

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2021

End of Term Report

Commitment 1: Engagement with Parliament

Lead agencies: Office of the Clerk and Parliamentary Service

Objective: To improve public understanding of how Parliament works and engage a greater number of people with its work.

Ambition: People will be able to access information about how Parliament works more easily and more people will engage with Parliament and have their say.

OGP values: Transparency, Public Participation, Technology and Innovation

What we achieved: Creation and delivery of new resources and events to connect people to Parliament, establishment of ongoing relationships with key stakeholders, and utilising new technologies to reach audiences in different ways. The launch of a new edition of the Parliament Engagement Strategy (2021 – 2024) with five focus areas to increase public engagement and participation.

Summary

Milestones		Progress
1	Expand the range of information and resources on Parliament channels (television, website, and social media), to support and encourage uptake of this content by targeted audiences (e.g. teachers and students, new New Zealanders, Māori, Pasifika and other community groups) and educate on participation in our democracy. -delivery of eight video pieces -creation of educational resources for the classroom Viewer numbers will be monitored quarterly. <i>Start/End dates: June 2018/June 2021</i>	
2	Build the connection between Parliament and New Zealanders by taking Parliament to the people, and raising awareness that Parliament is for everyone, by hosting five events both in and outside of Wellington and digitally. <i>Start/End dates: December 2018/June 2021</i>	
3	Develop and publish new content each quarter showcasing Parliament's connection between individuals and communities, to make the options for participation transparent and easy to understand how to participate in the democratic process. <i>Start/End dates: June 2018/June 2021</i>	
4	Develop virtual and augmented reality experiences for people to learn and experience Parliament. <i>Start/End dates: June 2018/June 2021</i>	

Progress key:



some delays



underway



completed

What we achieved

Milestone 1

Over the course of NAP 3, we saw an expansion of engagement initiatives to support people accessing information about how Parliament works and having their say.

We created new video series to help engage people with Parliament, including *Looking Back: Snapshots from New Zealand's Past* and *Taonga of Parliament*. Our award-winning short documentary *Rainbow Voices* explored the stories of those who fought for significant legislative change, while *Wāhine o te Pāremata* followed past and present woman parliamentarians speaking about the challenges they faced. These and other video pieces produced over the course of the plan can be found on Parliament on Demand, the home of Parliament's video content that was launched in February 2020.

A series of new educational resources were created for different levels of the New Zealand curriculum:

- Level 4/5 XR Headset resource – resource to accompany the Parliament XR app
- Level 6/7 Social Actions resource. Designed for senior secondary students wishing to undertake social actions connected to Parliament.
- ESOL workbook
- Level 3-5: Create a Parliament digital tool
- Level 4/5 Democracy's response in a crisis – focussed on the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2020 the nationwide lockdown to due Covid-19 (and subsequent halt to kanohi-to-kanohi events) resulted in the creation and delivery of a series of webinars about Parliament on many topics relating to parliament such as making a submission to a select committee, petitions, the life cycle of a parliament, the executive and cabinet and Maori electorates and the Maori electoral roll.

The unprecedented situation of the Covid 19 lockdown also led to the creation of the Epidemic Response Committee. This was the first committee to meet and have its meetings shared in an online forum. Research from Colmar Brunton showed the improved awareness of select committees that was generated. All the ERC committee content disappeared from the select committee pages at the end of the 52nd Parliament, and we created a new home for it in the History & Buildings and Special Topics areas of the website for posterity.

The utilisation of online delivery has continued more recently, with the Parliamentary Engagement team using the Education Perfect Learning Management System to develop 3 lessons online – Overview of Parliament, The Debating Chamber and Select Committees, and the role of the media (launching July 2021). Using this platform allows for greater reach into schools as this is a platform many schools familiar with.

Milestone 2

The Speaker's Outreach programme, launch in September 2018, has seen Parliament travel around the country to thirteen different locations and 34 educational institutions and community groups. At the commencement of the Speaker's Outreach programme, Mr Speaker said "Communities are at the heart of our country and we want everybody in every community to know they have a voice at Parliament. Launching this outreach programme is a way to show people that Parliament belongs to them."

In 2021 a new outreach programme of events was launched – there have been two Select Committee Outreaches: one in Wellington and one on Auckland, visiting secondary schools with MP's and educating about what a select committee is and how people can make submissions.

The presence of a parliament stall at various events around the country has been a successful way to engage with targeted communities. Events we have gone to so far include Pasifika Festival, Newtown Festival, Fieldays, and Festival of the Future.

Children's Day continues to be one of our key events to engage specifically with children and was held annually over the last four years (with the exception of 2020 due to Covid 19).

All of our events were profiled on our website to show Parliament connecting with people (and vice versa).

Milestone 3

In 2020 we created the Parliament Quiz – an online quiz hosted on the Parliament website, timed with specific events e.g., General Election, Anzac Day. Both quizzes so far have had substantial uptake – the first one, on the General Election, was picked up and shared by Newshub, leading to further uptake. This also acts as an information-gathering tool for our team as we can identify any common knowledge gaps and tailor future content to fill these gaps.

Our suite of 'how to' videos was added to in order to help demystify different aspects of the parliamentary process and support people's understanding of the ways they can make their voices heard in Parliament.

The General Election and the opening of the 53rd Parliament in 2020 presented an opportunity to provide information about Parliament and its processes while the public's attention was captured. The team created a website hub with content and resources which received good levels of engagement before, during, and after the General Election and opening of Parliament period, supported by good website and social media metrics.

Milestone 4

In September 2018 the Parliament XR app and the Virtual Debating Chamber were launched to provide new ways for people to visit Parliament virtually. Since the launch, updates to the Parliament XR app have included providing Te Reo Māori translations for all tours and the creation of Augmented Reality filters that allow the public to virtually explore the mace, the debating chamber and the parliamentary precinct (this was developed towards the end of NAP 3 and rolled out in July 2021).

How we included diverse voices and engaged diverse communities

A number of initiatives focused on specific communities, designed to engage with them directly and lift their voices, or to support their engagement with Parliament.

The inaugural *Change Makers at Parliament* competition received over 100 entries, and the winning entries showcased the passion and commitment mātātahi have to making positive change in New Zealand.

The creation of our short documentaries provided space for voices from different communities to share their stories. Notably, the launch of *Rainbow Voices* coincided with the re-opening of

Parliament's Rainbow Room, and subsequently has been featured at many of international LGBTQI+ film festivals.

Rito was launched to work with rangatahi in co-designing an initiative that increases youth engagement with Parliament. The inaugural cohort of Rito rangatahi (aged between 16-20) are working on their own project to raise youth awareness of, and encourage participation with, our parliamentary processes. This year the group has decided to develop a video series interviewing youth who have previously engaged with the parliamentary process. They are focussing on four areas in which this can be done – submissions, petitions, protests and visiting electorate and community offices. By telling the stories of youth who have engaged, and having youth explain these processes, the Rito members hope it will make Parliament more approachable and inspire other rangatahi to do the same.

In early 2020 a teachers' reference group was formed to provide feedback and guidance on the team's programmes, resources, and delivery, and in May 2020 we conducted a nationwide survey of teachers. 2555 schools were sent the survey link via email and it received 3373 responses from teachers. The survey allowed the team to assess the feedback of the reference group and ensure that it lined up with the preferences of the wider teacher base.

The *Ayes on Education* newsletter and Facebook page were also developed for schools during 2020 and bespoke on-site programs were developed during 2020 and delivered in 2021 in response to needs of groups and learning needs, including a programme about Social Actions for senior secondary students and also an ESOL programme.

A Parliamentary Accessibility Reference Group has also been formed, comprising of a working group of staff from across the Office of the Clerk and the Parliamentary Service and a reference group whose members have lived experience of disability. The group had its inaugural meeting in June 2021.

In 2021 we were keen to enhance our connection to Pasifika languages throughout the year. As a starting point, we translated three of our key public resources into the nine Pasifika languages which have a Official Language Week in New Zealand. The three resources we translated were How a Bill Become a Law, Guide to Petitions and How to make a Submission to a Select Committee.

The nine languages we translated these into are: Rotuman, Samoan, Fijian, Cook Islands Maori, Tongan, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Niuean and Tokelau.

These are displayed on our website and hard copies are available in our Education Room and Tai a Kiwa Select Committee Room. We also shared copies at the Pasifika Festival in Auckland where they were enthusiastically received by the relevant communities. As each Official Language week comes up, we do a further comms push on our social media channels.

Commitment links:

Parliament on Demand: <https://ondemand.parliament.nz/>

New educational resources were created for different levels of the New Zealand curriculum: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/educators-and-students/resources/>

Epidemic Response Committee web content archive: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/history-and-buildings/special-topics/epidemic-response-committee-covid-19-2020/>

Research on audiences for select committees: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/footer/about-us/parliamentary-engagement/engagement-research/research-on-audiences-for-select-committees-june-2020/>

Parliament webinars: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/parliament-webinars/>

Children's Day 2021: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/features/childrensdayactivities/>

Parliament Quiz: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/parliament-quiz/>

'How to' videos: <https://ondemand.parliament.nz/how-to-guides-for-nz-parliament/>

Virtual reality at Parliament: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/visit/virtual-reality-at-parliament/>

Teachers' reference group: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/educators-and-students/parliament-teachers-reference-group/>

The Ayes on Education newsletter: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/educators-and-students/ayes-on-education-newsletter/>

Ayes on Education Facebook group (within the NZ Parliament Facebook site) developed during 2020:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/2407928326164280/?ref=pages_profile_groups_tab&source_id=1352898668096852

Translated resources: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/have-your-say/guide-for-petitions/>, <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/how-parliament-works/how-laws-are-made/how-a-bill-becomes-law/>

Impacts:

In three separate pieces of research commissioned by the Office of the Clerk over the course of three years we saw evidence of increased public understanding of the role Parliament plays in their lives, and increased comfort with the idea of participating.

For some New Zealanders, the relevance of Parliament increased between 2018 and 2020 (p.29 of the 2020 research, <https://www.parliament.nz/en/footer/about-us/parliamentary-engagement/engagement-research/survey-of-the-new-zealand-public-january-2021/>). The proportion who said Parliament and the democratic processes are interesting to them had increased since 2019, while the proportion who said it has no impact on their life had declined. Fewer New Zealanders thought that getting involved takes a lot of effort, or that the process is too intimidating. However, only one-third felt they know how to engage with Parliament (p.35).

Encouragingly, New Zealanders appear to be feeling more empowered to engage with Parliament. Fewer feel that they do not have the capability as individuals to influence Parliament, or that there is no point engaging as it won't create any change. The perception that Parliament only listens to, or is heavily influenced by, groups, big business, and vocal minorities is also declining (p.37).

Four in ten New Zealanders say they have a very good or good understanding of Parliament how it works. Māori and young New Zealanders are less likely than average to feel this way (p.41). This sends a clear signal that there is still much work to do in this area.

Seventy-eight percent of New Zealanders are aware that they can create or sign a petition to Parliament, and 39 percent have done so in the past. Some who had not done these activities in the previous 12 months, but understood they could, considered doing them or helped/suggested someone else to. Fewer New Zealanders are aware that they can make a submission to a select committee compared to the other ways of engaging with Parliament. Only 11 percent of those surveyed said they had made a submission in the past. Very few people who know about the submission process helped or suggested someone else make a submission (p44-45).

What we learned:

- In particular from 2020 we learned that being proactive about how we could move online and use time to develop resources paid off in terms of keeping our engagement up with our communities. Doing things virtually can allow for engagement when physical contact/access isn't possible, and there's merit in continuing to provide a virtual offering on an ongoing basis.
- We learned through implementation of different projects that having existing connections and working relationships with different groups and people helped immensely. For example, our contact at ASSEN (Aotearoa Social Studies teachers network) is on our Teacher's Reference Group and offers invaluable advice and makes sure our work is spread to all Social Studies teachers. We also learned from the first two Select Committee Outreaches that we need to target the resources we use more to the school students involved.
- Importance of co-designing work with key stakeholders – teachers reference group, Rito, Youth Roundtable, Accessibility Reference Group
- First-person stories are powerful. Hearing people's stories in their own words provides unique insights into the role Parliament plays in people's lives.
- Young people care about what's happening in the world, and they want Parliament to do things that will result in positive change for the country.

Where to from here:

We will continue to look at the development of an online presence, for example virtual education visits that can be offered to schools who cannot come to Wellington and offer courses for teachers to develop their confidence in teaching about the role of Parliament.

It is important that we ensure that the connections set up through the Teachers Reference Group, Rito and the Accessibility Reference group continue, and that meaningful dialogue is backed up by actions. We will continue to work with our reference groups to understand the needs of various communities and codesign resources about Parliament with them.

Our library of video content continues to grow, with a short documentary planned for each year focusing on a unique element of Parliament. We will also continue to explore different formats for different audiences, such as developing ezy-read resources and resources in different languages.

We will continue to take Parliament to the people via attendance at events and visiting educational institutions around the country, and we are about to embark on a new three-year Parliamentary Engagement Strategy (2021-2023).

2021 Research highlighted key areas to focus on to lift advocacy for Parliament even further (p.23):

- 1) A key way to lift advocacy for Parliament is to make it easier to engage with. This can be done by teaching people how to engage, reducing the amount of effort it takes to get involved, and to ensure that MPs are approachable.
- 2) Increase perceptions that Parliament is 'by the people, for the people' Increasing public investment in Parliament will also uplift advocacy. This involves helping people feel a sense of ownership, connected to Parliament, and that their voice holds influence. Additionally, helping the public feel that Parliament is for them will also increase this investment – help them feel represented, reduce associations with conflict, and highlight where MPs are working together towards a common goal.