

Our Growing City - Understanding the challenges of change in a growing city

- Tena koutou, Tena koutou, Tena koutou katoa

- Good evening, everyone and welcome. I'm Rod Oram, and I'll be facilitating this conversation this evening. It's a great pleasure and privilege to do so because as a journalist, a lot of my work is focused on how Tāmaki Makaurau progresses, hence the title of this evenings Auckland Conversation, Our Growing City, Understanding the Challenges of Change in a Growing City. If I may just briefly offer you one of my favourite quotes about cities, and this is from Lewis Mumford, the American sociologist and philosopher all the way back in 1938 in his book "The Culture of Cities". "The city is a fact of nature, like a cave, a run of mackerel or an ant heap, but it is also a conscious work of art. And it holds within its communal framework, many simpler and more personal forms of art. Mind takes form in the city and in turn urban form conditions mind." So we're here this evening to talk very much about urban form and we are going to be joined by two very passionate experts in this and for a wide ranging conversation. And we're also going to give you plenty of opportunity to pose questions and offer comments to us as well. But first of all, a few housekeeping notes if I may, on the proceedings tonight and some Zoom protocols, the first one is this session is being recorded. All members of the audience will have their cameras and microphone disabled, but you members of the audience can ask questions via the Q&A chat function on Zoom. And so please note though that due to time constraints, I'm sure we won't be able to get through all the questions you pose, but we'll do our very best. If you want to direct your questions to someone specific on the panel to respond, please identify them in the question. So I know where to steer that question. We're here to have a friendly and thought provoking discussion and any comments, questions that are disrespectful or off topic will be dismissed and you may be removed from the call. Now you're also very welcome to tweet during the event using the hashtag Auckland AKL Conversations. And we always try to ensure that Auckland Conversation events are inclusive and accessible. So that's why this session is being recorded and on demand viewing of the event and a full transcript will be available on the Auckland Conversations website in the next few days. And joining us tonight are the following speakers, Dr. Jess Berentson-Shaw, a social scientist and a narrative strategist. Jess has worked across government, business, and the not for profit sector advocating and agitating for the use of best evidence in decision making. In an evolution from evidenced agitation, Jess co-founded the workshop with Marion Ella in 2017. At the workshop, she researches both what



evidence suggests are changes that will make the biggest difference to people and the planet and the shared mindsets and narratives that can hinder or enable people's support of such changes. Next up is Shamubeel Eaqub, an experienced economist who makes economics easy. Shamubeel is also an author, media commentator, and thought leading public speaker. He has over a decade of experience as an economist in Wellington, Melbourne and Auckland, in international banks and consultancies, and Shamubeel is a partner at Sense Partners, a boutique economic consultancy, and he's on various boards of charities and commercial firms. And our apologies, our third panellist planned for this evening has been unable to join us this evening. So the conversation will be with Jess and Shamubeel and myself, and then at the close, it's a great pleasure for us to have counsellor Richard Hills to offer some closing thoughts. Richard is chair of the Environment and Climate Change Committee and is already online with us this evening. His priorities include people, public transport, climate change, youth, mental health, and the environment. And he's Auckland Council's first rainbow councillor, and belongs to Napu. He will be listening to the discussion and providing some reflections on behalf of the council to close the event. A little bit of scene setting if I may, as we know, Tāmaki Makaurau is growing very fast and it's also already very diverse. We are the fourth, most diverse city in the world in terms of the percentage of people not born in New Zealand even, let alone Auckland. And that ranks us forth after Toronto, Brussels and Vancouver. We're also fast approaching two million people. We're up to about 1.7 at the moment with another million people expected in the next 30 years. And so as our city grows, so does the need for Aucklanders to have more housing choices, closer to their everyday things they need as just one example of what needs to happen. That's why this year Auckland Council like other councils around the country will make changes to its planning rules to support more housing density around the city centre and town centres. And along rapid transport corridors. These changes are in response to the government's national policy statement on urban development. We'll try not to use the acronym, but if we do NPS-UD, that's the one on urban development, which is designed to increase housing supply and to improve New Zealand's housing affordability. But such change of course can be very unsettling for people. And so the ability for Aucklanders to understand and accept the reasons for this progress in the city will be critical as council, government and other agencies give effect to transformative strategies, such as the new policy statement on urban development and on the council's climate action plan and transport emissions reduction plan. In this Auckland Conversation, we'll confront the topic of change and look at why change is challenging for residents in growing cities. And we'll explore how a population which is resilient and open to change is critical to the success of a growing city. Very simple format tonight. I'll very soon call on Jess to give a presentation, which is going to run for about 20 minutes or so, and then Shamubeel



and I will join her in that discussion. And then after a while, we'll be turning to your questions. So again, please do pose questions and comments in the question and answer box, and we'll be keeping an eye on those. And once again, I'm sorry, we won't be able to get through all of those. So it's a very great pleasure to hand over to you, Jess. Thank you.

- Thanks, Rod. That was lovely. Kia ora kotou, as Rod said, I'm Jess Berentson-Shaw. I'm down here in Te Whanganui-a-Tara on a rainy, windy day, that seems appropriate. I was born and raised here under these windy skies. And my ancestors came here for another windy, big skied place, Keith in Scotland. As Rod said, I'm a social scientist. I'm really interested in the ways in which our thinking and the ways in which we communicate affect our ability and willingness to understand complex and challenging issues especially those that are affecting our collective health and wellbeing like those Rod talked about, and many of you are dealing with. So I research ways to talk about issues like climate change, mode shift, urban density changes, poverty, and how we can talk in different ways to deepen people's understanding and build support for the types of transformative change that are in front of us. So I currently, as Rod said, do that as the co-director of the workshop. So I'm gonna share my screen, bear with me while the technology fairies hopefully work. I'm gonna put that onto slideshow. Great. So we're in a time when transforming the ways that we love, work, play, move, learn, earn, have huge potential for the wellbeing of our planet. And I think for many of us in this space, we know that the changes that are ahead of us can make a huge difference to all of us, whether that's redesigning our cities, to enable everybody to get where they need to go, rethinking how our economic system can centre the health of the environment, changing how we build and distribute housing so that all people have a warm and stable home and vibrant, creative, prospering communities, fully embracing the . So all New Zealanders are valued. Today, I'm gonna talk about why these change are necessary now in much of the work that we do and why when we engage in it, we've gotta be prepared for the work of shifting people's mindsets and how particularly narratives can help in this work. Because that's the area obviously that I specialise in. I'm gonna give you six shifts that I think that we need to make in order to activate helpful mindsets, deepen people's thinking and improved decision making. And so enable us to better do the work of change that we're engaged in, or trying to engage in. So many of the big issues that we are facing in our world. Won't be solved at what we would call the downstream level, not while they're are systems, structures in place upstream that are causing a lot of the problems. We can't ask people who are the most harmed by our current systems and structures, whether that's children who are being injured on roads and cities that aren't designed to take care of them, to simply change their



behaviour or make better choices, which is something that we might traditionally have done in the past. It's simply not right. And the research tells us that it's not particularly effective either. However, what we can do is create an enabling environment. And by that, I mean through systems, policies, practises, and transformations to our environment, we can support people to easily behave differently. So changing the things that'll make the biggest difference. I guess I would call it the most efficient, effective, and ethical way to improve people's wellbeing. But, and I apologise a little bit for this. Oh no, it's the next slide. Sorry, I'm looking at the wrong slide, making changes that make the biggest difference isn't always the easiest path to take, as Rod has alluded to, that's putting it mildly, I think transforming our systems and structures like changing our urban environments or our urban density, supporting more people, walking and riding, changing our health delivery systems to meet the needs of more who need public support. We need a commitment to changes from people in the public because without that public understanding and public support, these structural and policy shifts are hard to achieve, or we can do them, but they're hard to keep in place and they'll be dialled back. COVID is a good example of where we needed people's mindsets to support what we are doing in their support for particular interventions, lockdowns, mass vaccination programmes, did require the public understanding and public support for them to happen. The big question is how on some of our bigger, longer term, slower, rapidly speeding up crisis, can we deepen people's understanding and build support for changes that make the biggest difference. And this is where my work comes in and the science of mindsets and the narratives can be one tool. It's not the only tool, but they can be one tool that we need to be thinking about using in this work. This is the slide I wanted to apologise for because it's a very boring, typically academic slide, but this is from some authors, some researchers called , and they talk about that there are six conditions of transformative change. It's one way to conceptualise and think about how change happens and how we can shift the conditions that are currently holding the problems we're experiencing in place. So at the top, you can see our structural changes, practises, policies, resources, that's the stuff that we can see, sometimes the boring legislative stuff, and that we can name easily. It's really explicit, we can see that stuff. It's easy to see. In the middle are relationships and power dynamics. And that is how we relate to one another, who gets to talk and who gets to decide. We can sometimes see that. And sometimes we don't see it, but those are important conditions. They're semi explicit ones. And then the one that I'm particularly interested in that we need to ensure enduring success of these other conditions of change is shifting people's mindsets. And that's the hardest to see, or the implicit, and very much the other conditions and systems change will fall or rise on the basis of how successful we are in shifting those mindsets and keeping them there. So mindsets are the waters very much that people swim in. It's the stuff we



can't see. It's all around us. And it's influencing our thinking and decisions every day, without us even being aware of it, as much as we would like to think that they're not having an influence, that we are logically and rational people, social science is pretty clear that this is affecting a lot of our decision making. And so what we see is that mindsets really shape what we see as normal or a problem. They shape how we think the world works or how society is structured. They shape who we think is important, who matters the most. And they shape our willingness to support transformations through our systems, policies, and practises, and ultimately the success of their implementation. They're very much part of our culture. So different cultures will have different mindsets, but if we, when we exist in a particular culture the dominant culture will fairly much set a lot of the mindsets by which are operating on us. And you might have heard terms like mental models or schemas or cultural mindsets. And this is the same idea generally. And we get them from living in our culture. We get them from being exposed to public discourse, through news and entertainment media, and we just get them through our everyday interactions and our conversations, the backyard barbecue dare I say it, family, schools and community groups. And this is really critical mindsets. When we think about how we engage in changes that'll make the biggest difference and involve some level of transformational change, mindsets really are going to be a thing that we're having to deal with. So shared or cultural mindsets have an important relationship with our shared narrative. So we all know we're in a very busy information environment. It's filled with stories, words, and pictures every day. You'll feel it every day when you open your email, your social media, your radio, just your conversations. There's a lot of information out there and narratives a particular pattern of meaning in this information environment. So they tie together different stories and words and pictures. And when we communicate through these different means, narratives give us a common way to organise and make sense of information. We make meaning from all of this different information. They're like a golden thread really. And the common meanings often reflect shared ways of thinking in reasoning, in other words, our mindsets. So how do these mindsets develop and what holds them in place? Well, you won't be unfamiliar, I'm sure, by our information environment and how that may or may not create unhelpful thinking, but the process by which information and stories and ultimately narratives get out of step with perhaps where we need to be maybe best current understandings is very contextual. As I said, we get information from a myriad of places, family, friends, advertising, media, education. And so the narratives and mindsets that dominate tend to be shaped in this very noisy information environment. And it's useful to know that there are, and you will know there's particular people, players who are trying specifically to shape that information and narratives for their own good. So we can be exposed frequently to unhelpful narratives and unhelpful mindsets through digital and other media,



people can create and contribute to unhelpful mindsets and narratives with particular ill intent to maintain status quo systems or benefit themselves. Now, obviously we've seen a lot of the impact of misinformation and disinformation during the COVID pandemic. People can also spread unhelpful narratives and embed unproductive mindsets without any ill intent, you know yourselves how easy it is to share things on social media, to talk about it because you are concerned or worried, that doesn't necessarily mean that you are sharing it with ill intent, but once bad information and unhelpful narratives are in place, it is quite hard to shift them. And an important thing to know from the cognitive sciences is that we have fast thinking brains that will actually protect shallow or unhelpful ways of thinking. So where people will hold unproductive or unhelpful mindsets about issues, we have a rather evolved mental processing system that can hold them in place. So some of you may have heard of Daniel Kahneman and his work in the cognitive social sciences, he has named what we call a fast thinking system. And these are the extensively studied mental shortcuts that we have that help us cope with a vast amount of information in the world and protect existing reasoning. So fast thinking systems include things like confirmation bias, emission bias, motivated reasoning, status quo bias of some things you might have heard about, the fast thinking system is actually really useful and helpful. It means that we unconsciously process information quite quickly, we don't have to stop and relearn anything. But what it does mean is we respond with emotion and feelings to information, and we use logic to backfill our existing position. And we all do this no matter how much we claim to be entirely logical, because that's an effective and efficient system for us, it does mean that we grasp the concrete and we shy away from the abstract, availability bias, for example, means we frequently grasp explanations that come most readily and easily to our mind. So you can see how this starts to interact with some unhelpful mindsets. And it is a really serious challenge for having productive public conversations about more complex social and environmental issues, especially as the information we need people to understand changes. And so when we are talking about science in particular and a moving body of science, it can be particularly challenging. So we have an information environment that may provide unhelpful information and does, we have fast brains that take shortcuts to process information, that makes it hard when we have complex or new issues that need explaining and understanding, but we also have habitual ways of communicating when we're interested in changing complex issues and our own mindsets about how we can help people better understand or support transformative change. Often we see ourselves as experts and advocates who are communicating complex issues. Many of us will make the assumption that if we fill people up with good information, any incorrect reasoning will be corrected. And that's our own mindset that we hold about communication and knowledge transfer. And we call this the information deficit model. And when that



mindset is in place and the habituated behaviours that go with it, we tend to communicate in a few very common ways. We either construct our communications around a particular noisy oppositional, but minority group narrative and mindset to show how wrong they are and to give them all of the proof about how wrong they are. But this in effect works to expose more people to an unhelpful and unproductive way of thinking. The other thing that we do lead with facts a lot, the problem with that is that while facts are important, when we are doing this work, they can't create new patterns of meaning for people. And people will find a way we see in experiments to fit facts, new facts, and even discordant ones that don't fit with how they currently think, they will fit them into existing mindsets rather than review understandings entirely. So our habituated ways of communicating can also act as an impediment or a barrier to the types of transformative change that we want people to understand and support. So what do we do? And this is where narrative strategies and the science and research can help a little bit. It's not the answer, it's a tool that's useful and has some science behind it. Now I think that there are six shifts that we can make as communicators, as advocates, as people with lived experience who are working hard to shift some of our systems. And the first one is around these mindsets. Your work should be to shift mindsets when we are engaged in transformation it's critical to see it as important and as a core goal, transformation won't happen with a goal focused on ruffling the least amount of feathers with a universally popular message. So you should be seeking to shift mindsets by changing existing narratives that dominate in the public conversation, as the cognitive linguist and messaging expert, says, "Good messaging is not about what seems popular. It's about making popular what needs to be said." And I would add what needs to be understood. The second shift that I think we make is around the people who you engage with, changing dominant, unhelpful mindsets and narratives means we need to stop engaging with those people who hold very fast to unhelpful mindsets, transformative shifts and changes will mean you come up against oppositional mindsets and narratives. You will not and should not try to shift those who rigidly adhere to them, they're very ideologically opposed to change and they're very hard to persuade for a good reason. But if you listen to these people, if you seek their feedback, if you measure the impact of your communications by their response, you will never achieve the transformative change you're working towards and will often end up backing away from the transformations that most people need. And this is an issue of equity and it's an issue of justice. So instead the work is with those people who you can shift mindsets of, and we call these the potentially persuadable people. And the good news is, is that they actually represent most people on an issue. So we see in our research over and over again, that the people who are most deeply opposed to transformative shifts are not normally the majority. They're not the people you need to persuade. And the picture I'm showing you is New Zealanders



mindsets about climate change. And it's from the Six New Zealand's Climate Change Attitudes that Paul Winton did, and I'd just like to note that numerous studies have shown this over and over again, you'll see that most of us are either already convinced or are potentially able to understand and support the types of changes we need on climate change. And these are the people who need your transformations. In the case of climate change, often these people will want something to happen, but they're stuck in not knowing or feeling fatalistic that things will change at the scale that's required. And the minority of people will oppose change. Often they're invested in the status quo. We shouldn't forget that there is power involved in here and power dynamics. So they will do so loudly and they will use all the mechanisms that they have available to them in the status quo systems to do so. And you need to prepare your leaders for that reality, if they are truly engaged in transformation. And that means being smart about measuring the impact of your mindset shift work, you need to identify prior to this who the change is for and who it's going to benefit most. Again, this is an issue in equity, identify who you can deepen understandings in and this about thinking about your potentially persuadable people and make sure you are measuring the response of these two groups and your base and persuadable, not your hard to persuade. So the third shift, tell people what you stand for, not why this opposition narrative is wrong. If you spend time simply telling people why the unhelpful narrative is wrong and giving them lots of facts around it, to try and counter it, and lots of data, you are amplifying the unhelpful mindset and narrative. Your job is to know the mindset that you'd want to bring to the surface and to use your narrative to constantly hold it there. It will be a fight. Never think that the battle is run, but with friends and supporters and fellow advocates, you can hold a new narrative in place. And there are lots of tools that can help you build these narratives, I'm gonna talk about three now. The first is about leading with a vision, the cake, the better world you want once the changes are made. Leading with the cake means you're not leading with problems. That doesn't mean we don't talk about problems and we don't talk about those people that are most harmed. We just don't lead with it. Leading with the cake also means you don't lead with the ingredients that you need to make the cake. This is why cookbooks have pictures of finished cakes on them, not a picture of a list of ingredients on it, a cycle way, an integrated transport network, a new urban planning strategy. That's the ingredients for how we get the thing that we want in the better world. And it's compelling to those of us who are working in the change, but it's not particularly compelling to those people who might quite like to think about the change, but don't where to go or are influenced by unhelpful dominant narratives in the opposite direction. Now, I'd just like to make a note here about who envisage this better world, because those who the systems are currently excluding and hurting the most are the people who should be doing the vision making. They are the people who have a reason to think about a better world.



They are the people who have had to innovate and lead in order to operate in the existing one that constrains them. And they are the best people to see how the world can and should be better. And I think we should have an agreement that we don't want any more visions from people who the world works very well for at the moment. Number five, shifting to values. I'm watching my time, Rod, I'm just about there. So values are the why of life. They're our core human motivation, love, security, power, responsibility, and values are in all our communications because we want to motivate people to listen and pay attention. This is why this should match to you we're saying, but the values we often draw upon in our habituated communications, are those that tend to dominate in our noisy information environment in advertising media or elsewhere. And those values are often telling us we should care, we should buy a product, or we should support this issue because it will save us money. It will make us rich, give us power, make us look good, or save us from a terrible outcome. These values frame the world and the issues around us in terms of individual loss and gain. What's in it for me, what will I lose. If you want people to shift their mindset so they understand and support transformations that are about the bigger us, the collective we, then we need to start framing conversations through those values that are about the bigger us and the collective we, our care for others, our love for family and friends, our sense of responsibility to the next generation, the desire to live in a world that's beautiful. The good news is that these are, we see the values that people most highly prioritise. They might just not be able to act on them right now. And number six, shift to explaining. So shifting to a good explanation is really critical. Facts are not an explanation for how a problem happened and who and how we can fix it. Standalone facts about the existence won't shift an existing mindset. Rather it leaves a gap that fast thinking will fill with an existing mindset. You need a good explanation, and it features facts as a character in your story, but not the whole story. And that story needs to reflect your broader narrative and the mindset shift. Ah, I snuck an extra one in at number seven at 20 minutes, and that's remembering that narratives are core concepts found within patterns, words, images, and stories. And you need as many stories, words, and images as possible activating these core mindsets, if you're going to shift them. And that means you need to work together with people. This is about collaborative and collective action. And the good news is that the transformations we are trying to make are about collaborative and collective action. So work together as much as you can across groups and fields and come together to try and shift mindsets. Okay, that's it. 21 minutes, Rod. So I'm gonna stop sharing now.

- Splendid, thanks Jess. And you've covered a fabulous array of territory there in a very thoughtful and logical and constructive way. If I may just ask you a question



first, I love the idea about describing the cake. Now I should probably ask you to describe the Wellington cake at this point, rather than the Auckland cake. But if you're talking about Wellington as the wonderful place to live. How do you describe the Wellington cake?

- Yeah, that's interesting.

- I'd just say to Shamubeel and to Richard, if you'd like to do this too, how you would describe the Tāmaki Makaurau cake and I'll be in there as well with you on that one.

- They get some time to prepare. Look for me, the better Wellington that we live in is it's about my kids being independent and then being able to get to where they need to go without me, for my oldest, she's 12, and she wants to be able to ride her bike everywhere. So she'll be able to set off from home and I'll know that she'll get where she needs to go and explore her city safely. I would say that it's even more of the wildlife and the bird life that we are so lucky to have in New Zealand. When I step out of my gate, it's going to be everywhere. I think that it's a Wellington where we have responded to the climate in a way that is really inclusive. And it's ensures that we are operating in a way where we have shifted our economic system to really enhance our environment. We've got a lot of wind in Wellington. I feel like we could do more with it, Rod, to be honest. So I think it is really just more, more of what we've started, more of where we are heading to be honest, in Wellington.

- And if I may jump in just to give Shamubeel and Richard a few more minutes to think about this, for me I start with location because Tāmaki Makaurau is this wonderful place on two or three harbours, depending whether you count the Kaipara in there, and these lovely ranges, the Hunuwas and the Waitākere, and the incredible-ness in the middle. And so to me, it is about the place, which is so beautiful, so delightful, and I just love cycling or walking to the top of any of the , the cones to look around at that, and imagine a city where there are two million or more of us living comfortably in, and having a lot of what we need quite closely to us. I'm very much drawn to the 15 minute city concept, but also then being able to get around very easily by whatever mode of transport we may choose, but particularly active transport and public transport to avail ourselves of all the other things, but the city retains a great deal of that physical character of where it's located, but it also helps us give a very distinctive expression of what an Aotearoa urbanism looks like. So we're not borrowing entirely from other places, we're giving expression to what it



means to be urban people in Aotearoa. So anyway, that's me. Shamubeel, what do you reckon about your cake?

- Look, like you Rod, I love Auckland. It's a beautiful city, but it also has many problems, for me the sort of three big ones are probably around congestion, unaffordable housing. And related to that, the lack of density, we have a city that's got a very tight, dense CBD, and then little density outside of it. A lot of what we achieved since the unitary plan has created density far away without the public transport and the transport corridors and the active modes of transport that we need. So really, I think if we want to make the best of what's possible in Auckland, there has to be this coordination and coherence in the way that we do things. There's lots of really great things happening in Auckland, but they're still fighting each other. And I think my dream is Auckland's got absolutely the potential to be this amazing city that it really is, but much better than this, but only if we coordinate those policies. So, for many people like me who are relatively comfortable, Auckland is a beautiful city to live in. Not much to complain about.

- Richard. How do you describe the cake?

- Yeah, I guess I'm a bit biased, I love Tāmaki Makaurau, and I enjoy the cake and I think the cake has a lot to offer, but I think as Shamubeel said, not everyone in our city has the opportunity to enjoy the cake or have access or to be able to connect with. I'm gonna stop saying the cake, connect with each other in the same way that it is clear, the policies enacted over 30, 40 years and still are happening admittedly, are divisive to a lot of people. And I think a lot of the city doesn't realise that those decisions that have been made are divisive. Potentially if you aren't realising that not everyone has the same access to the city or the museum or the zoo or the beaches and the parks where I grew up, we've got the highest urban tree canopy in the whole city. And I probably grew up thinking that was fairly normal, that I could walk to school safely under the shade of trees. And we know compared to Taupaki, Glenfield, Birkenhead, Northcote, with 30-ish percent urban tree canopy. And you go to some of the local boards in the south who are six, seven, eight, 9% with very little public transport and to have the heat and the dust, and the lack of shade for those kids is completely unfair in our city has been built like that. And whether that's definitely not accidental, but we need to address it quickly, but try and bring everyone along with us. So I'm proud of the city. I think there's so much to offer, but we have not built this city to make sure everyone feels that way. I think there's promise and there's hope, but it's not currently like that now.



- Mm, thank you. Before I get into some more detailed subjects, I'd like to keep pursuing some pretty high level ones if I may. So Jess, your talk for us was very helpful in terms of those six shifts. And I'm painfully aware that I spent an awful lot of times as a journalist, just be believing if I could just lay out the facts that would persuade people. So I was very much taken by your shift about to explanation in which facts only play a role, but you use those facts to build a much more understandable and persuasive explanation. Could you give a particular example of where you've seen that good explanation actually have a big impact on changing people's minds?

- Yeah, so sure. Put me under pressure. I think I do sympathise, Rod, I used to be a fact-led person as well. And it's not that we are saying that facts are unimportant, the work that we do, all of us do, I think we do it because we know that this is what research shows us. This is what people with lived experience tell us are the important transformations. These are not based on whims or any kind of fairy tales. And so facts are still important, where see it's helpful is if people, if there are existing mindsets in place that, and I guess probably the best one I can talk about is in the transport mode shift space, which is where we are doing work at the moment. And one of the challenges that we we have is that the minute we start talking about, for example, in Wellington, I'll give you why we need to remove car parks or why we need to stop people from driving. You immediately get a reactive response. And the reason for that is because most people drive a car and you're just basically telling them, you're adding another problem. You're gonna take away their car. Now when we flip it and we start, instead of giving people facts, for example, the city is growing, we often see that. And so we are going to need to remove cars. There's just not enough space. When we flip it to an explanation where we talk about how our cities were originally designed and how many people there were living there then, and the types of lifestyles that we lived. And we explain that that has changed. Basically our popular has changed, and we talk about the harm that it does to everybody. And then we talk about what the solution is in terms of mode shifting and in terms of changing the way in which our cities are constructed. What we see is people are much more willing to consider the solutions that we put in front of them, because we've given them an explanation which doesn't rest on them feeling like A, they're a bad person, or B, something's gonna be taken away from them.

- Thank you. Shamubeel, do you have an example that you've come across where you've seen a very persuasive explanation of why something has been the way it has



and how it needs to change has actually moved a community or a group of people along in a useful way?

- Oh, absolutely. I mean, I think in Auckland, we had that wonderful conversation about housing and what needed to change. So the unitary plan, I think, was one step of that. So you might recall Selena and I wrote a book called "Generation Rent", and a lot of it was one, having that punch a little hook to sort of that imagery that what are we creating? What are we losing this kind of this, almost this visceral sense that there is something of New Zealand that is being lost. And a lot of our work was really trying to describe how we got there. What was the reason, it wasn't because you were a bad person. It was because we had all these rules and regulations that over time cumulated into this incredible. And then I think what we tried to show was there is a way forward, and it wasn't just us, right? There were a whole bunch of different people who were working in this space and slowly the narrative shifted from house prices are going up, it's great, I'm rich, to house prices are going up, it's a problem, to going house prices are going up because we are not doing enough on planning, infrastructure, transport, all those other things that go together. So that evolution I think is really encouraging. You know, when you wind back even 10 years, we were fighting about whether or not there was a housing crisis, today we have bipartisan support for what would be an extreme policy, which is MDRS, which is that medium density stuff, extraordinary, right? To have bipartisan support on this extraordinary shift in public policy, I think it's evidence of exactly what Jess was talking about. That we made a shift, understanding that there is a problem that there is a, I think, a way to kind of emotionally engage with it, know that it's not your individual fault, but there is a whole bunch of reasons why it happened. I don't think the people needed to know exactly why it happened, but they needed to know that we roughly understood that there were things that were happening and that there was hope that there were things we can do that it's not gonna make everybody terribly worse off. So I don't know, that to me is a really good example of this incredible change that New Zealand has made in a relatively short period of time.

- Yeah, absolutely. I'm very struck as I'm round about the city, how rapidly multi-story, multi-unit housing is developing, whether it be small blocks of flats or rows of townhouses and the rest. And I think that's a huge change. Do you think that transport has kept up with that? Or are we starting to put so much density in some places with inadequate transport yet still that would serve that better?



- No, I don't think transport has kept pace. Transport, I think has not been coordinated enough. And also the unitary plan wasn't perfect. Like I said, at the beginning a lot of the new housing, now the new density has come, won't be perfect. And quite often they're not well designed. And quite often, they're too far away. We are creating density that's really far away and too far from nodes. It doesn't mean we don't want those houses. It just means that actually there is a different sequence that we might have had maybe Grey Lynn should have been densified first and Ponsonby and those other places, and the golf courses in Remuera, rather than going out to far out to the west or far to the south where it was easy. So look, there's a lack of coordination and coherence in the way that we do things. And it's partly because council only was able to do the unitary plan. It was not able to also fund all of the infrastructure, all of these transport and all of those other things, because there's so many silos trying to work together, Jess is kind of smiling in the background because she knows exactly how hard it is to coordinate all the arms of government together to deliver this. But I don't think we should try and fix everything in one go, it's okay to get a win and build on it. It's a cumulative relentless journey.

- Yeah. I've got a very particular question here from William about medium density, will single house zone become MDRS, medium density. In other words, will there be no such thing anymore as a single house zone.

- That is the intent and about bloody time.

- Right. Thank you. Now, in terms of how we are, first of all, I certainly agree, we can't do everything at once. It's a question of continuing to build, but hopefully in better lockstep, do you think we're getting, we've now got better coordination between central government and Auckland over the likes of transport and infrastructure that will now enable us to make a better coordinated response.

- So were you asking me, Rod.

- Yeah. Yeah.

- The reason I asked is because I don't know the answer, I've seen lots of changes that they're trying to make, but we know that organisations like Open Transport don't have enough capital to be able to do everything that's being asked of. We know that they're big challenges in terms of the way that organisations are set up. Councillor



Hills might be better placed to kind of tell us a little bit about what he's saying in terms of the coordination between central and local government.

- Yes, Richard, it's wonderful to have you as an impromptu panel member. And you are the person who knows far more about this than the rest of us. So I was wondering what your sense was of how much better we are at trying to bring all the key ingredients together and coordinate them.

- Yes. I was discussing this today, the future of local government, in a perfect world, my perfect world would be, it would have say four year terms with central and local government having their elections in the same year. Maybe not the same months, maybe April or November. So then you had three solid years or two solid years. If it was still a three year term of delivery together, the problem I feel we have at the moment is you have one solid year, then a council election, where everyone gets scared or nervous and starts arguing about infrastructure. And then you have a year to the next year where the central government election happen, and they sort of blame council for everything and council blames government for everything. And then you come back together for year to deliver. Then if the government changes, you have projects thrown in and out, and then you have the arguments about, and then business cases and re-business cases. And then you end up coming to oddly often the same position you were maybe three years before all the ups and downs. So I think there's a concern there with the politics. On actually working together, we have ATAP now. So the Auckland Transport Alignment Project, originally with the national government and Auckland Council and Auckland Transport in 2016, and that has gone on with the current government as well. And it's actually, that's one of the better things, obviously, in my opinion, it hasn't scratched the service of climate and really driving the change we need. But at least, I think in 2016, we had a 26 billion budget with government and only 20 billion was funded. Now we're up to something like 32 billion, and it's all funded, so it's completely funded. And we know what we're doing with the . And we can sit alongside and it's a zipped kind of capital budget, as opposed to before where it was their budget, our budget, and everyone argued. So there are things like that, but there are also other issues which happen under, the special housing areas under the last government and other housing by the current government that is sprawl with no plan for funding that infrastructure, especially water and transport. So we get kind of pushed to accept private plan changes or other changes, but with no way to fund that infrastructure. So there are, I think it's moved forward positively, but there's still an expectation that we can find the money on a much, much smaller base than say the government's budget.



- Thank you. We've got some terrific questions coming through, and I'm just still trying to build a bit of a platform or a bit of a base before we get to them. And so the next question I'd like to ask you, Jess, is to use two words you haven't explicitly used in your presentation about the likes of deliberative democracy and participatory democracy, and whether we need to see, whether some different structures, processes, cultures around how people do get involved would be helpful in moving mindsets and helping us deal with big complex issues.

- Yeah. So I think when I showed the model of the kind of conditions of systems change, and I talked a little bit about the relationship and power dynamics, and I think there's a little bit of that in there, to be honest as who makes the decision and who gets listened to, I think we've known for a long time that the way that consultation, especially in local government, but even in central government works completely benefits, listening to status quo people, powerful people, people with time on their hands, people with money and people with who can operate in the current systems. I think it's more than just about deliberative democracy. I think it's about rethinking how we, how and who we want to hear from and engage with. Because one of my concerns about kind of more Western models of deliberative democracy is that again, you are shutting out people perhaps without time, money or energy. I think about, for example, a mother living in South Auckland with a couple of jobs and no transport access, well, what are the systems you're gonna put in place to make sure that you are actively and proactively involving her in a conversation? So I think yes, more inclusion, but it's actually about not just inviting people to your table, but rethinking the entire table in which you create engagement and conversation on listening with, and that's about shifting power dynamics.

- Mm. And can you gimme a really concrete example of a shift in power dynamics you've actually seen that has brought about a big change, sort of a concrete example of that?

- Mm. I mean, look, I would say what's interesting to me is what's happened during COVID and so we've done a little bit of work in the COVID space and especially around vaccination. And one of the things we noticed early on was that there was a very much a top down approach to COVID vaccination, Leon & Harper rightfully so identified their exclusion from it. And it was actually through, I would say, a shift in the narrative and the stories that were told, it wasn't perfect. And it certainly has its problems, but there has been a shift in the power dynamics a little bit around Leon &



Harper being able to control some of the resources and some of in the vaccination space, especially.

- Yeah. Thank you. Shamubeel, was there anything you'd like to contribute on that question of different democratic processes and different ways, ways to shift sort of power dynamics to be able to bring about a different kind of constructive conversation here?

- Yeah look, I think there's a relatively quick fix in that our counsellors and council staff have the ability to make sure the information and the feedback that's presented is representative, right? So we know, for example, when the unitary plan happened, I keep going back to it because it was such a big thing for the council, but there was a very high waiting of submissions from lawyers living in Home Bay. And so you don't want to give that equal weight to people, future generations, or people who are living in South Auckland. So making sure that the submissions are not presented on volume, but on true representation of our society would actually cut through a lot of the stuff that's happening at the moment, because it's very hard to see at the moment where these submissions are coming from, whose views they represent and whether or not they truly are good for all of Auckland. And I think Jess mentioned one really important thing, well, many important things, but one thing that I think that doesn't get enough weight is the unheard voice of future generations. They don't have a seat at the table, but we all must take a collective approach to making sure we think about what's gonna happen in a hundred years time. And Jess also talked about when our cities were first built, they were different, but also we have real good evidence in Auckland of our city builders, city leaders at the time who were thinking about our needs a hundred years out. Thinking about some of the water storage and dams that were built at the time, which was thinking about what Auckland will need in a hundred years time. So I think there is this requirement for us to be representative, truly representative, but a big chunk of weight on this must be future generations.

- Yeah. But do you think that we can have a mindset with people currently involved for them to think in those terms? Or do we explicitly need some kind of futures commission or sort of future generations body to represent that more directly and in a sort of a structured way?

- It's a good question. I dunno the answer, just might have a view, but my view is that we can't just pass it off to some group with a power. So if we create something, they



must have authority and an ability to influence the decisions that are made, not just somebody who's there as a tick box exercise, which is what happens, right. Or we consulted the poor people in X, Y, Z. We consulted the young people. We consulted the rainbow community. Did it change your mind? No. Well, why the fuck did you bother?

- Mm, yeah, Jess?

- Yeah. I mean, quite. So, well, I think there's a couple of things, which is, I think the values that we place at the heart of how we make decisions are actually quite helpful here. And I think there's a couple of things going on, when you talk to a lot of local counsellors and also people who work in local councils, they're very clear that they're making decisions and attempting to make decisions for long term wellbeing and future generations. So I think, and they feel like they can't say that, or they're pressured not to say that. And I think so that's an important thing to note is that it does help when the people in decision making who are trying to make decisions for long term future wellbeing talk about that. And that's why they're making the decisions that they are. I think the second thing that we need to think about is as Shamubeel said, how do we actually empower those in the younger generation, for example, to be at the heart of decision making that's about values. I think we use so many values in policy making that are absolutely implicit. And we say we are using one set of values and we're actually using another. Or I think it's incredibly important to start making explicit the values which are driving and are being, and we are basing decisions on, whether those are equity or long term intergenerational equity or inclusion. Then give us the evidence that that's the decision that you've based those values around. I think there's an opportunity here to think much more deeply about honouring totality, which is a blueprint for us thinking about the types of values that we should be using to make decisions for long-term wellbeing, honouring the is an opportunity for us as a country to drive forward with sets of values and decisions making that really are about long term intergenerational wellbeing.

- Yeah. I'm with you all the way on that. And for me, one of the best practical examples of being able to get that long term future thinking coming through from real people is the power of generation zero. I think they have been and continue to be very good at being able to express what needs to happen and how it can change, what needs to be done, and to be able to argue very forcefully. I mean, it was they as a group who put the Zero Carbon Act on the table in about 2017, and then we finally



got the legislation in 2019. So I'm a great believer in having supporting people like that who can do that.

- Yeah, I think that's an important point, Rod, but the thing I would say is there is an injustice in that for young people to have to fight for essentially their wellbeing unfunded in their own time fighting against status quo individuals who are well paid, sitting in bureaucracy, covering their bums on status quo. And so I think there is an issue of resources here as well. Like where is the money flows going? And are we putting them in the places for those young people, for example, to have the resources to do the work that they do, or for those people who are most hurt to be able to advocate and shift systems as well. So I think there is definitely an issue of what are we doing? You know, New Zealand doesn't have a particularly well developed approach to civil society either. So our government doesn't do a lot of supporting for example, of civil society, groups and organisations that can actually support some more of the transformational shifts that are needed. So I think there's an aspect there that we could explore a little bit more as well.

- Mm, thank you. Here's a question about mindset change. And again, perhaps I'll offer this to you first, Jess, from Agnes who says mindset change takes a decade to come about, to change, are the smart strategies to shorten this. Can it happen very quickly?

- Yeah, So there's two things to say there, and yes, it can be long, slow work. But what we see is that there are windows of opportunity that open and what you want to be able to do is understand the mindset shift and the narrative shift in advance of those windows of opportunity. Opening COVID was a perfect example where we could have taken an opportunity. And unfortunately it didn't really happen. And partly that's because the existing work hadn't gone on around mindset narrative shifts for a new system also because we lacked some of the capability and capacity to do the big shifts that we needed to make. The other thing that I would say is that mindset shift and structural shift doesn't have to be sequential. It can happen at the same time. So you can work hard on agitating for policy structures, system shifts, and at the same time work on mindset shift. So if you have leaders who are looking like being brave and stepping into a space of making and advocating for change, you can do the mindset shift work at the same time.

- Fine, thank you. And then I've got a good question here from Alika about how do we encourage grassroots flat roots work when so many people are time poor, financially



unstable, and just need to pay the rent, get food on the table and don't have the capacity to engage. So are there some ways to draw people like this in? And I'll come to you Richard too on this one, if I may. From a council point of view.

- It's the problem where you can consistently, sorry, I've lost. It's the problem we consistently face the council is that we do see similar groups of people being the same people who submit on the hundreds of consultations we have to do each year. And so you are constantly needing to take on board the views of those who give feedback, but then you need to also consider the future generations and the people who are currently living in Auckland who never give feedback, I guess. In my experience, to make things enjoyable helps, to give people different options to engage. So expecting everyone to turn up at 8:00 p.m. in a draughty town hall or during COVID times, a Zoom kind of meeting on the annual budget, where we talk about rates for two hours is not the way to engage with people. You know, if there is tangible ways to have a, we've done planting days before, or you've had a design or place-making group on a local issue or a local park or a local town centre, but then also being able to tag on other types of council initiatives for people to engage with at the time where they are being at the library or the supermarket or something, and giving people the opportunity to a place-make, if they're interested, I think assuming people are gonna come to council meetings, it's such in the past, that doesn't happen anymore. So providing more ways to engage where people want to be, but also you have to acknowledge that people, time poor don't have of the energy often to look through a 4,000 page annual plan or 10 year budget to engage. So you have to try and pick up what you hear through the communities and hope that people are engaging along the way, but there's no silver bullet to this. And this is a massive issue for cities and local community is the lack of engagement. Look at our voting record, 35, 38% each time.

- Thank you. Jess or Shamubeel, do you want to contribute to that question about?

- Yeah, that's interesting. 'Cause we recently had a conversation with people in Wellington about this, Richard, and one of the things that they said to us was they'd like to be consulted less, but they'd like to be asked about the things that matter to the most and be told later why that decision was made and which I thought was quite interesting. You know, they really, it's not that people were disengaged in some sense, they just felt so over consulted and then nothing happened. So this kind of regulatory environment of multiple consultations when nothing can happen, it's ticking the boxes and people just feel worn out by it. And the things they were asked



about didn't really have meaning for them. They would rather just say once a year, get to have a conversation about the things that mattered to them and then say can you tell us why you did things? I mean, that's not gonna keep everyone happy. I think there is a little bit of this engaging with the opposition going on as well. There's kind of bum covering in terms of, well, there's a loud, noisy vocal minority, and we are gonna do all of these things in order to say that we met the need. And I tend to think we just need a little bit more bravery and clarity around who we are listening to and going and seeking input from those people. Like, there are children out there who love to be engaged on this stuff. If there was the mechanisms to engage them and listen to them every day. I do think we just need to get A, braver, and B, a little bit more innovative and C, put some supporting structures around our governance that allows them to talk to different people in different ways.

- Thank you. Now, let me move on to some particular questions. Many of these are really big questions about the nature of what we're doing in this city. So this is a question from Dashco, bearing in mind climate change is accelerating and at least partly irreversible, is it not risky to concentrate even more people and assets on an already hazardous volcanic isthmus, and thus make the city even more dependent on complex centralised and vulnerable infrastructure. Would it not be safer to decentralise the infrastructure and disperse population and pursue a more polycentric spatial structure at a regional level? Richard, what's your sense about, what's your response to that question?

- Well, essentially, we've already done that and it hasn't worked very well. We have a very, very spread out city and it's full of people having to drive to the hospital, to the university, to the shops, to their grandparents house across the city, to the interesting things in the city centre, et cetera, the infrastructure costs so much, 'cause it's spread so far apart. So I guess there's an argument with there's risk, no matter what we do. We had extreme flooding during lockdown last year in Northwestern Kumeu where there isn't a lot of intensification. And then two weeks ago, three weeks ago we had 120 mills of water in one hour on the North Shore and we had our streets, residence, libraries, everything flooded. And you know, so that's quite a depressing view, but I guess no matter where you put the infrastructure, it needs to be resilient. And right now we cannot build infrastructure for the types of whether we are having. So I guess my opinion is probably not based on evidence is that to try and continually spread out the city and think people stay in their local areas is just, it just doesn't happen. So everyone will travel to the university somewhere or to the football game somewhere or to see their parents across the city or kids across the city. So I think the more we have people connected in urban areas, the current urban areas, the



more infrastructure we can build quicker for the people who live there, but also the less people need to travel vast distances, much like almost every city, major city internationally. Ain the world is how it's set up. So some of you might have some more data behind what I talked about, but that's kind of my view that I think it's a nice idea, but I don't think it actually works.

- Well, I guess the only thing I might add is Auckland is policy centric in the sense that we do have multiple city centres already. And we have when we talk about Auckland getting density, it's not necessarily only in the Isthmus, only around the CPD, in fact, quite a lot density that we want is around transport corridors and transport nodes. So I think that is where we're heading anyway, given the footprint that we have, which is a fairly widespread footprint now, the task for us is to make sure that we get some density around the corridors and the nodes that are there. So I think Doshku is quite well known for his views on this stuff, so we won't go too detailed into it. There's several questions here that I'll paraphrase. And it gets to the heart of whether we are making sure that as we develop our built environment, we're doing the right thing there. So there's questions about urban stress and depression 'cause lots of high rise buildings and lack of green space. There's another question. This one from Julie about, oh, sorry, wasn't Julie, but another person here about trees and the like, so here's the question. Are we confident that the national policy statement on urban development will still allow us to have high standards and to make sure that what we build is built well and designed well? Or do we feel we're kind of heading for a bit of an open slabber? Any?

- Well, I can probably contribute a little bit. Look, think of the policy changes that we see, including the NPSUD, MDRS Auckland Unitary Plan. Think of them as a progression of things that we're trying to make better. So we're starting from a place that wasn't very good. So we clearly weren't creating enough homes that were sufficient for all Aucklanders or all New Zealanders. And we had the unitary plan, it wasn't perfect. We now have of the NPUSD, which is essentially the unitary plan on steroids for more of New Zealand. And then we are getting the MDRS, which is essentially doing away with single family homes, home zones in fast growing parts of New Zealand. None of these are perfect, right? So even the reform and all these things that are coming, this is all part of a continuation of trying to one, build enough homes. But at the same time, I think we are gonna see some niggles around transport, around things like green space. And this is why Auckland Council and most local government has pretty good policies in place of lots of green spaces in most neighbourhoods. And I think we've gotta make sure that we protect and preserve some of those things. So I guess yes, we should be cautious that as we



make these changes, there will be some unintended consequences and we should make them better as they become evident over time. So we should not think of public policy and policy changes as static things, rather things that are alive and that are relentless. There is no end date. We should continuously be trying to improve because we can't plan for and regulate for every eventuality. It's that 80/20 that Jess was talking about in many things, right. Get it there. And then we keep improving. So I might answer it in that way.

- Fine. Thank you. So Richard, how are you feeling about these, the national policy statement and the processes we have now, whether they are robust enough to make sure we design, build and run our built environment well?

- I guess I still have worries about things like design and things, because even the current RMA won't protect that. And it's probably due to a cost thing that if we require too much, the buildings never get built and they're far too expensive. So I can see the other side of that discussion, but I guess a lot of it is the misinformation. I see someone has a comment about the parking strategy, the other week like that, that is about 3% of the roads across Auckland that will be consulted on when a project is put in place over the next 10 years. But it had a lot of other things around disability parking, where do we put new EV parking? How do we ensure we get turnover in our town centres? There was about seven policies. All that got focused on was a little bit about having to remove some car parks on some streets at some future point. So much like that, the NPSUD, the worst bits will get thrown across the papers and make people very scared that their lots is gonna be built around their house. And they're gonna feel like they have no power overnight when largely that won't be true for most people, but I guess what it will do, and what it has to do is provide more housing around town centres and our public transport routes, because the rates are finite and the taxes are finite, and we need to continue to build on what we have. The issue is when we keep sprawling, we have to continue to put up the rates and the other charges and inevitably taxes eventually to fund all the infrastructure. And then I imagine in 30 years time renewing, or 50 years time when renewing that infrastructure, you're having to pay for it all again, which we're finding in parts of Auckland now, look at our waterways, trying to fix 80 year old pipes under the ground right now. So I guess there's no good argument for exactly the perfect model, but I think the government, and I guess the opposition too, working together on this has made it happen. There are issues that council was facing, and we don't know how we're gonna pay for the infrastructure. If it is kind of spread out, we felt in some senses, there was a lot happening with the unitary plan anyway, but we also have to make sure that people feel heard along the way. And we can understand why people



feel upset at lots of change happening all at once. But we also have to think about the next generations and their ability to live in this city, or stay in the community that their friends and family actually live, which at the moment I don't feel that's happening.

- And there's a very specific question here that we used to have an Auckland design office, which was doing good work, but that was disestablished. Don't we need, should we, well, the question is, should we reignite a city design office to be a real sort of creative centre for good, good quality design? Let me ask Shamubeel that in terms of what you are seeing around the city, in terms of quality of design and whether you feel a mechanism like that is essential.

- Yeah. I think as long as the powers are very specifically defined, so it's about boundaries. So as long as it's about topologies, it's about protecting certain things, but we've also seen the overreach of councils and others of telling you what colour door must be. Well, there is a balance in terms of how far we go. So the vandalism of the eighties when we kind of did away with so much of our architectural and built heritage, and then we had no design controls and we built really ugly things. So yes, we need to find a balance. Something like a design office is a good idea, but as long as its powers are quite limited and defined.

- Yeah. Thanks. Jess, what's the situation in Wellington in terms of whether Wellington city Council has sort of a design office, a central source?

- Yeah. In the most recent consultation around urban density, that was feedback. And I know that the council was looking at that. And I mean, it certainly, look, with the bypass that went in, and a lot of the things that happened here in the nineties where we had some dreadful developments in Akakupa Street and bisected the middle of a heritage area with a massive three lane, essentially motorway, which I have to try and walk across each day and makes me very angry. You know, people are naturally really, people who wouldn't hesitate to support urban density, do feel quite concerned that they're going, that that sort of thing has happened. And I for me, I get back to what are the values that drive a lot of these decisions. And I think when you think about equity, I think that's a really important thing to consider. So both how you do universal design. So you are inclusive of people into the future, thinking about environment, so how do you create spaces in which there's sufficient green space, if you're going to build up and also thinking about how do you create housing in which people are actually in warm stable housing that is carbon neutral, or at least has low



energy requirements. So if you can centre some of these values, you're probably going to be able to do a little bit better and think about some of these issues in a kind of more constructive way.

- Mm, thank you. There's a question here about media, media scare mongering is a bigger contributor to mindsets. See cycleways, parking intensification, et cetera, et cetera, and are reinforcing the status quo. What's the responsibility of media in supporting necessary transformational change, maybe a question for Rod, the person asked, which I'm very happy to answer. Media has a huge responsibility to do that very well. And we very often fail, quite honestly. Part of it is that media organisations have don't have the resources they used to have because business models have become so stretched, but it's also partly a sense in many newsrooms that people's attention span is not necessarily up for big issues. And so far too often, you just see a noisy, personal few people interviewed on a given issue. We're seeing it for example, on parking now, and yet, so the responsibility is absolutely there. So I would encourage everybody who feels strongly about this to express your views to media organisations where you feel that they have been deficient, that they haven't explained an issue well enough, or given a wide enough range or given sort of fully both sides of the argument. And if you feel that the answers are still unsatisfactory or you feel there is a particularly or better, this next hack, this next response is applies to this next situation. If you feel there's a particular egregious example of that failure, and then there are press bodies to make a formal complaint to, some years ago, even though I'm a journalist, I made such a complaint about a media organisation that I had feel substantially failed on, it was the time of the unitary plan discussion on a particular aspect of that. So yes, absolutely the media are absolutely crucial and needs to be kept up to the mark on this. So I would be also welcome of course, views from our panellists on that as well.

- Well, I was gonna ask you a question, Rod, which is like, there are certain criticism for example that local and central government shut down access to important experts when decisions are being made or particular policies are being made. And that can influence and effect journalists ability to both explain the issue and where it's coming from. How much do you think that that is true?

- Oh, it's very true. And it has got to be more of a challenge as time's gone on. So for example, these days, it's actually very hard to get, even to talk to people closely involved in an issue. And many of my colleagues are very frustrated by that. My response to that is to then take the very perfunctory statement from the media office



of whatever ministry it was that has failed to supply. And just quote that whole thing and saying, this is the only response I get. Now, that's not satisfactory, it's only making it clear that they've failed, what I really need to do as a journalist, and I do spend a lot of time doing this, is then trying to, rather than taking a straightforward front door approach when the front door's completely closed, trying to find the right people to talk to, or at least the people who talk to those people to try to understand what's going on, and then try to give expression to that. That's very time consuming. And I do very much regret that what it's taking these days, and the days when you could talk to, and that used to be one of the great joys of being a country this size, you felt that you could actually get hold of a minister or senior staff people who were directly involved in an issue. And that's very frustrating, and I'd love to with my colleagues all try to find ways so turn that around.

- I think it's really important to be honest, people in government have to get used to the idea that they are going to have to explain their transformational policies and why they're doing them as opposed to running scared of what will happen. And that's a relationship issue as much as anything and that's my impression.

- Yeah, absolutely. Shamubeel, any sort of comment on that?

- I kind of feel for a lot of the people who work inside of local council and in government departments. So there might be experts, but there is also such a risk aversion around not saying the wrong thing or not being exposed to these kinds of situations, that it is very difficult for them to engage too. So our public service is kind of protected behind this kind of this wall of media and PR and the experts are quite often, not always quite often excluded. And I think that does make for a poorer discussion because, it's easy to beat up on local government workers and on bureaucrats. But the reality is these are experts who are doing quite often, really good work, and we're not seeing the full benefit of the evidence, the trade offs, the tensions that politicians are dealing with. So quite often what we get is a very kind of neutered view of the complexity of the problems that we are trying to decide on. And I think that does make it very difficult. So reflecting on what Jess has been talking about, yes, we don't need to have every detail paraded in front of the media, in front of the public, but the public need to understand why there is a problem that we understand the issues and that there are ways of improving it. And I think we need to end on that note of hope that we understand there is a problem, but there must be hope that we can do something and that we can trust our elected officials and our experts and bureaucracies to be able to do this, sometimes it feels like we're not



making progress, but our country is getting better. Our city is getting better. It may not be getting as better as quickly as we would like. So I think a lot of what I took from just today was how do we speed this stuff up and how do we get rid of a lot of the opposition that slows things down?

- Yes. Thank you. That's very well said. And I was just about to wrap up and that you've got us off to a very good start to wrap up there. So I turn to Jess to see if there's anything you'd like to say by way of a closing comment before I say something briefly and then hand over to Richard for thanks.

- No, just thank you for having me. There were lots of great questions we didn't get to answer, but it's so nice to have so many people, so enthusiastic and engaged. And as Shamubeel said, it's helpful to look for where change is happening when we doing this work to remain hopeful.

- Yes. Thank you. And I want to stress about the title of this, our growing city, understanding the challenge of change. And so that's why we had Jess as our main speaker talking about those six shifts. So thank you very much for that considerable contribution. Rather than getting into many of the specifics about what's actually underway in the city. And so it has been a very rich conversation, across those really important subjects, and that sense that the city is progressing in terms of the quality and attractiveness of what we're doing. And finally wrestling with some of our big issues. We had some 240 people online. So thank you all hugely for being a part of this and to Ashley McIntyre in Auckland Council who organises Auckland Conversations, so to Ashley and her colleagues, thank you very much for doing so and getting us involved in this evening's programme and staging this online. Speaking as a keen attender of Auckland Conversations, I look forward to them being back in person. That's always a treat. And so thank you very much for joining us and being part of the discussion. And I'm sorry that we've only been able to answer a small selection of all the great comments and questions you raised. And lastly, I'd just like to turn to Richard if I may, and for your closing comments and thank you.

- Kia ora Rod, and thank you very much. And first of all, thanks to you for always being such an engaging emcee and taking the night so smoothly and letting everyone have their say and trying to get through as many questions as possible. Thanks, Jess. The presentation was fantastic and really gave me pause for thought after what has been a gruelling couple of weeks of big decisions and big ideas out there about the city. And often it is, it can feel the loudest voices are the only voices,



and we have to make sure we are listening to everyone to make sure we're planning the city for the future. So I will definitely continue to look at your work for guidance around mind shift and bringing people along with us and knowing that people actually do want change, positive change, but just, maybe aren't always around to tell us, Shamubeel, thank you very much for your words that are always very clear and very concise, and even threw a few F-bombs out there, but your passion for cities and your passion for people and to ensure the diverse nature of our city is taken care for, and that we plan for the future in stop leaving it to the next generation to figure out. So I really appreciate you constantly speaking up for everyone, actually. Thanks to Ashley and the staff, Auckland Conversation staff for putting this all on again. And most importantly, thank you to all the participants we had. Yeah, a couple hundred people on, what is it, a Wednesday? Is it Wednesday? Wednesday night to attend this conversation. And I think, yeah, it's really important for all of us, but I would say that there is a lot of good happening on the chair of the environment climate change committee. And you did get all counsellors and two members of the independent statutory board to support Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri, Auckland's climate plan two years ago. Obviously, maybe it's going to be a bit harder to get that support for everyone to do the actions, but we have got all of your counsellors no matter where you live in the city supported the plan. So we are ramping up the actions from the 10 year budget last year. And also we just consulted on a billion dollar budget for climate action that looks like it's got good support from the public. So keep putting pressure on for whatever it is to your elected representatives, your MPs, your local board members and counsellors, and ensure that you're putting your voice out there, whether that's writing letters to the editor or Facebook, or doing whatever and voting. So we need those voices on every issue, a diverse amount of voices, but , thank you so much. And we will continue the good fight to ensure that we reduce our emissions and ensure that people have a place to live in this beautiful city. So, kia ora.

- Fine. Thank you, Richard. And so once again, thank you, Shamubeel, thank you, Richard. Thank you all for joining and go out and enjoy the city and dream great dreams of what Tāmaki Makaurau has every chance of becoming so go well and look forward to seeing you again. Bye.

