huh. Thanks.

- We'll help you put up your

- Julie said she's going to transfer to my account.

- Alright, well, let's wrap things up then. And I just wondered if I could your final thoughts, final thoughts on why this matters, why people need to vote, why they need to be engaged. Erin, can we start with you?

- Yeah, so action needs to be taken now, right? So I'm going the All Black game on Saturday. There's 91% percent of people already enrolled. So we only have a very short window of time to get them across the line to vote. So this is our encouragement is to get out there and talk to people, communicate, refer them to the



information that they need, have those conversations within your communities so that you can actually make a difference. Because yes, we can put some plans out there in the future, but now is the time, now is the hour. And so this is our opportunity right now. So if anybody's listening, you know, let's get out there. It's it's time to activate our vote.

- [Matty] Julie?

- I reckon each person who's listening to this make a personal commitment to, you know, you pick a number that's realistic for you, but say, I'm going to try and make sure I take X number of people along with me on this voting journey and, and get their, their papers into the countdown. Really small, think really small, but actually do it. The smallest deed is better than the grandest intention.

- One of my aunties who's works night shift always tells me if you're not going to vote, don't complain, which is so crack up. But so that's one message. But then on the other side, I think it's important. We're we are all part of communities. We're all part of families. So having those beautiful conversations, maybe sometimes those hard conversations with your friends around voting, and also it doesn't matter who you are voting for as long as you're voting based off your values. And you're saying true to who you are, who your community is, and maybe those most marginalised in your community. That's how I place my vote. And I just encourage everyone to vote based off your values, if you can, and voting, like we were talking about for the sacrifices that have been made in the past, and for a future Tamaki Makaurau that reflects the beautiful diversity in which we live in, kia ora.

- I'll just toggle what my three fellow panellists have said, and maybe to add to that, just sometimes thinking of it as a really selfish act like the, you know, when you get stuck in traffic and you get annoyed at something, or when you want to go down and maybe there's a pothole in the road, or like your local pool has got something wrong and it's closed, just think, oh, I can, you know, I can do something about that. Well, no, I can't, you can't do something about that. But those are the things that I can vote for, or vote towards in my local election, so yeah, just trying to bring all those sentiments together.

- Beautiful, haven't they been incredible, this evening? Yeah, a massive round of applause For all four of our panellists, Erin, Julie, Latayvia, and Teuila. Thank you so much for being with us this evening. We so appreciate it. And we so appreciate you being here this evening as well and online as well. Thank you for engaging because that's what this is all about, right? It's about engagement and making sure that we are striving for a better Tamaki Makaurau, a better Auckland. This is an amazing city. We've all talked about why we love this place so much, but we can always be doing better, whether that's just making the city a better place to live or be doing better in terms of making sure that we are engaged in the process. And so I hope you've



learned something tonight. I hope you've taken something away. I hope either you are, have voted or you are going to vote. Go and do the research, read up about the candidates, go and talk to the team down the back, Erin's team are amazing. Yeah, thank you for being here this evening. Thank you so much for engaging. To wrap things up this evening, I'd love to invite Phil Wilson, the Director of Governance and CCO Partnerships from Auckland council.

- Greetings, good folk. I'm Phil, I'm council's Director of Governance and CCO Relationships, those are Council Controlled Organisations. I want to add my thank you to you guys. That was awesome, sitting here, listening, digesting. And there are lots of ideas, lots of challenges, but lots of ideas that you've shared tonight. So, you know, again, maybe a big round of applause for these guys. Look, I, by no means would I attempt a, to summarise such wide ranging content, but you know, I would just make the statement that for, for democracy to be healthy, for society to be, to be inclusive, you know, absolutely. We've got to see, we've got to see some change. We've got to see people observing, people with their values, their experience, you know, that communities are represented around that table, around that decision making table. And there's so much more we need to kind of keep cracking into in, in that regard. I want to, I'm looking at the audience. I do want to offer my appreciation to Rose Leonard, Elodie Fontain, and a few other people. These guys are doing some hard graft in the background, sort of managing the election on behalf of council and doing a spectacular job so kia ora to you. Matty's kind of said this and thank you Matty, but you know, eighth of October, get your votes in. People should have received purple voting packs at home by now, if you haven't or, you know, people who haven't, then go online to the vote Auckland website, you'll find it easily. There's really great material guidance, material on candidates, but also material on processes that talks you through what to do. If you are posting your vote back, it's got to be posted before the eighth. So have the fourth in, in your mind, please. And, you know, be a proud Aucklander, be proud of this Tamaki Makaurau region, city, that we call home and be part of the journey. Thank you, kia ora.

- [Matty] Well, that's it from Auckland Conversations. Thank you so much. And another massive run of applause for our four panellists this evening. Thank you so much. Have a fantastic evening. Thank you.

