

## ***Democracy***

Voting for one of two main parties every three years is not democracy. Our current political structures disenfranchise those with limited social and economic standing. The divide between the halls of parliament and the community is widening, with a greater weight of decisions going in favour of powerful lobby groups. Can we move from a central hierarchy to horizontal and bottom up processes powered by the community? Can we participate in a democracy that puts community, equality, and the environment first?

True democracy requires participation. Participation requires time.

***Question: How can we form active participatory measures to govern ourselves?***

### **Assets**

ACT

- Gender parity.
- Diverse, multi-party assembly.
- Member electorates + Robson rotation.
- Accessibility to our elected representatives is pretty good.
- Some accountability.
- Diversity of civil society.
- Free (but corporate media).
- Some people feel they have power to get involved.
- Democracy is good, then basic institutions can be built

### **Ideas**

- Make it easier for independents to be elected.
- Modify electoral system.
- Reform political party donations.
- Community determines/ decides, and documents the role of elected representatives.
- Community to decide a 'profligacy ceiling' and a 'dignity floor', helping to hold governments to account.
- How do we stoke peoples passions to generate enough discourse to make politicians self-regulate, or be regulated.
- A media for the media, to hold the MSM to account.
- YouTube 'Beat the Drum' calling out the limitation of the debate.

- Need more independent media to push the limitations of the scope of the traditional media debate.
- Participatory democracy, where ordinary citizens and electorate vote on individual policies.
- Build awareness of strength of democracy, protect and improve upon it
- Take personal responsibility, eg scrutinise what is done with our money and with our vote
- Divestment
- Be wary of identity politics – becoming a highly fragmented society
- Start local, work locally, start building our local democracy (needs to happen anyway due to system collapse with climate change, build resilience)
- Make it possible for independents to be elected
- Hare Clarke not working as intended
- Transparent and genuine public consultation system
- Engineer ways where all sides must talk – come up with consensus, because partisanship is killing our democracy
- Do something about political donations, plus social influence of vested interests
- Give citizens meaningful and fair input into policy making through citizen juries/ panels
- Create new drivers that drive progressive change
- People powered government
- More women in leadership roles
- Citizen's juries
- Community participation, more opportunities for participatory democracy
- Creation of time

### **Problems**

- People feel disengaged and not properly represented – have then bought the neoliberal line that materialism matters and government doesn't
- Ignorance of where our systems and institutions come from (educate)
- Blame of elites 'the other'
- Drivers of change: corporations, blame goes elsewhere, inequality, accrue wealth; small government rhetoric; encouragement of citizens to see themselves as consumers
- Encouraging disengagement
- Media doesn't provide information, it sells products

### **Implementation**

- Build a social movement that demands change in how democracy works (ideas).
- Early adaptors need to be very clear what they are advocating for.
- Climate change has galvanised people because:
  - It effects young people and future generations more.
  - Evidence of impact is becoming clear to people.
  - Change is coming regardless, people will have to change the way they live, and jobs will have to change.
  - Impact is big, and dangerous.
  - 'Target' for needed change is clearly defined and measurable.

So, to implement democratic change/ create demand for change, we need to find the preconditions that will make people demand change (and not just grizzle about how democracy is not working).

#### Federal

- Universal suffrage
- Six year senate terms
- Parliamentary democracy