

Shaping Tomorrow Together

Event transcript

- Can I have your attention please? And of those of you who are just arrived, you can just come and have a seat and we'll be ready to commence. Well, good evening everyone. My name is Richard Nahi, and I'm with the Auckland Council as one of the senior or principal cultural advisors and very honoured and pleased to be here to open this wonderful occasion and this event and also to acknowledge the agenda here tonight. So I'm going to do a mahi and katakhia to open up, and the katakhia is about the agenda in terms of shaping tomorrow together and the importance of that. And that means working together as one people. So that was an acknowledgement to each and every one of you that have arrived here tonight. And no doubt that we are a number of thanks extended to each and every one of you for coming here tonight. And so I just want to extend a mahi to our chiefs who are before me and who will be on the panel and they will be introduced as well. So let us give a prayer and acknowledgement to our creator and also for this wonderful evening and also for the kopapa and the agenda here tonight. So we give acknowledgements to you, our heavenly creator, for this wonderful opportunity to be here in Tamaki Makaurau inside this party. We seek your guidance and your presence and your wisdom, and we give thanks to all the leadership that we have here in Tamaki Makaurau and to all the people who have gathered. May you continue to bless their homes and their families and most of all their children and grandchildren and extended family members. We thank you for tonight or for everyone who has come. Good evening everyone. Kiwora, welcome. My name is Alec Tang, and I have the pleasure of facilitating this evening's Auckland Conversation. Some of you may know prior to my current role, I spent a number of years at the Chief Sustainability office in Te Kaunihera o Tamaki Makaurau through the development of the refreshed Auckland Plan 2050, where we established belonging and participation as one of the critical outcomes for a thriving, resilient and sustainable Auckland. And also present through the adoption of Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan, which recognise that transformational changes that we need to drive through everything that we do if we are to meet our emissions reduction targets and become a more resilient to the climate impacts that are already locked in. So this evening's topic, how we ensure better, broader, more diverse and representative engagement and participation in our democratic system on the increasingly complex issues that we face is a topic that's very close to my heart. Thank you Richard, for the karakhea and the mahi that opened our evening today. Auckland Conversations is an amazing forum opportunity that we have as Aucklanders. Some of you who have not travelled so far may know that Christchurch does a conversation now and a number of other cities do conversations because they're such important fora to share and to learn about some really important issues. Some of you will have been here last week where we had Janette Sadik-Khan come and talk in conversation with Helen Clark about transforming our transport systems and how we move around. This evening's topic is no different and no less important. And I really encourage you to take this session, this conversation with the intent that it's delivered in a very open sharing opportunity and an opportunity for us to discover different ways of engaging with our democratic systems. It's really cool to see so many people here. I know that there are many people online as well from



what I'd heard from colleagues and whatnot. There are many who couldn't make it. So please be aware that there are folk online as well. A few housekeeping issues, for those of you who are here, the bathrooms are located on your left of the stage and or outside in the foyer. If there is an emergency, which we would hope there isn't, you'll need to move guided by the staff here onto the grass terraces out the back or which is really exciting, evacuate through the back of house route, which I would be interested to see what that is. And as I said, please follow the instructions of the DT operations manager who is the chief warden. Lastly, if you could please turn your phones onto silent, please don't turn them off. That is how we would love you to engage both in the conversation tonight but also share your insights of the topics that were discovered. There is a hashtag, #AucklandConversations. There is a Twitter handle that you can use and you can tag the teams in and we'll be using Slido for fielding the questions tonight, which I'll talk to a little bit. Making good enduring decisions about complicated long-term issues is a tough challenge for any community whether it's a neighbourhood or a nation. Arguably the key to success is having constructive discussions among diverse people. Late last year, Rod Oram released a 10 part series the way forward where he investigated big new ideas that can lead our response to climate change. In one of those episodes, he looked at the Citizens Assembly established by Kōi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures and Watercare to investigate the best new source of water for Tamaki Makaurau Auckland Post 2040. And those were the ever insightful words that he chose to open his article. Rod was due to moderate this Auckland Conversations panel quoted on these deliberative and more participatory democratic methods with the intention of discussing the barriers, challenges and opportunities that come with this driving force for change. As many of you will know, and Rod unfortunately and unexpectedly passed away last week. I had the good fortune of getting to know Rod and working with him on a number of projects including his way forward series. And I think those of you who also got to know Rod will agree that behind the pristine and astute commentary that you read in places like the Newsroom and beyond the inquisitive patient, but pointed inquiry that events like the Auckland Conversations for which he was such a great supporter and moderator of many, many discussions, he had time for everyone and anyone and an infectious hunger to drive us all forward towards this more sustainable and equitable and resilient future. Rod was deeply passionate about and excited for this Auckland Conversation. And so it was with passion ringing in their ears that the team and the panel all decided to go ahead with this event as something of a tribute to Rod's amazing and tireless work. As Josie said to me last week, we all have to do his mahi now. There is a public celebration of Rod's life at the Holy Trinity Cathedral on Friday the 5th of April at 11:00 AM on the same day as the climate strike, which is deeply appropriate. I would before then invite you all to take a moment of silence as we remember a deep friend, not just of the conversations but of Auckland and of progress in our city. Kiwora, everybody. So to this evening's agenda, the format for tonight will be a presentation from Max Rashbrooke, Senior Research Fellow at Victoria University. And then Max will be joined by our other speakers for a discussion and Q&A where you, the audience both here and online will have the opportunity to ask and ask some questions and hear from our speakers. We do have a limited amount of time, so please keep your questions to the point. And if you would like to direct them to a specific member on the panel, please add that to your question. As I said, we will be using Slido because there are many of the audience joining online. So we'd like to give them all an equal opportunity to ask their questions. So if you have got a phone on you, please go onto slido.com and enter the event code #delib, D-E-L-I-B and ask your question virtually. If you don't have a smartphone with you, then there is a



team at the back with various iPads. So you can go and ask them to upload your question for or upload the question for you. You can up vote and down vote questions. I believe that's how it used to work. So please feel free to engage in other people's questions as well because we won't have a huge amount of time through the evening. And as ever, please ask a question rather than make a statement. We always try and ensure that Auckland Conversation events are inclusive and accessible. So on demand viewing of the event is here, we will be transcribing and captioning the event so that it will be available for you to revisit and re-enjoy and re-listen into some of the conversation, but also the potential way forward that we see tonight. So with that, a bit of scene setting about why this Koi Tuh is so important. As many of you hopefully know by now, we are currently near the end of the consultation period for the 2024-34 long-term plan. Who has put in a submission already? Oh, fantastic. Good work, well done. The challenges are experiences of folk who've been at the other end of consultations and the evidence shows that existing democratic and consultative processes that we use to inform these decisions are not representative. In the previous iteration of the plan, the council received almost 15,000 pieces of feedback, which I think was a fair record at the time, but 15,000 is still less than 1% of the 1.6 million people that reside in Tamaki Makaurau or reside at them. And then when you look at the age and ethnicity breakdown of the respondents, things get even less representative with an overrepresentation of submissions from Pākehā Europeans and an underrepresentation from Maori Pacific peoples and Asian communities. 70% of the submissions for the last long-term plan were from respondents over 35 years of old, whereas 50% of our people are under 35. And when we think about the issues that we are looking to face, long-term investments and infrastructure, the impacts of climate change, it is those people less than 30 that are going to feel the brunt of the decisions that we make today. We also know that there's a huge complexity of the issues that we face, which means it's not simply a case of making it easier for people to participate in votes or consultations. It is that we need to enable a more informed decision through dialogue and discussion, education and upskilling. We know that our increasing diversity also means that we need to shift and learn different ways of thinking, not only to challenge our own mental models, but also for the sake of our community cohesion. So something new is needed. More deliberative, participatory methods have the potential to fill that need. I'll leave Max to go into more detail about what we mean by deliberative democracy, how it's evolving globally and what it might look like here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. But one thing to note, which is really cool, is that this journey into deliberative democracy, this conversation we're having tonight is one part of Auckland Council's wider journey and experimentation around deliberative methods. Some of you will have seen the scales at the back, which is a key part of that. If you haven't gone, chat to the team to engage. For the first time, the council have run participatory forums to invite feedback on the council's long-term plan, including diverse cross section of Auckland as being randomly selected to participate in more in-depth workshops on the challenges and opportunities set out in our budget. These fora will collectively provide feedback and present back to the elected members on that. So it's a really exciting time and hopefully a really important time to engage in this conversation. With that, I'd like to invite Max Rashbrooke up to the stage. Max is a Wellington based writer, public intellectual with twin interests in economic inequality and democratic renewal. He is a senior research fellow at Victoria University School of Government and writes a fortnightly column for the Post and his work appears in outlets such as The Guardian and Prospect. Interestingly, and I didn't look at this, but his TED Talk apparently on upgrading democracy has been viewed one and a half million times. So there



you go. So Max please you come to stage. Thank you very much everyone for coming, whether you're in the room, whether you're watching online or you're watching it later on. Thank you Richard for the karehia for the Ian for welcoming us in that manner. Thank you Alec for the introduction, and thank you to Auckland Council for the chance to be part of this panel. I'm a real enthusiast for democracy and for doing it differently. I think democracy affects so much of our lives. The roads that you drive on or the public transport that you can take is profoundly affected by the democratic decisions that your council makes. The water that runs through your pipes or if like me you're a resident of Wellington runs through the streets and sort of guises into the air with gay abandon is also profoundly shaped by democratic decisions that have taken or not taken. The quality of your housing and the safety of the restaurants that you eat in is also profoundly affected by democratic decisions. So these things are hugely important to us in the shared lives that we live together. I've observed quality of democratic forums, including some of the new and more innovative ones, and I've thought a lot about the theory of them. And I'm also a great believer in the phrase that there's no such thing as a gap between theory and practise. There's just bad theory. In the sense of there's just bad theory is stuff that's not engaged with what's actually going on on the ground. And so on that basis, a real pleasure for me to be speaking alongside people like Penny House with long experience at the coalface of democracy. People like Mark Thomas who's served in a number of political and economic and and community roles. People like Anne Bardsley who's actually working right, well again at the coalface of some of these democratic innovations. Looking forward to hearing about what they've got to say about what these things look like in practise. First though, I wanted to give you my thoughts and my feelings about what democracy is and what democracy can be. And there's a lot of technical definitions that you can get into at this point. Democracy is about being able to vote, say, or it's about certain conditions, it's about certain rights that people exercise. Or you can say, you can look at the derivation of the word demos, the people, cracy a way of running a society. And all those things are useful. But for me, democracy is most fundamentally above all things a state of mind. And that state of mind is a trust in each other. It's a belief in ourselves, it's a confidence in our own collective ability as citizens and as residents to come together and play our part in taking the biggest decisions that we face. And I think we forget that trust in our own competence no matter who we might be. I think sometimes we forget how revolutionary that is. But in the western tradition for thousands of years in these things that we sort of think of as western, well, in the modern times as western nation states for a very long time, the message that everyone got was you are not competent to do that work. You need someone, you need a king or a queen or an emperor, someone of supposedly superior wisdom to do that democratic work for you. And then roughly 2000 years ago in Athens, which gets a lot of press, but actually also in a lot of other places including India and the Middle East, people started to develop the idea that actually maybe they, no matter their status and station in life could come together and deal with the biggest questions that their society faced. And so you had those kinds of practises, assemblies in Athens and elsewhere where people were literally gathering and making decisions about do you go to war? How do you provide for people who were poor? And all these kinds of basic questions. Eventually that energy ebbed and evolved into representative democracy. It's a view of the world that says that yes, people are competent, but largely only to elect other people to take decisions on their behalf. And that's broadly the system that we have now. And look, it has its good points. There are things about representative democracy that work well and I want to acknowledge the good work that's done by our representatives. But I don't think the system as a whole exactly as it is constituted now is really fully fit for



purpose. I think it's a bit like running a bunch of 21st century apps on a computer that was built in the 20th century or possibly even in the 19th century. And I think that to use a different metaphor, we can have a much richer ecosystem of deliberative forums and practises. We can have a much richer array of ways in which we can come together and make decisions, including some of them just ourselves as ordinary citizens and residents. I think we can find forms of democracy that respond to the capabilities that we know we have and the ambitions that we hold for what we're capable of and what democracy can do. And as I go around the country and I do a number of these talks and I listen to people I hear real frustration with the way that politics works sometimes the sense that it politics isn't close enough to the people. And conversely I hear a real willingness from people to get more engaged in the big collective decisions that affect their lives where it's practicable and where that they feel that that involvement will be meaningful to them and to their community. Now to make all of that big picture stuff a little more concrete, I wanted to draw a contrast between a way of doing democracy that we're all familiar with and one that we might make greater use of in future. A contrast between the classic government or city council consultation on the one hand and something called participatory budgeting on the other. The thing about a classic government consultation where you get sent a form generally online these days and asked to fill in a bunch of boxes is that it's not very participatory. I mean, you're participating in something but you're giving your opinion but that's the limit of it. And you don't know that that participation will have any real weight. You don't know that what you say will have any particular impact and so you're not really participating in decision making in the way that we would recognise the deepest sense of that word. And I think we're all fairly familiar with that problem with consultations. But there's another one that I think is really profound that we don't talk about as much. And so not only a consultation's not participatory, they're not very deliberative either, and that's a term that won't be familiar necessary to a lot of people in the room. But when we talk about deliberation in a very crude sense, what we mean is high quality public discussion. So deliberative democracy is about a form of democracy that involves people meeting each other often across the differences that they have, giving reasons for their views, justifying them to others, listening, reflecting, ideally shifting their own views in response to that discussion and arriving at some kind of consensus decision that everyone can at least live with. And the thing about consultations is that they're really nothing like that. They're working on a sort of mental model that we all just already have our opinions, we have our preferences, they're already formed and the only task of government is just to elicit them from us. Whereas a deliberative democrat would say, well, actually often we don't even know what we think until we've talked about it with others. And in particular, our views aren't necessarily very well considered or very thoughtful or very well informed if we haven't had the chance to debate and discuss them with others. And particularly in particular people from my demographic who've had a lot of advantages in life won't necessarily understand the issues unless they hear from people who have had much greater struggles in life who are probably experiencing the very social problems that democracy spends an awful lot of time trying to solve. So consultations aren't very participatory and they aren't very deliberative. In contrast, there's increasing interest and increasing activity all around the world for these processes that are called participatory budgeting. And what crudely that means is a city council takes a bunch of its infrastructure budget, the money it's got to spend on new concrete things in future. And it puts it up for the community to decide directly through discussion. And so what that looks like concretely is a council might say, well, there's \$5 million up for grabs, how should we spend it? And so you have meetings, you initially maybe at the neighbourhood



level in your community centre or out on the basketball court or whatever, and people have to argue the toss with each other in their community. So someone who wants that money spent on say, upgrading parks has to argue with someone who wants it spent subsidising public transport to greater extent, who has to argue with someone who wants to spend on street lighting improvements so that roads are safer at night for people to walk on. So people are bringing their expertise in their own lives and I think that's a really important phrase. Everyone is an expert in their own life. They may not have a huge level of technical expertise, but they know what their community needs and what it wants. And so people are bringing that expertise, they're arguing things out with each other, they're coming to a consensus about how they as a neighbourhood would spend that money. All those decisions then get brought together and aggregated, say at the ward level, you thrash them out again and then eventually you have a citywide discussion and you, the community in whatever form that takes, allocate that money directly and you can do all the stuff very face to face. That's how it first evolved in places like Porto Alegre in Brazil, a town that's ballpark the same size as Auckland and where as many as 50,000 people every year get engaged in this process. Or you can do it very online, which is how they do it in Iceland through the Better Reykjavik kind of programme. And this is very participatory. People are literally in conversation with each other, allocating where the money goes and it's pretty deliberative. There's discussion, there's give and take, people at least when it works well have to listen to each other, reflect on their position and shift when they hear better arguments and better evidence. So I think that's the task we face to try to take the way we make decisions and take them up the ladder of participation but at the same time up the ladder of deliberation. And when you have these two things together, participation and deliberation, you have what people sometimes call everyday democracy. And it has that phrase just because it's an attempt to make democracy, not the sort of abstract thing that you can barely see, but something that's woven at least ideally into the everyday fabric of your lives as a citizen and as a resident. And there's really good evidence about the benefits of everyday democracy. It's been shown to improve trust because you're bringing people into the decision making process. They're having to do trade offs so they understand how hard actually it is being a politician, the real difficulties of having to make those trade-offs. And also it can bring politicians closer together with people, with experts. When people go through these processes and you survey them afterwards, they come out with measurably higher trust in politicians, in processes, in democracy as a whole. It's also a way of bridging differences of bringing communities together who would never normally encounter each other. It's a barrier or it's a sort of way of pushing back against misinformation and polarisation. It is quite simply also a way of making better decisions. The thing about everyday democracy for me is it genuinely represents the wisdom of the crowd. If I think about the crowd that's gathered here, all of us gathered here for any given big public problem, pretty much everyone in the room would have something to offer on it would have some piece of the puzzle for solving that problem no matter how small that piece might be. But if we don't discuss the issue with each other, those pieces of the jigsaw puzzle never come together. The wisdom of the crowd isn't brought to the surface and in fact it remains mute, sort of lodged in each of our minds and hearts individually. And it's only through coming together and through discussion that we can really bring that wisdom of the crowd to the surface. I think it's because of that potential, that ability to do things differently, that these new forms of democracy, this everyday democracy is gathering pace around the world. So there's more and more participatory budgeting going on. There's more and more citizens assemblies is something I'll talk about in a second. There's this wave of excitement about



renewing and reinvigorating democracy sweeping the world. But we also always have to be attentive to the local context. We can't just import things from overseas willy-nilly. And in particular I think it's very important that we acknowledge that in Aotearoa, New Zealand there are plenty of communities who quite understandably have negative views about democracy as it's often conceived in the western sense. And most obviously for Maori, the bringing of sort of western democracy to these shores as part of the period of colonisation far from actually ensuring democracy, the control of the demos over decisions actually involve the loss of that, the loss of the ability of Maori communities to make decisions for themselves to enjoy. Indeed it overrode preexisting indigenous traditions, which as Maori scholars were always reminding us involved a rich and complex set of practises in Hui and elsewhere that privileged things like turn taking in argument and a really profound commitment to consensus. So anything we do in terms of reinvigorating democracy has to fit with local traditions, it has to fit with a commitment to, it has to draw on the multiple traditions and cultures of decision making that we have in this country. And we also, and this is the point I want to close on, we also need to work out the relationship that everyday democracy is going to have with the representative democracy that we currently enjoy. There's all sorts of barriers to everyday democracy and I don't have time to get into most of them, but one of them we see this time and again internationally is sort of the best intentions and the best efforts for people taking part in things like participatory budgeting being held back because these processes can seem very threatening to people who are acting, who are serving as representatives in our system of representative democracy. But from my point of view, it's not really about threatening anyone. It's about, as I said, building a much richer ecosystem of practises, having a diff array of ways in which we can make decisions. It isn't reliant on just any one system. And I think, like I said, there's a lot to be said for representative democracy and I think where politicians are elected on a really clear mandate or where there's a scientifically correct answer, then I think elected representatives should just go for it. But whether it's not the case where there is gridlock amongst politicians where they're found they simply can't make any progress forward on an issue or where there simply is no right answer. Where the trade offs are very complex, I think there's a huge amount to be said for having a bit more everyday democracy in our system. And I would take at the national level the example of hate speech reform. How do we try to ensure that there is freedom of speech while protecting certain communities from the harms that very, very hateful and violence inducing speech can create. Politicians seem very gridlocked on this. The debate on the subject ironically has got very heated and there is absolutely no scientifically correct answer. It's all about trade offs and no one can tell you I exactly how we should make those trade offs. We all have views to be made about the balance to be heard about the balance between hate speech and free speech. And this is where something like a citizen's assembly could be really powerful. The concept of a citizen's assembly is you get say 50 or 100 people who've been selected to be representative in their demographics of the country or of the city. So in the Auckland context, that means people who are basically Auckland in one room, Auckland and miniature. So you get a group of people and it's 50/50 men and women, it's got the same ethnic diversity as the city as a whole. The same balance of people with different levels of education and income and their location in the city. You get these people together, ordinary citizens, you give them access to information and training and how to have these discussions with each other. You put them in front of experts and you give them time to think deeply about these issues, listen to each other, as I said, reflect ideally shift their positions and come to a kind of collective view of the issue, a consensus set of recommendations that everyone



can live with. And the idea there is that these decisions have got huge authority, huge legitimacy because they were made by a group of people who represent the city as a whole, but who have been able to make, have their discussions free of, I'll certainly say this to central government free of the point scoring that often substitutes for discussion in parliament and free of the rigid party alignments that can sometimes be a barrier to good decision making. So I think that there's a lot of room to bring in these kinds of new ways of making decisions alongside our traditional forms. Now of course it still can be hard to convince elected politicians that these things are a good idea because if we devolve some decision making powers to these assemblies, if we say the decisions you come to, we will implement pretty well as a whole, there is an element or it can feel like there's an element of a loss of power for politicians. But what I would say is that there is a very, very positive long term trade off here for them. Bear in mind that when people take part in these forums, they come out of them with much higher trust in politicians and government in general. And that surely in the long run opens up greater space for politicians to take the decisions that they need to and the decision that we will always want them to continue taking. So there is a trade off there, a bit of short term maybe what feels like a devolution of decision making power in order in the long term to actually get more of it. Of course as anyone who has an unused gym membership knows as humans we're not particularly good at taking short-term pain for long-term gain. This stuff is hard, but I think we have to do it and we have to hope that our elected representatives can see that trade off because I see and I feel a lot of distrust of the way we make decisions at the moment. A lot of dissatisfaction. I fear there are dark consequences coming at us if we don't evolve the way we take decisions, if we don't make steps forward in the way that democracy works and the way that we think it can work. And I see all around the world in forums like participatory budgeting and citizens assemblies, citizens and residents showing time and again that they're not just willing to take to shoulder the burden of responsibility of democracy, but they're also immensely capable of doing so. They're capable of coming together, of bringing politics closer to the people and really taking those huge collective decisions on which so much of our future rests. That trust I mentioned at the outset that confidence in each other, that belief in our ability to shoulder that democratic burden. I think it has been justified time and again all over the world and in some senses here in Aotearoa, New Zealand as well. And I think we need to give it the fullest expression we can wherever and whenever it's possible to do so. Thank you very much.

- Amazing, I was scribbling away. Hopefully this is on scribbling away with my notes. We had a whole string of questions that's now out the window. We're going to have a whole bunch of different questions but I really enjoyed the start and the end in trust. I think that's a topic that is really important as we're thinking about how we move forward. The trust in each other is critical. The other thing just before I invite the panellists up is deliberative. And it's interesting 'cause we can often mistake the deliberative for we are being particulate. Oh no, that is the fire alarm. I believe that we will need to exit the building towards the grass out front. Apologies guys. Try and continue the conversation out here with Max and Car. I probably should it out by night. And what I'm going to do is we'll start here and then hopefully at some point we'll get to go back inside. So we've got Max, Max is going to come along here and I'd like to introduce our other panellists. Kenny Halt, you probably need no introduction. Essentially a local government specialist. I'm pretty sure that's an understatement. Former deputy mayor and of the West. We've also got Mark Thomas, who's a managing director of



service works and director of the committee for Auckland from the inside sale will be fantastic. And Dr. Anne Bardsley, who is Deputy Director at Koi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures. So again, if you can't hear, please put your hand up and then we'll try and project a little bit more. This is deliberation. Before I invite our panellists to introduce themselves and tell us a little bit about their perspectives on this, I just wanted to make a point about that Max was talking about deliberative and we often forget that deliberative doesn't mean we're being deliberate and we're picking, it's that opportunity to deliberate on something, know the answer and actually that deliberation is really important to make a decision or help us make a decision. And actually on that spectrum of views, often many of us, many people are sat in the middle and wanting to understand a bit more information so we can put education. So with that, I'm going to hand down and maybe just a minute, introduce yourself and to the crowd. It is a crowd now, I think. And just to of your interest and interest around this.

- Alec. And to my fellow panellists also just want to mahi to our wonderful deputy mayor Desley Simpson, who's here. Bless your heart darling. It's so good to have you here. And I have to say this kind of works really well. I feel I should have a sheet wrapped round me total like shouting I'm delivering an important message. But this is what democracy is all about and it's also the chaos of genuine deliberative processes are able to put in and able to change. So that's my passion. As I introduce myself, I'm a recovering politician after 30 something years in politics. I've got a passion for new ways of doing democracy so that we hold into it.

- Mark Thomas, everyone. So technology and cities are, I suppose the passions that bring me here. I'm part of a technology business that works actually mainly in offshore markets providing technology solutions to city programmes. And here in Auckland one of the roles I have is a director of 24 Aucklands, which is a group that's about trying to help Auckland make more progress. And one of the things we are doing there is a benchmarking exercise comparing us to nine cities around the world to see what we are great at and to see what we could do better on. And one of the things we could do better on is the reason why we are here today. So pleased to talk more about that. I'm Anne Bardsley. Happy to join to come to this mahi from being in a role in the chief science advisor's office for many years. So working on evidence to policy and how we make decisions on really technical kind of questions. Realising though that all of those questions needs public input and public to understand and to incorporate public values. So we are now doing a lot of these processes in our centre and yeah, that's it.

- You gave us a great example of Reykjavik and other places where we're thinking about participatory budget making and so on. There's a question obviously attention about how do we make these deliberative processes get more integrated into governance? How do we strike that balance between respecting diverse perspectives but ensuring that decisions made through these processes are actionable and implementable that we don't run off into places where we actually just can't deliver on those solutions.

- I think that's such an important point. And for those of us who've been around processes where we are asked our point of view or we're asked to feed back and then we wonder why



on earth the council, the government, the decision making body hasn't followed our instructions and done what we asked them to do. It's because we are never quite given the parameters around which those organisations will be making the decisions. So the key for deliberative decision making processes is, I think as a ex politician, the first thing is that the question that's going to be resolved needs to be really clear and needs to reflect the decision that the decision making body is going to be making. Secondly, the outcomes or the possibilities that the group come up with need to be actionable and they need to be agreed to, or there needs to be a process agreed by the decision making body about what they're going to do with what the citizens assembly comes up with. So I think it isn't a big wide open process, it isn't a blue sky process. It needs to be quite directive, quite clear and quite doable. And I think that will build the trust in the process.

- I want to bring you Anne in, 'cause obviously I mentioned at the start the work that Koi Tuh did with Watercare, with a broad but quite focused question about the future of water for Tamaki Makaurau Auckland. So how do you go about finding what the right questions to ask?

- Well, that one was fortuitous for us. We were actually doing a research project at the time to try to develop these processes and in conversations over the school fence, one of my colleagues with Watercare, we realised they were interested in deliberative processes and they had a question that they wanted to ask because they knew based on projections of climate change and population growth that Auckland was going to need another major source of water by the mid 2040s. So that was the question that we asked, what should that be? They were already looking into the possibilities and because of that there were options that had been narrowed down, there was some criteria to look at what would be feasible. So that's what we had. So it became a very good question for, and it was also far enough in the future, it wasn't something that we had to that people were scared of that this was going to come tomorrow. So it was a future focused question and it was pretty clear and there were options available that could be discussed. So that made a very good question for an assembly.

- And thinking, so the work that you are going to be doing with this Koi Tuh forum, how will you go about finding questions for that or what's the process there to understand questions and so on?

- Well, some of them still come to us. We're involved in a lot of, and we are continually involved in processes big and small on questions that come to us from different agencies. But the forum we want to just build this up, this expertise so that different questions can be addressed. Some that we might know from our circles that should be and are not being asked by government agencies, maybe they're afraid to ask them. And if we can set this up in a way that it's a bit more sustainable than each one on a contract kind of basis, we will be able to ask those really tough questions for the future.

- Thanks. Mark, just pulling you in there and this question of actionability. So in your mind given the work that you've done, both being a politician but also the work that you're doing



in terms of cities and the community for Auckland, some really complex issues. So what's your view around actionability and how deliberative processes can play a role here?

- I mean I think from the context of working with cities, particularly in Southeast Asia, the thing we learn to do was to shrink the size of the problem and this is true I think of every city, right? The problems are usually enormous and that's by definition challenging. And so if they're approaching you with something that is a, I call it a feed the world kind of problem solve world peace, then the first thing you've got to do is to break that down. And I think to something as discreet and manageable, like the Watercare example that Anne talked about. We are very involved with mobility and so congestion is the city problem. Well that's kind of hopeless, right? We can't fix congestion, but what we can do is look at what the sort of particular tools we might have technology tools maybe even just do a proof of concept to solve one part of the problem. And so I think cities have been doing as we heard this sort of a process for actually decades. So I think part of the approach is start small, but then look at the capability you need to have. We can't just pick these things off the shelf. These are democratic kind of tools. So they do need to be customised, particularly for diverse cities such as ours.

- Yeah, and we were talking just before this question of standardisation and the degree to which we can, what do we mean by that? So there was a couple of points, Penny and Anne that you were throwing around interested in Max around your views of yes there's a degree of standardisation of process, but how do we recognise the diversity of people involved and topics that are around. So if you want to jump in.

- Sorry, around the processes?

- [Alec] The standardisation conversation that we had before.

- Yeah, I don't think there is a standard. There are elements that will be common to the processes and I would outline that representative and inclusiveness, the drawing from voices that you don't normally hear in these consultation processes that Max talked about, it's about that access to information and time for learning and listening, being able to ask questions of experts and of each other time for deliberation on the questions and actually working towards a consensus. So those elements should be there in these processes. How they're played out. There's a lot of variety that you can use depending on the situation and the question.

- I think it's a really important issue and as we move from the current democratic systems that we've got, the old putting your submissions or come to a public meeting and see if you're brave enough to speak as we move from there to Citizens Assemblies, which are I think the only way to do democracy properly, we are going to have an element of trust. And I think people will need to understand the process and how it works. They'll need to see that it can be the fourth leg of the stool for the political process. And by having some very sensible bottom lines about what constitutes an effective citizens assembly as Anne has outlined, I



think that that's probably the most critical thing. And then the magic happens, then you give yourself over to that wisdom of crowds and the wisdom of communities and you end up with better long-term decisions.

- Max, you want to jump in 'cause just folding into that, there's a question here which I think rounds that out to that notes that there are a range of methods, right? It's not just a Citizens Assembly, it's not just so, and I talked at the start about participation forum that we're used for this LTP, this long term plan. So it's not just a citizens assembly. There are a lot of other options that are available, which is a question to you.

- Yeah, I think that's absolutely true. I mean, as people can tell from my remarks, I'm a big fan of participatory budgeting because you can get tens of thousands of people engaged in a decent sized city. And I think that level of participation is really exciting and there's also lots of ways of doing it differently for the local context. I mean, this is stuff that's just evolving because no one has an absolute clear idea of how to do it. But for instance, in Wellington there's a group called the People Speak who are committed deliberative democrats and they're working very closely with Mana Whenua, with Ngāti Toa and Porirua on building a kind of citizens assembly type process, but one that reflects a sharing of responsibilities between the Ewi and this group. And so they're going through this very long and deep thoughtful process about how do you acknowledge the role of Ngāti Toa and their manner but then how do you retain the elements of the Citizens Assembly that make it work and make it representative. And so they're coming up with models that may involve running parallel Citizen Assemblies, which report to Ngāti Toa as well Australia groups of community leaders. None of this is super clear yet, but it's all local experimentation and I think that's what we have to do. We can't pretend there's a single model that we can just pull down off the shelf and it's going to work right first time. I mean there's always so much to learn from overseas. Absolutely, but we have to fit it for the local context.

- Can I just jump in there to say that, that the challenge we have with the cities we work and even just in a relatively sort of small area, Southeast Asia is every city's different, every aspect of even transport is different. And what we had to develop, and we actually worked with the Centre for Livable Cities in Singapore to try to develop a, when I say a standardised model, this is not trying to dumb down or normalise individual problems, but it's about a methodological approach to this sort of thing because absent that, absent kind of a way of a system for approaching this, you end up effectively creating unique solutions every time, which just adds cost and sometimes reduces efficiency. So I don't know if this is the answer for a deliberative democracy, but I mean there's been huge amounts of work done by the OECD and others trying to inform and give options. So there's a good body of work there and I think those who are looking to embark on this need to make sure that they're accessing that to see what the array is and then just carefully build the methodology that's right for the community and the project that you're focusing on.

- 'Cause I guess coming back to something that Max you opened and closed your koitotoa around is this concept of trust, right? And so one of the challenges we face is a lack of trust in



our current systems and the decisions that are made. And so replacing something that is not trusted with something else that's not trusted is not going to work, right? So we've got to think about the structures around which we set this in a way that those participating genuinely, and this was another point funnily enough, to get to that deliberation, you need to feel comfortable to express yourself in those spaces. And that's a really important part of deliberation in a real sense.

- Yeah, I'll step in there. I mean one of the important elements is that time and that the people who come into these deliberations are not, like Max said, experts in their own lives, but they do not have to know anything about sources of water or whatever the technical problem is. They will learn about that, but they're bringing their own experience and their own perspectives and some will be ready to speak straight away, others will take time. And we really observed that actually in the Watercare Assembly over time people gain confidence and at first, because I don't know if you all know what answer the Watercare Assembly gave and they decided that we should be using recycled wastewater as a source of water in the future. And they didn't come to that straight away at all. It took some time, it took them, it didn't take too long for them to understand the science of it actually that it was safe. They talked and debated on that, talked to each other and talked to people. There were people from Auckland who came from countries where water issues were much worse than we face here. And so those perspectives, and even someone who had come from Namibia where they drank recycled water for a long time so that technical problem they got over, they said, okay, I believe it's safe. But it was several stages before they felt comfortable to be able to speak for the rest of Auckland, knowing where they'd come from in that process. But by the end of the four, two months of the assembly, they did get there and it was all a process that happened right at the last minute, really last few hours of the assembly when they really were doing their last minute checks and Q&A and fact checks with the experts and decided we've got this, we can do it. We believe it.

- Fantastic.

- Alec, can I guess be a bit provocative and I'm sure we'll-

- .

- I think we can spend a huge amount of time trying to iron out all the wrinkles of this process. But as I said when we stood outside, democracy in and of itself is messy. Communities are not easily tamed nor are they homogenous and neither should they be. And I think the bravery that's needed here, as I hope councils around Aotearoa step more into deliberative democracy as an alternative to what we have now, I think we need to be prepared to just jump off that cliff really rather than try and solve it all. Because if we are really honest, we do not, for most people have a democracy that works for them, for our young people, it doesn't work for them. If you are under 18, you can't vote. If you are of ethnic minorities where English isn't your first language, you are not involved in forums like this, if you have disabilities, you are often excluded. And if you come from countries where it's dangerous to



actually even line up to vote, you are likely to get shot, abused or your family harassed. Democracy isn't the first place that you turn to. So I guess my challenge out there is saying we need to face up to the fact that democracy in its current form is not working. I won't, and I promise I will not mention the current government and some of the things that are happening, but I just wave the flag and say how's this going for all of you and how engaged you feel in the discussions that are happening. So let's acknowledge number one, democracy's fairly broken. Number two, participation in politics is now at an all time low. And when you've got more people in the states saying that they don't think that democracy actually matters than people who say democracy matters, we've got a real problem. So it's broken. Peeps, we need to do something about it. And I think we need to start really engaging proactively in how we're going to make this change.

- So I think Max has a comment and then I'm really keen to bring Eva up onto the stage to ask her question, but Max just a warning.

- Yeah, well, just a couple of points to pick up on that sort of discussion around trust. I think one of them is about publicity because you can say that something like Citizens Assembly has this really beautiful legitimacy and structure and clarity and authority and it does, but if it's decision set of recommendations made by 50 people and the other five million in the country have never heard of this process, your chances are saying to them politicians should just implement this thing and you should live with it are relatively slender. So I think these forums have to be really well publicised. People have to know that they're going on, they have to have a perceived legitimacy as well as this sort of theoretical one. And I just wondered if I could also on that pick up on one of the questions that's been upvoted via Slido where someone says, "If a deliberative process ends with a recommendation that is not accepted, how can you maintain citizens' trust in the process?" So this question again about trust. And I think that's very true, and my advice to public bodies is if you do one of these things and then you don't listen to it in any shape or form, that is much worse than having never done that thing in the first place 'cause you've just created a new set of processes for people to be cynical about. But it's also really complicated because it's very hard for elected politicians to just say, we are just going to implement every recommendation that the citizen assembly comes up with. That's not an easy thing. But I do think any of these processes, there has to be at least a commitment from the body that commissions it to receive the report and give a very clear account of why or why not its recommendations have been implemented. And I would ideally, I think like councils and governments to say, go even further and say we promised to implement at least 50 or 80% of this report or whatever, something that realistically retains a bit of wiggle room, at least in the short term at least until these things are really part of the furniture. And then maybe then we get to a place where people can say, yep, no, whatever this thing comes up with, we will go with it. But in the short term that's a complex.

- I sense a couple of comments. I'd like to invite Eva up onto the stage. And whilst Eva makes a way up, if Eva's over there, maybe grab two comments.



- We can look to vTaiwan for insight here. So vTaiwan is a platform they set up 10 years ago as a way of the government, although it's run independently, doing a much better job engaging with people and seeing what they want. They agree, end up achieving and delivering 80% of what's recommended, unlike the OECD average 'cause the OECD average for all of the research that they've done, says only 55% of what goes through democratic processes get implemented, right?

- Yeah, yeah, sure.

- But look, what Auckland should do is rather than just sit in the room and design it ourself, look at what vTaiwan's done. That's a terrific model. Been going 10 years and there's things we could adapt, I think, for Auckland.

- Fantastic. So Eva Chen, and just a little introduction to embarrass you as you jump on here. Eva, originally from Taiwan, moved to Aotearoa New Zealand at 17 to pursue your studies, 1.5 generation migrant and dedicated over a decade to community work. And that community work I understand serves as this grounding force connecting you with migrants and refugees. And we've talked a little bit about, earlier on while Max talked about why this is so important to get that diversity of voices. So you have a question that you've prepared, you may want to ask that one or surprise the panel, up to you.

- Okay. Before I start, are you talking about the Taiwan that I'm coming from? Anyone else from Taiwan here? No, my question is, as you would've noticed that or already know more than I do is that Auckland is the most diverse city in New Zealand and the diversity has been increasing over the years. But what happens is, even though we have this local board members increasingly being diverse over the years, we don't actually have elected councillor representing us. In saying us I mean Asian migrants, refugees, that we don't have our voice on the table. And that also brings the concern of how can our needs being prioritised when those politicians making their decisions other than the... And it's a chicken and egg issue as well. When we can't see our people, we don't come out and vote, then we have less of our people representing ourselves. Do you have any suggestions or any solutions or anything that we can help around this?

- I think that we've been asking this question a long time and the current council, it's getting increasingly diverse, but I think for your average Aucklander, it doesn't begin to represent who Auckland is around the table. And this is where I think we need to make that really interesting transfer of decision making from all being about we've got our local boards, but let's face it, I'm right, aren't I Desley? The big policy decisions and the big financial decisions happen around the big table. The boards to a greater or lesser degree are not necessarily always given the chance to do that. So the governing body does need to be more representative. But by utilising Citizens' Assemblies or participatory budgeting, it does give far more opportunity for those diverse communities to participate in a way that genuinely represents the numbers and where they fit within the community. And as we were talking about before we started this evening, it's not all about those people bringing themselves



within that culture or that part of the community they represent to the table. It's about bringing that system of thinking, that lived experience and who they are and how they participate and that assembly. So that for me is probably one of the most key answers because Auckland being one of the most diverse or possibly the most diverse city in the world, democracy at the risk of repeating myself, does not serve the level of diversity that we have.

- Yep, I'll second what Penny said, and when we form a Citizens' Assembly, it's really purposeful to consider the important demographics of the city. And it is really obvious when you get the groups in the room that they look like Auckland. And it's a bit surprising and people are surprised to be able to have that opportunity to be in these groups that are so mixed and diverse and hearing different perspectives every time people come out of these forums really enjoying the experience and saying, "Wow, we haven't had this opportunity." And we also do a lot of work to reach out to communities that don't normally engage for whatever reason, because they don't see themselves represented or there's other reasons, structural or other that they don't typically engage in consultations and have a voice because they feel like it's not going to be heard. So that's a specific like goal that you reach for.

- And I think we were just talking, Eva actually your question enlisted a lot of conversation before we even jumped on the panel about the importance of these mechanisms. I mean, as current and hopefully future politicians need to recognise that they hold a worldview and that's important and that's valid. But in making decisions, how do you better understand other worldviews and understand that the way that you've come up or the frame or the lens that you have on an issue, you need to think broadly around that and how deliberative methods can help underpin that and think about that.

- My next thing is that is probably one of my favourite phrase now, is that we are now elected people, we have local board councillors or MPs talking about reach out to the hard to reach people. You guys didn't realise that you are the hard to reach people for us. And that's the thing that I think that deliberative democracy need to actually really work on it. We are trying to be reached but we don't have the opportunity.

- Yeah, thank you Eva.

- Yeah, and the other thing is that, like I put in the question is local board councillor, central government whatsoever, it's a big monster for us. Not all of us have the same system. We have to navigate through that. Being born and raised in Taiwan, I know a bit, but New Zealand is a totally different, not to mention about refugees in other countries, that they don't have the system in place. So expecting to have deliberative conversation democracy is asking kindergarten kids to do a university assignment. So how do you try to walk around that.

- We need you to help is a short answer. I lived in Singapore for a few years and as I'm sure most of you know, it's a Chinese majority in the same way that New Zealand is Pakeha majority, but it has Indian and Muslim constituents and others. But those are part of the



constitution. And the Chinese majority would go out and consult all the time and ask everyone and wonder why they were just hearing so little from particularly the Muslim and Indian communities. And what they learned was using technology actually 'cause they were triaging WeChat and they were triaging some of the social tools. They could see the intel. And what they learned was they had to actually get people from the community leading that. And look, I was part of a local board for a period and we know that diversity is the priority, but the people who are leading the diverse conversations are often the least diverse people. And the way to build your aspiration of having more ethnic diverse councillors is actually find these leaders in the community like you and actually probably employ you or give you some money 'cause that's probably going to be part of the deal too, to get you to come and lead that sort of an engagement to change the way that we do it because part of the reason that it's not happening is 'cause we don't do a good job. We don't know what we're doing.

- Awesome. Hey, thank you Eva. That was a great question.

- Thank you.

- Really good conversation.

- A little bit of a applause for Eva. And actually the the points, Eva you raised just there at the end really nicely dovetail with a couple of questions. The two at the top of this, which talk about time. So Anne, you were talking about time and the investment required to build trust within the communities to educate and so on. So there's two kind of similar questions where we talk about a, the time for people like Eva who are participating in this, how do we make sure that they do have time? Maybe it's the compensation side, but there's also home life that people live with, and we know that there's gender privilege in terms of who can have time in the evenings to participate. So how do we make sure that people can afford the time and effort to participate? And the flip of that, the question prior to that is from a financial perspective these processes cost money, there's investment required. We are in a challenging economic climate. So there's a dovetail there, the time of the participants, but also the investment in these processes. But maybe we hit the people first 'cause obviously you're talking a little about that time.

- Yeah, we really work on that. I mean, it's important to compensate people for their time, but people might need help with childcare, ways to get to the venue. All of that is taken into consideration so that there we just lower those barriers to entry into the conversation and really, I mean every one of our fora that we do, we have a research assistant who calls everyone on the phone and has a conversation with them and tells them what the process is going to be and how can we help you to participate? Because what we do is send out thousands of invitations asking for people to register their interest and then do a random selection so that the demographics do match the community that we're interested in. And then those people that are selected get phone call and say, you've been selected, you've won the lottery, here can do this, and how can we help you come in and be part of this conversation?



- Fantastic. So lowering those barriers is really critical, understanding that context.

- Yeah, look, I mean, I would completely agree with that. And just on the question about the cost of running these processes. I mean, yes, they can be expensive upfront, but there's nothing more expensive than making the wrong decision quickly than having to undo it. An example from Wellington in my local area is the council, without consulting anyone decided that a bunch of car parks weren't needed. And this wasn't anything to do with cyclers or anything like that. It was just a random decision and sort of basically removed them. And then there was this massive up cry and the community explained why this car parks were actually quite important. And so the council had to come in and basically repaint them again and all that. Very small amounts of money involved really, but it tells you the inefficiency of not talking to people up front. And I think we also need to see these processes and the money we invest in the democratic process generally as infrastructure. And we in Wellington have learned something about what happens when you don't invest in your infrastructure and it is that you get sewerage running in your streets. Similarly, democratic processes, running elections, supporting councillors, supporting the mayor, running citizens assemblies and participatory budgeting. Yes, it costs money but it's infrastructure. You have to invest in it. We have some real problems as Penny's been pointing out with things being a bit broken and a bit crumbling. Things are only going to get worse if people get less and less engaged and we don't evolve democracy. That is an investment in infrastructure that we absolutely need to make.

- Fantastic. I'm going to invite Zaprina to come up onto the stage and ask her question, but you hit upon a great point as Zaprina comes up where, and I don't know if you remember Penny, well, we used to talk a little bit about how cities and councils have become evolved over time to be very focused on physical infrastructure. We build pipes and we build roads or repair roads and all that kind of stuff, and has lost sight of that criticality of non-physical infrastructure, be that social, be that community, be that governance and participation, all that kind of stuff. And I think that's something we need to address in the what is the remit of local government, which is kind of your experience with the local government review would be fascinating, right? Zeprina sorry, that's terrible. Zeprina Fale is Samoan and holds this oratory chief title. And I would love you to express. from the village of Eva in Savai and traditionally a title bestowed upon men. So really interesting.

- It's got nothing to do with my manly features.

- So you're a Pacifica engagement consultant, social research evaluator director at BlueSpur, and I would really invite you to ask your question or any other question you might have on the panel.

- Alright, thank you very much. I value the attention given to deliberative democracy today, particularly as it aligns with longstanding practises in my country, Samoa. In our traditional



framework for decision making, community concerns are deliberated and decisions are then negotiated until a consensus is reached. The principle of Yamoā Letua underscores the importance of careful consideration before making decisions with negotiations persisting until a consensus is reached, ensuring widespread agreement and commitment to the outcome. In our framework, deliberative democracy hinges on decisions grounded in consensus. Now I believe here we could do that at lower levels, but when it comes up to the governing body, it's usually a majority vote. Regarding the integration of deliberative democracy within the current legislative framework and policies governing council engagement practises, I am keen to hear your views as to how this process can be effectively incorporated given the current settings and whether decisions can be based on consensus rather than majority rule.

- Well, I think we have a lot to learn from Pacific communities and we've always said in our work, we also have a lot to learn from Maori ways of deliberation. The question about how this goes up to the higher level of decision making it really depends on what the question is. We haven't tried to do this on a national level. It's easier to look at a local issue potentially where the governing body is going to, it depends on the remit and it's this very important to set out, as we say, if you've set out a question and a remit to ask that group of citizens that you're not prepared to then implement it will fall apart. I'm not sure I'm fully answering your question about, I mean I think the processes can work, as you've said, and come to a consensus. It's whether what types of questions you use them for and who the decision makers are, whether they're actually going to empower that group to make those decisions.

- I'm really interested, I thought it was such an interesting question. So there's two bits. I'd just like to address one of the practical bits first and that's the kind of legal issues that bind councils into the way that they do consultation. I just had the huge privilege of spending a year and a bit working on the review of local government and one of our key recommendations in here is that those rules and regulations be reviewed because to be quite honest, councils need to be able to consult in ways that work for them and their community and some of the hide bound way that that's required to be done no longer serves a useful purpose. So I think that's an important point. On the issue of consensus. And there's far better brains than mine. I think it might be a bit of an and. I think we sometimes consensus can't be reached and some people are stilled going into the corner and being told to shush. Now we've had enough of a say and I'm not always convinced that consensus is the right way for highly complex issues. I was reading Ireland has some fantastic history with these citizens assemblies and for the Irish decision on women's reproductive rights, the decision that was made in Ireland was quite extraordinary. For anyone who understands Irish history, the decision that the citizens assembly came up with, I think it was 66 to 34 in favour of women's rights to have abortion. And it was thought at the time that that was a very liberal room when it then went out to the citizenry of Ireland, the percentage decisions were 66% in favour, 34 against. So the room absolutely reflected what Ireland really wanted. Now if consensus had been required, I don't know if that would've worked. So I'm a huge consensus builder. In fact, I think I drove my colleagues insane and was often accused of, well that woman never stopped talking because I would constantly drive for consensus. Sometimes consensus can drive decisions that aren't necessarily the best. So I think there's room for it, but I don't know if it's an always, but I'm sure Anne and Max have far more experience.



- Well, I would say, and not all of our processes that we do are necessarily consensus processes. The Watercare one was, but the consensus isn't. And I was really interested in your question too, and I wondered if you meant that everyone is in agreement because I don't think you're ever going to expect that in a really diverse community. And we didn't but for the recommendations to Watercare and it wasn't just the main one, which was about what the source was going to be and we recommend direct recycled wastewater, there were other recommendations under that. But for all of them, the wording had to be agreed by the group and everyone had, I think Max used the term people need to at least be able to live with those decisions. It might not be their favourite, but they need to at least most people. And our rules were that we had to have 80% of that group at least live with it. There were other stages they could like it or they could love it. We had to have 80% of the room at least living with it. And in the end everyone moved. So we did have a consensus on the main recommendation we had, but we allowed for minority reports. Minority voices, and they came into the report. So that's not lost. If people really had a dissenting view and had something that they thought was really important, it wasn't just one person. They had to have a couple of people agree to write a minority report and so those other voices weren't lost. But the decisions were on that consensus basis.

- Yeah, because there's a point here, I don't know Max you you look prepped to contribute as well. But there's a point here and I think you raised it and generally in the work that I do around sustainability, the key thing is how can you get people to understand the rationale behind the position. And that's often what you don't get in a conventional forum or even around a governing body table is that you don't get that. So why is that your point of view? Do I understand why? To your point, can I live with that? Do I understand at least why you've come with that view? And we don't have for that we can do that. And that's where we get, and I mentioned kind of the division and the lack of cohesion because we don't take the time to understand why people sit with that point of view. And that's a really important part of this process, right?

- Absolutely. I think that's really the key to the deliberation part, is providing a rationale for your point of view and you try to do that and we encourage people to do that in ways that other people might accept or change their mind about it doesn't always happen, but the people then at least understand where the differences are coming from and can usually at least live with those decisions.

- Thank you for sharing. I guess in that I'm trying to explain the context of deliberative democracy in our country and how, if you are starting the conversation around that, that is how it could be perceived by our community. So I think it's important for us to really understand what it is that we mean when we talk about such very interesting topics. I have one more question and I'm really glad that we are talking about this because to me I think deliberative democracy cannot exist on its own given the limitations that we all know legally, policy-wise and whatnot. And a lot of things need to shift if we are to genuinely wanting to go down this pathway. So I guess my next question really is how serious are we about this? Or is it just going to be another phase that we talk about and then one, six months down the



line, another new interesting concept comes that for us as community, we are quite cynical about it. It's like, it's just old terms being reworded, but how serious are you in pursuing this? And by that we mean we need to change a whole lot of the legal and policies around it so that we could open up the platform and really have genuine conversations.

- Can I start with that? Thank you for the passion of your question. I think that was a great summary really of a lot of the reasons why we are here. I want slightly push back and say the we starts with you. I mean we are all in this, right? So this is not an LTP kind of hearings process where you're encouraging us to tick the box for the funding that we're not even there. Although of course, because you've got two days to go, is it Desley until consultations close? You could leave this and just add something about funding this. I mean we are the ones who've driven this. And in the work that I've done looking at cities around the world that have moved this thing forward, it's less commonly come from the mayor who said, "My goodness mate, we've got to deliberate more on democracy." It's more commonly come from activists, it's come from people within communities who've said, "I think there's a better way of doing this." And it's often been positively suggested, right? Not as a negative thing. So rather than look to us and there is in fact no us here as well. I just want to push back and encourage you with clearly the power and kind of sense of purpose that you have to use the resources and voice, you and your colleagues and others have to pursue this too.

- And I think we've been saying it for a long time, but it hasn't been actioned. And I think that's why we are asking how serious are we all? And so we as a community, we would love to have the conversations, but then if you give it a month to talk about it highly complex things and expect Joe block on the street to understand all that techy work, it is difficult. So I just want to put that here and be very open and frank about it, that if we're going to go down this path, there shall be no retreats, no surrender.

- Brilliant.

- We're we're sick of trying things and move on to the next phase. That's all I wanted to say.

- Awesome. Thank you so much.

- No, thank you Zeprina. A fantastic question. I'm going to invite Chloe to come up on stage as well 'cause we have one last guest and I really want to get to Chloe's question as well. But Zeprina, that is a fantastic challenge and fellow thrown down and I will say, and this is not just my previous council hat on, but I was super excited when I saw that this year's long-term plan would have elements of deliberative bureaucracy put in place and that there was this conversation going on. And if I think back to two, three years ago when we were last in an LTP, the fact that that wasn't even part of the discussion and now we are, I think we're moving, I would 100% toko your comment that we in this room probably, I'm guessing because we are here, we have seen the word deliberative. We are already engaged, we already hear about it. There are many not here that don't. And so this is actually part of the



reason why the team wanted to bring in Auckland Conversations was to try and educate a little bit more about what is this thing, it sounds really interesting, can we learn more? So I think that's a really important thing that we want to do. And that I'm not still at council, but I think, and I'm inferring from this conversation being that that's an attempt to step into this space.

- Before we go to our wonderful speaker, I just really want to acknowledge that challenge and to say that council I think has really listening ears at the moment, councillors around that council table and it's been a few years since I've been there now, but council is rapidly losing its social licence to increase rates, to ask for difficult things from Aucklanders to deal with complex issues like climate change, making way for water, all of those sort of things. Most elected members will be looking for something to reengage with Aucklanders and it's through this that they will. So we are no longer decision makers. I don't have any role in this at all. But I think it's time to be activists. It's time to actually talk to your elected members to meet with your local board, to meet with your counsellors and say the current processes are not working for us. Good try and thank you to the LTP team for the sterling effort, but it's not enough and it costs a shed load of money. Let's actually spend that money doing processes that absolutely works. So Kyoran and thank you for the challenge, I think it should be taken up.

- Thanks Penny. So Chloe. Chloe Yip who is General Manager of Auckland Youth Voice, a charity that supports and connects Rangata here across Tamaki Makaurau and volunteer in the local voice youth groups. Passionate about empowering youth, which is fantastic to read and make positive changes in their communities and work to make feedback and consultative processes more accessible to young people. So Chloe invite you to ask a question.

- Kiora, everyone. So according to the governance manual of Auckland Council at 4.1, 0.3, I believe the mayor has a role to effectively engage with all people of Auckland. And that includes people who are too young to vote. And now in terms for barriers for young people to participate, firstly, most young people don't understand how the system works, right? They don't understand Auckland Council does. Only really engage young people like myself and others who are more working in this space understands, local boards, councillors, how decisions get made. But I talk to a lot of young people and they don't even know what Auckland Council does. Another barrier is that even when we do and even when we voice our opinions, we aren't often taken seriously. We get dismissed for the lack of real world experiences. But actually, even though we are young and perhaps we aren't really contributing to our country in terms of economic or GDP wise, we are still citizens in our own rights and we experience Tamaki Makaurau different. So just want to know how can we use deliberative democracy practises to address these two barriers and ensure that young people are effectively engaged and also well represented in the decision making process.

- Kiora Chloe.

- Yeah, well, thank you Chloe. Fantastic question. Slightly aside to deliberative democracy, I mean one thing I would say is voting, make it 16. That would be a big thing for me. On the



deliberative, I mean also I think just generally, I think what you question is, is pointing to is the fact that government needs to change the way it does things and again, that's a bit beyond just deliberative democracy. I mean some of the better sort of engagement, even consultation processes that I've seen have just taken the simple step of going out and trying to find people where they are. So just going out and putting your consultation booth or whatever sitting down in the local shopping mall or something places or the sports club or the school or whatever places where people already are rather than expecting people to go to where the council is. And I think that's valid for important for all different sort of groups. But I suspect particularly for the young people you're talking about. final thought on the deliberative processes specifically, there's a particular set of them that they use in Japan and they're called something equivalent to forums for the future. And so they're bringing together representative groups of Japanese people to think about long-term issues in particular. And what in those forums are sampled to be very representative of the Japanese population, but they deliberately have an overrepresentation of younger groups because those are the people who are going to have to live longer with the decisions that are taken. And I think finally just that takes you towards the respect point, I think which he raised and which sort of underlies a lot of this. And I think we just need to recognise that everyone's got an important role to play. There's a very important role for older people because there's the knowledge and the accumulated wisdom that comes with experience, but there's also for youth, there's the fresh perspective. There's the energy and there is that fact of having to live for a very long time with the decisions that we make. And I just think that needs to be respected.

- You bring to my mind, when I was on the local board with Desley, I was the youngest member of my local board only just, and I went along, maybe I was delegated to go along to the youth advisory panel, which is one of the council we used to call them demographic panels, effectively representing those people who weren't elected ironically. And I went along to have a look and these poor people were in the old council building where we are now, the old council building in the huge big formal room. And there was 15 of them. And I thought to myself, my godfather look, it was someone's attempt to do the right thing and to engage people and perhaps put them in the formal big room. It was a room where the council formally met. But I thought to myself, if I was a young person, and of course no one was speaking 'cause they all felt constrained by the environment and I thought, "Wow, we're a million miles away all the good intentions but a million miles away." And actually we actually had people there who could help, but the environment we're putting them in puts them off helping. A better version of that was local boards had to have a young person, Desley, didn't we? I don't know whether it was a choice or it was compulsory, but local boards chose to effectively bring in a youth member of their local boards and look some did better jobs than others. But I thought that was a great example. You've got an ossified kind of Westminster system, which you're trying to tack on fixes to. And this was a great way of effectively bringing a person on. And some local boards started treating them almost like local board members. And that was a much more dynamic way of actually changing and making a difference. So look, I don't know if that answers your question 'cause it's a really big one, but what you don't want to do is put them in the flash room with big tables and all that kind of stuff. Big feed at the back. What you do want to do more of is connect them to the existing sort of governance processes and have the change come from that kind of engagement.



- Yeah, awesome. Just with things like the youth advisory panel members or young people that are informally on local boards, they are also still young people that are already engaged and interested in these topics. How do we reach the young people who are just trying to live their life still affected by decisions made by the city, but how do we reach them? And my other last question is that the definition of youth at least in Tamaki Matarau is from 12 to 24, so I'm actually getting close to the other side. But how do we reach the young people that are 12, 13 years old? I'm not sure if citizen assemblies or similar processes are actually able to accommodate them in terms of their experiences and their understanding. How do we make it more accessible for 12 to 18 year olds?

- I think we can start by listening when our young people do express themselves and the climate change marches are, for me absolutely key. There's a few people shaking their heads, but the climate change marches are absolutely where our young people have expressed their views. They're the ones who are going to need to deal with this, pay for this, cope with this. And I think we need to absolutely listen, our young people have spoken and it's absolutely critical that climate change be taken seriously and supported. At the other end of the spectrum around council tables we aren't going to change things quickly, but I've become increasingly interested in the concept of moukopupuna decision making, where there's a requirement that council needs to take into consideration the impact of decisions made three, four, five generations ahead. We can't simply make decisions that are stuck with the now and unfortunately that is how we make decisions because it's grey head people like me who vote, it's grey head people like me who turn up and do submissions and it's grey head people like me who fund campaigns and do that sort of thing. So bless us grey head people, we've done really, really well. We now need to make sure that we put our arms around our young people and find every opportunity for them to have a say. The final thing though is we can bore our young people to death by asking them about a million things that are not relevant to them. I think we need to keep our powder dry, be really clear, concise, and ask young people what we want done and then do it.

- I think that's a fantastic place to end tonight's conversation because we are running out of time. But it's a really important call that we need to not just wait for deliberative processes. We can do this now. And thank you very much Chloe, for raising that challenge to us. With that and apologies for the minor interlude we had. It is just verging on half past. So I have run slightly over. I'd love to invite Deputy Mayor Desley Simpson, sorry, Desley, to provide a bit of a vote of thanks and some closing remarks.

- . Thank you, what a night. We won't forget it for a lot of reasons, I think least of all the topic. But I just want to say, whilst we all went outside for a fire alarm, what has happened inside has been a spark of something really exciting. I think potentially that little spark has begun to grow in a number of conversations, a number of ways that we have changed the way we have looked at the democratic decision making and engagement. And I think that little spark will turn into a flame and that flame will get bigger and bigger and hotter and hotter. I'm certainly feeling pretty hot feet right at the moment. Let me tell you from my perspective. I'd like to formally though thank the wonderful people who have made tonight so very special. Alec, I'll start with you sort of dejavu, isn't it? Coming back into the fold, but I just want to say, I think



you've done Rod proud tonight. So a big round of applause, please, for Alec. Thank you. To Max, look to have someone of your talent capability in the room and your keynote address I think was outstanding. I'm going to steal a little line that you said, and that is, there is no such thing as a gap between theory and practise. Just bad theory. And I'm going to remember that. So thanks for that. I also think that you've given me the real inspiration to take decisions up the ladder of participation and up the ladder of deliberation. So thank you for your contribution tonight. Ladies and gentlemen, Max Rashbrooke. To our great panel, all of whom I know really, really well. To Anne and to Mark and to the lovely Penny. Haven't they been amazing? I mean, it's just your answers and the way that you've engaged have been truly inspirational. I also want to give a special thanks to the three special guests who came and asked the questions. For me they were really, really, really special and gave us all something pretty exciting to take on board and to learn from. So put your hands together. And just finally to you and to those online, to those who are shaping the questions as they came through to the panel, thank you very much for tonight. I'd like to officially now ask Richard to come and formally close tonight's conversation. Thank you.

- Kiora everybody. How about we end our evening with a song? How's that?

- Yes.

- And to express our appreciation for Desley. So thank you very much. Okay, let's stand then. Let's sing And that karakhia was to acknowledge all of us in being here tonight. And also to give thanks to our wonderful speakers and our guests here tonight. Thank you very much. Have a safe journey home.

