2026

A Blueprint for a Stronger New Zealand Aotearoa

Part 1. Governance, Power and Decision-Making

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Author's Caveat

This work presents the author's research, analysis, observations and opinions about governance, systems, sovereignty, public policy and New Zealand's future.

It is not a statement on behalf of any political party, government agency, legal, medical, financial or professional body. It is not legal, medical, financial, political or other professional advice, and should not be relied upon as such.

The purpose of this work is to encourage systems-based thinking, informed discussion and public participation. Readers are encouraged to consider the ideas critically, undertake their own research, seek appropriate professional advice where required, and form their own informed views.

Views and proposals may evolve as further evidence, feedback and public discussion emerge.

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A Personal Introduction

Democracies remain strong when citizens care enough to understand, question, and improve the institutions that shape their future.

Imagine if New Zealand had a governance system that gave people vision, confidence, and even excitement about the future. Too many people are carrying uncertainty about what lies ahead for their children and grandchildren: whether they will be able to afford a home, find meaningful work, access good public services, live safely, and remain connected to strong communities.
It does not have to be this way.

We can change the future by changing the systems through which we make decisions. The pathway forward can be lawful, calm, deliberate, and democratic. It begins with creating a shared vision for the country we want, then examining the laws, institutions, incentives, and structures that may no longer be serving that vision.

In New Zealand, Parliament remains legally sovereign. In practical terms, this means Parliament can create, amend, or repeal most laws, and the courts cannot invalidate legislation passed by Parliament. This places significant power in the hands of the government of the day, particularly when it has the numbers to pass legislation through the House.

New Zealand is a parliamentary democracy, but it does not have a single supreme constitutional document that sits above Parliament and protects fundamental rights from ordinary legislative change. For many generations, this arrangement has relied heavily on trust, convention, restraint, and the expectation that those in power will act in the long-term interests of the country. Yet society has become more complex, more interconnected, and more exposed to concentrated economic influence and international pressures.
Trust alone is no longer enough.
Clarity matters.
Structure matters.
Intergenerational protection matters.

Every nation is shaped by the institutions through which it governs itself. Those structures determine how decisions are made, how public money is spent, how assets are protected, and whose voices are heard.

This Blueprint explains how New Zealand's current governance systems operate, where they may be failing to serve people well, and how they could be redesigned.

When power is clearly defined, it becomes safer.
When rights are structurally embedded, they become more durable.
When governance is transparent, trust has room to grow.

Constitutional sovereignty means that the rights and dignity of people are protected regardless of who they are: a farmer, business owner, parent, retiree, worker, student, entrepreneur, job seeker, or community volunteer. It means that the long-term wellbeing of New Zealand is not subordinated to short-term political, offshore, or private interests.

It asks us to imagine a country where:

- New Zealanders share a commitment to fairness, responsibility, opportunity, and care for one another.
- Rights are protected and upheld in practice, not simply stated in principle.
- Current and future generations can live free from violence, exploitation, unnecessary hardship, and the effects of short-term decision-making.
- Effort, contribution, accountability, and community responsibility are recognised and valued.
- Governance decisions are made for the wider and long-term public good, rather than narrow or temporary advantage.
- The natural environment is treated as a foundation for life, prosperity, and future generations, rather than something to be traded away for short-term gain.
- Differences can be debated respectfully, without allowing division to become a tool of power.
- Progress, contribution, innovation, and achievement are recognised as part of building a stronger country.

This Blueprint does not argue that democracy has failed. Rather, it asks whether New Zealand's current democratic structures are strong enough, transparent enough, and sufficiently protected for the future we want to create.

Instead of searching endlessly for better politicians or purer politics, it asks a simpler question:

What would democracy look like if we could redesign the system for the country we actually want to live in?

This Blueprint shows how New Zealand's governance systems currently operate and how thoughtful institutional design, transparent decision-making, stronger constitutional safeguards, and more locally grounded leadership could support a more

Democracies remain strong when their citizens care enough to improve the institutions that shape their future. Do You Care Enough?

Definitions

Sovereignty means that all decisions are made based on what's best for NZ and its future. Not an overseas conglomerate, not a specific community grouping, etc. It means that the rightful place for decision-making, resource management, and financial reserves is in NZ and remains under NZ control.

Financial sovereignty

Financial sovereignty means a country has enough control over its own money, banking, savings, and investment systems to make decisions in its own long-term interests — without being overly dependent on overseas lenders, corporations, or financial shocks.

Machinery of government refers to the systems (policies/laws), processes (how things are done), and structures (parliament, cabinet and agencies) that run the government.

Decentralisation means moving money (tax and revenue), ownership of resources (e.g., utilities), and control of assets from the centre (government) out to the regions.

Devolution means to move decision-making **and** responsibility for those decisions out to the regions and the people.
3 Tier Governance means a central group of 16 regional representatives making very few National decisions, while almost 80% of decisions are made by the Regions.
The Goal of Continuity
The goal is not rupture. It is clarity. A system that:
- defines authority clearly
- distributes responsibility wisely
- embeds accountability visibly
- protects rights consistently

So get excited, there is a way this can happen!!

This is a call to action, to learn, to understand, to share ideas, and to know what we need to do to make this work. It will require a new level of faith and trust, changing the way you think about the system.
It sets the scene for our younger generations to pave the way and lead this forward. We have to start the wave of change and consciousness and keep passing the baton to our Youth until we and they have the type of country (and world) we want.

About the Author
Dr Wendy Gillespie has spent her career working across governance, organisational performance, public services, community development, and social-sector leadership.

Her experience spans not-for-profit organisations, central government, local government, community services, and Kaupapa Māori organisations. Across these settings, she has worked in leadership, change management, planning, investment, evaluation, service design, performance improvement, and organisational development roles.

Wendy has worked alongside frontline staff, communities, senior leaders, government agencies, regional organisations, and service providers. This has given her practical insight into the difference between policy as it is written and the reality of how systems are experienced by the people expected to deliver or rely on them.

Her work has included designing and implementing strategic and operational plans, developing performance and dashboard reporting, conducting reviews and evaluations, improving accountability systems, and supporting organisations through significant change. She is particularly interested in how systems influence behaviour, how decisions move through institutions, and how better design can improve outcomes for people and communities.

Having worked both inside and alongside government, Wendy brings an independent systems perspective to the challenges facing Aotearoa New Zealand. She has seen the strengths that exist within public institutions, as well as the effects of fragmented decision-making, short-term priorities, repeated restructures, weak accountability, and distance between decision-makers and the communities affected by their decisions.
This Blueprint was written out of concern for New Zealand's long-term future. Many people are experiencing pressure in different ways: families facing rising costs, workers struggling to get

ahead, businesses and primary producers carrying high compliance and operating costs, public services under strain, communities concerned about safety and wellbeing, and older New Zealanders worried about financial security.

The purpose of this work is not to claim that one person has all the answers. It is to offer a structured starting point for discussion: a practical governance design that can be challenged, tested, improved, and adapted by New Zealanders themselves.

Wendy believes New Zealand can build a stronger, more transparent, more self-reliant, and more locally responsive system of governance. The model set out in this Blueprint is not presented as perfect. It is presented as a serious alternative to the systems currently in place, and as an invitation for people to take part in shaping a better future together.

> Be the Change you want in the World
>
> Ghandi

Introduction to the Full Blueprint

Government can feel confusing. Its language is often technical, its structures are layered, and decisions can appear to be made far away from the people most affected by them.
Having worked within government and alongside communities, I understand how difficult it can be to see how the system fits together. This Blueprint aims to make that system easier to understand. It draws out the most relevant parts, explains them in plain everyday language, considers lessons from other countries, and proposes a practical governance model that could work for Aotearoa New Zealand.

This is not presented as a finished answer to every issue. It is a starting point: a Blueprint for discussion, refinement, testing, and public participation. It brings together ideas from governance, finance, industry, public services, and community life into one connected design. You will read about countries that have built stronger financial resilience, retained greater national control over key assets, and organised public systems in ways that are more transparent, responsive, or efficient. Each part explains complex issues in accessible language.

It provides a snapshot of the legislation, regulations, institutions, and policy settings that have shaped the current system, and then considers how New Zealand could approach things differently.

Most importantly, this Blueprint is about solutions. It asks how we can work together to build a country that is more self-reliant, transparent, locally responsive, and prepared for the future. The proposed governance model is designed to reduce unnecessary duplication and bureaucracy, so that a greater proportion of public revenue can be directed toward regional priorities and frontline services. This includes education, health, community safety, food production, youth development, care for older people, infrastructure, and local economic opportunity.

It also proposes that more decisions should be made where their effects are most directly felt: within communities and regions. National leadership would remain responsible for matters requiring countrywide coordination, while regional and community structures would play a meaningful role in planning, delivery, oversight, and decision-making. The Blueprint is organised into seven connected parts:

Part	**Title**
Part 1	Parliament, Power and Decision-Making
Part 2	Financial Autonomy and Resilience
Part 3	Industry, Business and Economic Sovereignty
Part 4	Restrengthening New Zealand Public Services
Part 5	The Three-Tier Governance Model: The Detail
Part 6	The Transition Pathway
Part 7	The Future

You may begin with the part that interests you most, or read from the beginning. Understanding how the current system works is an important first step before considering how it could change. Every part refers to the proposed three-tier governance model. Part 5 explains the model in full, while Parts 6 and 7 consider how change could occur lawfully, practically, and with public participation.

The final summary pages are designed to be shared with friends, whānau, and communities. They provide a simpler overview of the ideas and questions raised throughout the Blueprint. Volume 2 contains the practical templates, tools, stocktake processes, planning frameworks, and implementation guides that communities, regions, and national structures could use to put a new governance system into place in an orderly and workable way.

Overview of the Parts

Part 1 – Parliament, Power and Decision-Making
Part 1 demystifies Parliament, the machinery of government, and the way major public decisions are made. It explains how the different branches of government interact, and how authority moves through the institutions that have developed over time.
It examines the roles of Parliament, core public services, the judiciary, regulatory bodies, and security agencies, as well as the influence of international agreements and institutional relationships. By examining how these structures operate in practice, this part identifies where complexity, distance, and limited transparency can make government difficult for citizens to understand — and leave people feeling they have little ability to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Part 1 then sets out a proposed alternative: replacing the political party system with a non-party, three-tier governance model. National decision-making would be undertaken by regional representatives serving on a National Governance Board, supported by independent sector advisers and transparent public information. Regional Boards would replace elected local government structures, while Community Boards would be strengthened to play a wider role in local advice, participation, oversight, and community governance.
The purpose is to shift decision-making away from party-political competition and toward citizens, communities, regions, and long-term national interests.

Part 2 – Financial Autonomy and Resilience
Part 2 examines New Zealand's financial foundations, including banking, public debt, fiscal policy, investment, and the institutions that shape national economic choices.
It explains how the banking system works, how offshore ownership and overseas borrowing can affect the flow of wealth out of New Zealand, and how fiscal settings influence the country's long-term ability to invest in its own future.

This part then proposes reforms designed to strengthen financial autonomy and resilience. These include establishing an independent people's bank; creating stronger rules around the retention and reinvestment of profits generated in New Zealand; directing a greater proportion of domestic savings and investment funds toward productive New Zealand infrastructure and industry; and reducing unnecessary dependence on overseas borrowing.

It also proposes clearer roles, stronger accountability, and more transparent reporting for institutions such as the Reserve Bank and Treasury. Together, these reforms would create domestic investment structures capable of supporting infrastructure, regional development, innovation, and productive industry — leading directly into Part 3.

Part 3 – Industry, Business and Economic Sovereignty

Part 3 turns to the structure of the national economy: the industries that sustain New Zealand, the businesses that create employment and value, and the ownership patterns that influence where wealth, decision-making, and profits ultimately sit.

It examines the development of key industries, including those weakened or lost through policy settings, privatisation, consolidation, offshore ownership, or the removal of domestic processing and manufacturing capacity. It also considers the role of state-owned enterprises and strategic assets in supporting national resilience.

This part explores how laws, investment settings, procurement, trade arrangements, ownership rules, and economic policy could be redesigned to support primary industries, domestic production, innovation, small and medium businesses, and locally retained value.

The central question is not whether New Zealand should withdraw from the world, but whether it has enough domestic capability, ownership, and strategic control to withstand shocks and create prosperity for future generations. Part 3 introduces the need for national and regional planning across five-, ten-, twenty-, and fifty-year horizons.

Part 4 – Restrengthening the New Zealand Public Services

Public services such as health, education, policing, courts, environmental protection, housing, social support, and economic development are central to the wellbeing, security, and opportunity of every community.

Part 4 examines how these services are currently organised and delivered. It considers how centralisation, fragmentation, repeated restructures, shifting policy priorities, and distance from local communities can undermine service quality, workforce morale, continuity, and public trust.

It then sets out how public services could operate under the three-tier governance model. Most delivery and planning responsibility would be devolved to the regional level, while national structures would retain responsibility for constitutional protections, minimum standards, equity, funding frameworks, national infrastructure, and matters requiring countrywide coordination.

Regional staff, communities, service users, iwi, businesses, and local organisations would have a greater role in identifying needs, shaping priorities, and improving delivery. Each region would assess its public-service assets, infrastructure, industries, workforce capabilities, environmental resources, and future economic opportunities as a single, interconnected system.

That work would inform a holistic Regional Strategic Plan — linking public services, local economic development, infrastructure investment, environmental stewardship, and community wellbeing rather than treating each area as a separate issue.

Part 5 – The Three-Tier Governance Model: The Detail

Having examined the current systems in Parts 1–4, Part 5 introduces the proposed three-tier model of governance in greater detail. The model is based on connected leadership at community, regional, and national levels.

Its purpose is to place more decisions closer to the communities and regions where the effects are most directly felt, while retaining national coordination where it is genuinely needed. Community structures would provide local knowledge, participation, advice, and oversight. Regional Boards would take primary responsibility for planning, public services, local infrastructure, economic development, and the stewardship of regional assets. The National Governance Board would focus on matters requiring a national approach, including constitutional stewardship, national revenue and funding frameworks, equitable distribution of resources, international relations, national infrastructure, defence, and long-term strategic coordination.

The model aims to simplify governance, reduce unnecessary duplication, strengthen transparency, and ensure that decision-making is more responsive to the people and places affected by it.

Part 6 – The Transition Pathway
Significant constitutional and governance change must be undertaken carefully to preserve stability, legality, public confidence, and continuity of essential services.

Part 6 outlines a possible pathway for moving from the current system toward a three-tier governance framework. It considers how change could occur gradually through public education, democratic participation, constitutional safeguards, transitional legislation, and clear arrangements for maintaining the economy, public services, and legal continuity throughout the process.

The pathway recognises that change must begin within the structures that exist in New Zealand in 2026. It identifies three practical tools available to the public:

1. Petitions to Parliament, through which people can formally call for consideration of reform;
2. Referenda, through which major constitutional questions can be put directly to the people; and
3. Public discussion, organisation, and sustained civic participation, through which people can build understanding, support, and pressure for change.

This part is not about disruption for its own sake. It is about giving people a lawful, informed, and practical pathway to reshape the systems that govern them.

Part 7 – The Future
The final part asks us to consider what Aotearoa New Zealand could look like if governance, finance, industry, public services, and community decision-making were designed to work together for the long-term benefit of the country.

It imagines a future in which leadership is open, accountable, and shared; communities and regions have a meaningful role in shaping the decisions that affect them; and national institutions focus on the responsibilities that can only be carried collectively.

In this future, New Zealand would work steadily to reduce unnecessary overseas debt, retain more value within the country, invest in New Zealand-owned infrastructure and productive enterprise, and use public money with greater discipline and transparency. Taxation would be clearer, fairer, and more directly connected to the services, infrastructure, and long-term investments that people can see and understand.

The economy, public health, social wellbeing, environmental stewardship, infrastructure, and community life would no longer be treated as separate issues. They would be understood as parts of one connected national and regional ecosystem.
Part 7 asks us to imagine what could become possible when the people of New Zealand are no longer simply observers of governance, but active participants in shaping the country's future.

It asks us to imagine if....

Part 1: Parliament - Power and Decision-Making Redesigned

Introduction to Part 1.

Welcome, brave one! You are embarking on an adventure to seek clarity about NZ's bureaucratic system that keeps us in a fog. We can't challenge what we don't understand, so we give up. We are going to explore what the system beneath it all truly is, and how we can fix it. So people can have hope again. This first part aims to give you an easy-to-understand snapshot of Parliament and the machinery of Government, including the historical ties that bind us to the current-day political system, which is no longer fit for purpose.

Part 1 — Imagine if…

Imagine if we had a Governance system where you could clearly see how decisions are made, with Leaders who were passionately and unashamedly pro-NZ and directly answerable to their regions (not political parties). Where the people in decision-making roles followed what the consensus of the people wanted, and not some hidden alternative agenda. What they said they'd do was put into action - and if they didn't deliver, they could be removed.

What's happening: Parliament, the Executive, and agencies are all following different scripts that aren't improving NZ's future or benefiting Communities, families, or NZ-owned industry and innovation.

How it works: The decision-making process is opaque, and centres on a small, power-based body called the Executive Council (the PM and a few senior Ministers). MMP, the coalition partnership, Parliament, and the Steering Committees are 'fabricated' to make us think we have a say.

Why: The Parliamentary system was created through a historical layering, allowing the Politicians to be the supreme law. Which means political will/whim is law over people's rights. They are also the gatekeepers of the flawed system, and that is how they want to keep it. That means Politicians and their parties, often connected to overseas alliances, supersede any other rights, laws, and constitutional conventions.

Pressure points:

It means discussions are held, and decisions are made in back-room deals with no minutes taken. All of this makes it hard to trace accountability. The system feels distant; the People have no power, and it is doing what it was designed to do.

Everyday life (now):

It feels like there is a lack of trust in decision-makers and no hope for the country's future.
We don't want to vote, we can't be bothered commenting, protesting, getting involved, because we can't understand the system; that's exactly what the system's gatekeepers want us to do.

What changes:

By creating a uniquely NZ Direct Democracy system we can bring back democracy and be unashamedly pro NZ. The current governance and bureaucratic system is stripped away and totally simplified (Constitutional supremacy, no layers of bureaucracy or political parties), voting processes are honest, and accountability is clearer across the 3 tiers of leaders (Central, Regional and Local): no more backroom deals, no more hidden agreements with overseas globalists.

Everyday life (future):

It is easier to understand who decides what and why. The country has an expansive, healthy, exciting vision for NZ, and our voices are heard. Once again, we as a country feel like one big family and community, making the future brighter. People mean something.

Reassurance:

By reading the Blueprint, you will understand how to change the system to strengthen our democracy and NZ's future.

What this part is for

This section helps you see how New Zealand's current governance system works beneath the surface. Many of these structures are inherited, complex, and rarely explained in plain language.

You'll understand by the end.

How power is distributed, who holds authority, and how overlapping systems can obscure accountability and limit public influence. You'll get to understand how NZ's fragile financial situation has come to be.

Better yet, you'll understand how the Governance systems can be remodelled to deliver what we need them to, now and especially for our future generations.

Explaining Direct Democracy in a Nutshell

Direct Democracy: Giving Decision-Making Back to the People

Direct democracy means that the people have a real and ongoing say in the decisions that affect their lives, communities, regions, and the country.

It does not mean every person votes on every issue every day. It means the people have clear rights to be informed, involved, consulted, and able to make final decisions on major issues.

At its heart, direct democracy is based on one simple principle:

The people are the highest authority in a democracy. Government exists to serve the people, not rule over them.

Under the current system, people are usually asked to vote once every few years. After that, political parties, Ministers, officials, councils, and agencies make most of the decisions. Many people feel consulted but not truly heard. They may give feedback, but never see how that feedback changed anything.

Direct democracy changes this relationship.

It means people are not just voters. They are participants, contributors, reviewers, and decision-makers.

This policy supports a peaceful, lawful, and practical shift toward a system where everyday people have more power over major public decisions.

Direct democracy would include:

- 16 People voted in as people fit for the job, no elected parties, no 123 Ministers;
- binding public votes on major national issues;
- citizen-initiated referendums when enough people support an issue held in quarterly succession;
- public veto rights for laws or decisions that raise serious public concern;
- petitions that lead to real action, not just symbolic responses;

- local and regional decision-making closer to the people affected;
- citizens' assemblies for complex issues that need careful public discussion;
- plain-English information before major decisions are made;
- public dashboards showing spending, debt, service performance, and progress;
- clear safeguards to protect rights, minorities, and future generations.

Direct democracy would apply most strongly to major decisions, including constitutional change, public assets, national sovereignty, emergency powers, long-term debt, natural resources, and major public service reforms.

Representatives and public servants would still have important roles. They would continue to manage day-to-day decisions, provide advice, deliver services, and coordinate national and regional priorities. But their role would be to serve, inform, and be accountable to the people — not to hold unchecked power over them.

Direct democracy must also be protected from misuse. Strong safeguards would be needed, equality of campaign funding, spending limits, independent oversight of referendum wording, balanced public information, protection from foreign interference, and constitutional protection of fundamental rights.

Emergency powers would also need strict limits. In a crisis, fast decisions may be necessary. However, those decisions must be time-limited, publicly explained, independently reviewed, and returned to the people as soon as possible.

For everyday people, direct democracy means your voice matters more often than once every three years.

It means communities can help shape local priorities through Local Community Boards. It means people can challenge major decisions. It means public money is easier to track. It means decision-makers must explain themselves clearly. It means the people can say yes, no, pause, review, or try again.

Direct democracy is not about chaos, anger, or division. It is not about voting on every small decision. It is not about removing expert advice or basic rights.

It is about better balance, transparency and accountability.

It brings together public voice, expert advice, local knowledge, national coordination, transparency, and constitutional safeguards.

This policy commits to building a democratic system where power sits closer to the people, information is easier to understand, and decision-makers are more accountable.

Democracy should belong to the people every day, not just on election day.

To Summarise

System Change 1. Protecting Democracy

Upgrade the Constitutional Act to make it legally binding, protecting people's rights, and reflecting the NZ of today, including the enforcement of Citizens' Initiated Referendums.

System Change 2: Governance not Politics
Remove the outdated links to the Monarchy and the Governor-General's role. Change the Electoral Act, abolishing all and any acts that support Political Parties. Enact the 3-Tier People's Governance system into law. Representatives on all three tiers are paid and accountable to performance-based agreements.

System Change 3. Independent Checks and Balances
The Judiciary and watchdog agencies will be given true independent separation of powers, and a higher Council will provide oversight of the Judiciary when necessary. System agencies are devolved to the regions where appropriate and given clearer powers. Security agencies have clearer accountabilities.

System Change 4. Public Services and Resources Decentralised to the Regions
80% of public services and resources are devolved/allocated to the Regions to control, decide how to use, and distribute. Heads of agencies will be in place for a maximum of five years with no renewal. Independence of the CEO will be created through the 3-tier model and a review of the agencies. Monitoring the agencies' performance will be conducted to merge them into one clearly defined Accountability and Transparency Agency.

Ok, let's dive in.

System Change 5. Transparency and Fairness of Costs to The People

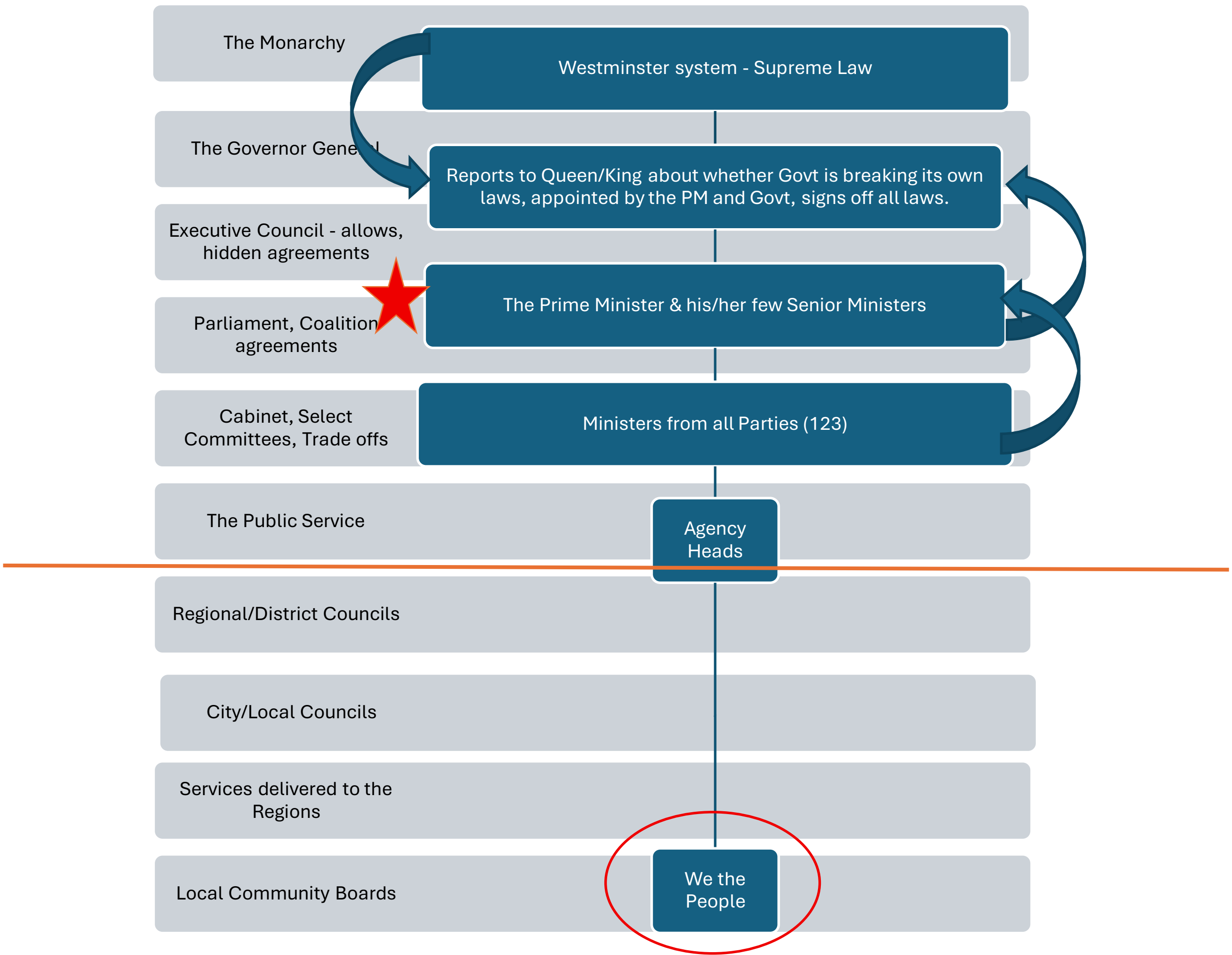
A complete review and cancellation of all payments to ex-MPs and PMs, and an exit of all payments and benefits with a 3-month notice period. Ex Ministers and PMs are entitled to the same Govt superannuation as all other NZers, nothing else. Then going forward all costs attributed to governance bodies are fully transparent.

System Change 6. Raising the integrity of Representatives

Investigate past MPs' and PMs' roles if corruption is found, and if they knowingly made decisions to cause harm to the people, they will be prosecuted. If an MP or PM has been found to have increased financial or asset wealth during or just after office, their assets are frozen and an audit by the SFO is completed. Abolish Parliamentary privilege. If a governance representative abuses their position and is sued, they must pay for the court litigation themselves.

Chapter 1: Political Power Versus People Power

This chapter provides an overview of the Parliamentary system, its complexity, and how a simplified system could run our country more effectively, with better results, lower costs, and greater transparency and integrity.
It is where the seat of power currently sits. How Politicians - the PM, and a few key Ministers can override any acts of laws, people's rights and the future of NZ in an easy layman's language.
There are flaws in the system **design**. Except we ***don't know*** what the system really is, so we can't understand where the flaws are. A complicated bureaucratic system means flaws can be hidden, rewritten and manipulated.
Below is an overview of the machinery of the Government 'system', established over 100 years ago. So, as a starter, the overarching view of our Governance system looks like this – Part 1. Goes over the Machinery of Government and Parliament, all the functions ABOVE the orange line. The red star is the seat of power in NZ. Below is the easiest roadmap I can put together to show you what you are about to dive into. The red below is what we are delving into in this Part of the journey – the Machinery of Government.



Look how far down the food chain **we, the People,** are...There are eight layers above us where decisions are made that we don't see, where oligarchies and influence push their intentions over the outcomes for a sustainable NZ and for us, the people.

The star represents where all major decisions are made, without discussion, notes, or public release. This is what Parliamentary sovereignty is: the authority for Politicians to make decisions based on their own preferences, regardless of election promises.

The Executive Council (the PM and a few senior Ministers) can make any decision and override any laws. The coalition partners are locked out of this level of decision-making. This is where most influence comes from: Oligarchies, both nationally and internationally (e.g., Big Pharma); International Trade Agreements; the WHO/UN/WEF; and private Ministerial bargaining. There is a section that discusses decision-making in more detail.

The Machinery of Government and Core Public Services		What Benefits the People
1. Parliamentary System (123 Ministers)	2. The Judiciary	The Public Service Delivery Arms
3. The System Agencies	4. The Security Agencies	
	5. The 'Assurance' Agencies	

I'll give you the costs for each central government department (where they are publicly available).

As a signpost, we are creating a 'Government' with minimal central input, where most resources are distributed to the regions. There will be open, accountable decision-making for the people and NZ. Throughout the parts and chapters, I will weave in how the Three-Tier system could work. In its basic form, the 3-tier people's governance model looks like this...

*Replaces the need for Parliament, Political Parties and 123 Ministerial roles. There is no singular one PM or leader.
**Based on the current 16 Regions in NZ
***Determined by the size of the region and what public services are within each one.
In the Three-Tier Model, We the People are at every tier of the decision-making. It is;

- A way of distributing power so that it cannot settle or dominate anywhere.
- A way of bargaining that restores value rather than trading it away.
- A way of governing that does not depend on blind faith to function.

Much simpler than eight layers of bureaucracy!
I will describe how the Three-Tier model of Governance will minimise the bureaucracy of Parliament and the Machinery of Government, creating a transparent, devolved, unified people's government with no political parties.

What is a Constitution and Why Is It Important

Let's start by talking about the Constitution. In many other countries, there is a single constitutional document that protects the people when the laws and regulations the government chooses do not.
A well-governed country uses a constitution to establish the fundamental rules for government and the Judiciary to abide by. It defines the powers and limits of state institutions, protects citizens' basic rights, and provides a framework for making laws, ensuring stability, accountability, and the rule of law. The Constitution acts as the supreme law, above all else, outlining the nation's values and how power is distributed and exercised, preventing abuse by setting clear boundaries for rulers. A well-written constitution:

- **Establishes Government Structure:** Defines the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, their composition, powers, and relationship.
- **Limits State Power:** Places restrictions on what the government can do (substantive limits) and how it must act (procedural limits) to prevent tyranny and arbitrariness.
- **Protects Rights & Freedoms:** Guarantees fundamental human rights, such as freedom of speech, assembly, and due process, holding the government accountable to its citizens.
- **Defines National Values:** Reflects and enshrines a nation's core principles, values, and identity, providing a stable foundation for governance.
- **Ensures Stability & Order:** Provides a stable, difficult-to-change framework for governance, ensuring continuity even as political parties change, and outlines mechanisms for peaceful transfers of power.
- **Foundation for Law:** Serves as the supreme law, guiding the creation of all other legislation and policies, with courts often empowered to ensure that laws comply with it.

In essence, a constitution is the bedrock of leading with integrity, creating a system where power is accountable, rights are protected, and the rule of law prevails over arbitrary decisions. Many other countries have constitutions and review them every five years to ensure they reflect the country's changing nature.

NZ's non-constitution

Ok, so in NZ's case, it has an uncodified constitution, meaning it's not in a single document but is a mix of written laws. For example...

The Constitution Act 1986 says the government is supposed to stay within its own rules. We have the State Sector Act 1988, which sets out the standards the Public Service is expected to operate within, including being impartial toward Ministers and Politicians.

The Senior Courts Act 2016 and the District Courts Act 2016 are intended to keep the judiciary in line with the preservation of NZ Law free from Political interference.

The Fiscal Responsibility Act 1994 is supposed to ensure transparent fiscal and economic reporting procedures for us, the public.

The Bill of Rights Act 1990 states that the state and civil rights are supposed to represent a modern liberal democracy. The Human Rights Act 1993 is supposed to protect people from discrimination.

The Treaty of Waitangi and He Whakaputanga are intended to protect people's rights.

Here lies our first problem: the 'system' has no rigour to stop rogue government decisions; they can work around it because of its 'flex'. None of these Laws/Acts protects us from the 'Government' system. This mishmash of words allows the Government to override ANYTHING. It can rewrite or introduce new laws that supersede all and anything to keep NZers and smaller parties compliant. And it does.

Below is an example Constitution that sets the standards needed to ensure rights and integrity in governance and would be a good foundation for NZ while we go through the system changes in this Blueprint.

EXAMPLE CONSTITUTION FOR NZ

Constitution of Aotearoa New Zealand

Constitutionally Supreme · Regionally Governed · Community-Led

PREAMBLE
We, the people of Aotearoa New Zealand,
Affirm that all political authority derives from the people of NZ.
Declare that governance exists to protect dignity, liberty, fairness, and the well-being of present and future generations.
Establish this Constitution as the supreme law of the land, binding all institutions and persons exercising public power.

PART I — SUPREMACY AND FOUNDATIONS
Article 1 — Sovereignty of the People
Sovereignty resides in the people collectively.
All public authority exists only by consent of the people and under this Constitution.
Article 2 — Supremacy of the Constitution
This Constitution is the supreme law of Aotearoa New Zealand.
Any law, decision, or action inconsistent with this Constitution is invalid to the extent of inconsistency.
No governance body may suspend or override this Constitution except as expressly provided herein.

Article 3 — Te Tiriti o Waitangi, He Whakaputenga and Sovereign Beings

The Whakaputanga, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the mana of all early settlers are recognised as foundational civic covenants of mutual responsibility and equal dignity. No authority exercised under Te Tiriti or He Whakaputanga may diminish the equal fundamental rights of any other person.

Article 4 — Subsidiarity

Governance decisions shall be made at the lowest practical level closest to the people affected.

Article 5 — Limited and Accountable Power

No governance body may exercise powers not expressly granted by this Constitution. Public power must be exercised through governance structures that provide transparency, accountability, and meaningful participation at both national and community levels.

Where services materially affect rights, well-being, or safety, governance must include mechanisms for early intervention, community oversight, and mandatory correction of systemic failure.

PART II — RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Rights are inherent and not granted by the State.

Article 6 — Human Dignity and Equality for Now and the Future

All persons are equal in dignity and rights.

No person shall be discriminated against on any unjustifiable ground.

Discrimination includes systemic practices, funding structures, or governance arrangements that, while neutral on their face, produce foreseeable and persistent harm to particular groups or future generations.

The law applies equally to all.

Article 7 — Civil and Political Rights

Every person has the right to:

• Life and security of a person
• Bodily autonomy and informed consent
• Freedom from torture or degrading treatment
• Freedom of thought, conscience, belief, and religion
• Freedom of expression
• Freedom of peaceful assembly and association
• Freedom of movement
• Privacy and protection of personal information
• Protection from arbitrary detention
• Fair trial and natural justice
• Equal political participation and equal vote value

Article 8 — Social and Economic Rights

Every person has the right to reasonable aCCess to:

• Healthcare
• Education
• Sufficient food and clean water
• Adequate housing
• Safe working conditions
• Participation in economic life

These rights guarantee access and opportunity, not equal outcome.

Article 9 — Environmental and Intergenerational Rights
All persons have the right to a healthy natural environment.
Natural resources are held in trust for present and future generations.
Governance bodies, businesses and communities owe a duty of ecological stewardship.

Article 10 — Cultural and Collective Rights
Cultural, linguistic, and community identities are protected.
Collective rights may not diminish the equal individual rights of any person.
Regional and iwi governance arrangements must comply with fundamental rights protections.

Article 11 — Limitation of Rights
Rights may be limited only where:
The limitation is prescribed by clear law.
The limitation serves a legitimate objective in a free and democratic society.
The limitation is necessary and proportionate.
The limitation is publicly justified with evidence.

Article 12 — Emergency Powers
Core rights to life, dignity, and protection from torture may never be suspended.
Any declared national emergency must:
• Be time-limited
• Be subject to judicial review
• Be ratified by referendum if extended beyond three months

PART III — CENTRAL GOVERNANCE / Board (CB)
Article 13 — Establishment
The CB is the sole national governance body.
It operates strictly within the powers granted by this Constitution.
The CB is subordinate to this Constitution and subject to constitutional review.
Article 14 — Composition
The CC shall consist of 16 members and one Chair.
Members serve one non-renewable term of five years.
Members may not hold office more than once.
Article 15 — Powers
The CC may act only in matters of national necessity, including:
• Defence and international relations
• Currency and macroeconomic stability
• National infrastructure of significance
• National emergency coordination
• Establishing national minimum rights standards
Article 16 — Limits
Expansion of CC powers requires:
• 75% CC approval, and
• Binding national referendum approval.

PART IV — REGIONAL GOVERNANCE / Regional Board (RB)
Article 17 — Establishment

The RB is the sole regional governance body.
It operates strictly within the powers granted by this Constitution and the National Board.
The RB is subordinate to this Constitution and subject to constitutional review.

Article 18 — Composition

The RB shall consist of 16 members and one Chair. (6 elected, 3 balloted, 7-9 employees from the public services).
Members serve one non-renewable term of five years.
Members may not hold office more than once.

Article 19 — Powers

Regions hold primary authority over:

- Health systems
- Education delivery
- Housing and land use
- Environmental management
- Social and economic development
- Policing consistent with constitutional rights

Article 20 — Autonomy

Regions may design governance structures that reflect local culture and needs, provided that constitutional rights are upheld.

PART V — CITIZEN PARTICIPATION – (LCC)

Article 21 — Establishment

The LCC is the people's representation at the local level.
It operates strictly within the powers granted by this Constitution.
The LCC is subordinate to this Constitution and subject to constitutional review.

Article 22 — Composition

The LCC shall consist of a maximum of 12 members and one Chair.
Members serve one non-renewable term of five years.
Members may not hold office more than once.

Article 23 — Powers

Regions shall convene Local Community Boards selected by sortition to:

- Review governance decisions
- Propose legislation
- Trigger referenda

Article 24 — Binding Referenda

Referenda are binding and required for:

- Constitutional amendments
- Expansion of national powers
- Structural governance changes

Article 25 - Enshrining the Three-Tier Model as a Rights Protection Mechanism

Public power must be exercised through governance structures that provide transparency, accountability, and meaningful participation at both national and community levels.
Where services materially affect rights, well-being, or safety, governance must include mechanisms for early intervention, community oversight, and mandatory correction of systemic failure.

Article 26 - Intergenerational Rights Protection

Public authorities must take reasonable steps to ensure that decisions made today do not create foreseeable and disproportionate harm to future generations, including through degraded services, unaffordable housing, environmental loss, or institutional fragility.

PART VI — JUDICIAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

Article 27 – Board Chair

Each Board will have an independent Chair appointed by the Governance Committee, who holds a non-voting position except on occasions when a hung decision occurs.

Article 28 — Independent Judiciary

The judiciary is independent and bound only by this Constitution. The judiciary in NZ, under the Three-Tier model and constitutional sovereignty, will, when necessary, adjudicate Governance decision-making that the people believe is undermining their rights.

Article 29 — Constitutional Court

A Constitutional Court shall review the consistency of laws and actions with this Constitution.
Its decisions are binding on all governance bodies.
Judges serve single, fixed five-year terms and cannot be reappointed.

PART VII — FINANCE AND PUBLIC TRUST

Article 30 — Public Finance

National revenue may fund only constitutionally defined national responsibilities.

Article 31 — Resource Trust

Natural resources and State-Owned Enterprises are held in trust for present and future generations and may not be permanently alienated without the approval of a referendum.

Article 32 — Strategy, Planning and Reporting

All Governance tiers are required to operate according to clearly stated 1-, 3-, 5-, and 10-year plans and to report against the milestones of each plan.

PART VIII — ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY

Article 33 — Recall and Term Limits

All representatives are subject to recall by constituents. Removal of representatives is done through an investigative process and a 75% voter agreement as a vote of no confidence.

Article 34 — Anti-Corruption

Independent oversight bodies shall monitor the integrity of governance.
Conflicts of interest must be publicly declared.

PART IX — AMENDMENT

Article 35 — Amendment Procedure

Amendments require:

- Two-thirds approval of affected governance bodies
- Binding national referendum approval

No amendment may abolish fundamental rights protections.

CLOSING DECLARATION

This Constitution affirms that governance is a public trust.
It protects liberty without fragmentation, unity without domination, and shared authority without hierarchy.

All power is limited.
All people are equal in dignity.
All governance is accountable to the people.

Take-home points:
NZ does not have ONE Constitution but several laws, statutes, Acts, etc. that determine how the Government is supposed to behave. Which means there are no legally enforceable rights by the government ‘watchdogs’ or the People.
MANY more Acts and Laws should help keep an open and transparent democracy. They should protect us from Laws that cause economic, physical, and other harms by the government, the Public Sector, and/or the Judiciary.
So, why aren’t they? Because the two-party and parliamentary system allows the government to make laws to suit itself without a stopgap. The system is flawed and does not protect the people at the highest level.

A revised Constitution such as this would hold power over any political decisions made without the citizens' knowledge. It puts into law human rights, transparency, and the devolution of decision-making powers to the Regions.
This constitutional change would come from a legally binding referendum by citizens.

System Change 1. Upgrade to make the Constitutional Act legally binding, protecting people’s rights, including the enforcement of Citizens' Initiated Referendums.

Let’s delve deeper into the other system changes needed.

Chapter 2: Understanding the Monarchy and the Machinery of Government

For most citizens, the institutions that govern their country operate largely out of sight. Laws are enacted, budgets are announced, and policies change, yet the processes that produce these outcomes are often difficult to see from the outside.

The system has developed over many decades through layers of legislation, administrative practices, and different political parties. As a result, the structure of governance can appear complex and difficult to navigate for anyone outside it.

Yet understanding these structures is essential, but don't worry, I'm simplifying it for you. The first step is describing our current link to the monarchy and the machinery of Government.

The Monarchy, Parliament and the Powers of the PM

As you discovered earlier, in NZ, the foundation of governance rests on the principle of parliamentary sovereignty (the politician's seat of power). Parliament has the authority to make or amend laws and approve public spending, but ultimately it is the executive branch that makes the most important decisions. In practice, the operation of government involves a much broader network of institutions. Ministries, regulatory agencies, independent authorities, courts, and security organisations all play roles in implementing and overseeing public policy.

Together, these institutions form what is often referred to as the **"machinery of government"** — the complex set of structures through which laws are interpreted, policies are implemented, and public services are delivered.
New Zealand's parliamentary system was established by the British Parliament's **New Zealand Constitution Act of 1852**[1], which created Parliament with an elected House of Representatives and an appointed Legislative Council, bringing representative government to the colony and laying the foundation for British-style government and 'democratic' processes.

Key Aspects of the 1852 Constitution Act:

- **The General Assembly:** This was New Zealand's first formal legislature, consisting of the Governor, the Legislative Council (upper house), which was abolished in January 1951, and the House of Representatives (lower house), which is today effectively called parliament.[2].
- **Elected Representation:** It established the principle of elected representatives, with the first elections held in 1853, leading to the first meeting in 1854. The Political party system was introduced in 1890, modelled on the British Westminster system.
- **Self-Government:** The Act granted New Zealand self-governance, though initially under British authority, paving the way for a government (where the executive depends on the legislature's support) by 1856. While this change was intended to ensure independence, it hasn't guaranteed us freedom from other areas of influence.

[1] https://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/imp_act_1840/nzca185215a16vc72351/ The Constitution came into effect in January 1853 and, in my opinion, opened the door to the first step of corruption which effectively gave the Queen rights over the citizens, then it continued.
[2] https://nzhistory.govt.nz/keyword/legislative-council

While the 1852 Act established the framework, New Zealand's constitutional arrangements evolved, with the Constitution Act 1986 as the principal modern document, recognising Parliamentary Sovereignty and establishing the PM as Head of State.

The Governor General's Role and Function

This function was created under the NZ Constitution Act 1952, which allowed the Governor-General to pass laws that advanced the Queen's/King's wishes for the Queen's pleasure and purposes.[3]. Which means we are still vicariously linked to the Westminster system today.
The role of the Governor-General was created as a safeguard — a neutral figure who represents the Crown and ***ensures governments act lawfully and in the public interest***. In theory, this role exists to provide a constitutional check on political power and to protect the people from misuse of authority.
On paper, this sounds reassuring. However, understanding how the role actually functions in practice requires examining who appoints whom **and who is accountable to whom**.
In reality, the Governor-General is appointed by the Monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister. This means the Prime Minister of the day effectively selects the person who is meant to oversee the constitutional process.
The Governor-General signs legislation passed by Parliament and acts on advice from the Executive Council (the PM and a few senior Ministers). However, by convention, the Governor-General does not:

- challenge government policy
- independently intervene in political decision-making
- act against the advice of Ministers.

As a result, the authority flows in a closed loop:

- The Prime Minister advises the appointments
- those appointed advise the government
- the Governor-General acts on that advice

This creates what can be described as **circular authority**. A critical flaw in the system you will notice again and again. In simple terms:

- The person meant to act as a constitutional safeguard is appointed by the political leadership they are meant to oversee
- There is no practical mechanism for independent intervention
- accountability remains within the same small group of decision-makers

The Letters Patent is supposed to be the formal mechanism by which the government keeps the Governor General updated; however, many clauses in the legislation shut the Governor General down. Clause 14 is a classic example;

Powers and Authority of the Governor General

While Our Administrator of the Government is performing all or any of the functions of the Office of Governor-General, the powers and authorities of Our Governor-General shall not be abridged, altered, or in any way affected, ***otherwise than as We may at any time hereafter think proper to direct.***

In plain English, this means the Prime Minister, through the Executive Council, has the right to veto or override the Governor-General at any time; the Governor-General or Monarchy has no power or authority over NZ. The **system** has turned the role into a symbolic and ceremonial function, at taxpayers' expense.

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[3] See Joseph Chapter 6 section 4 page 155 Responsible Government

Under the new Constitutional system as a sovereign country, NZ would no longer require the role of the Governor-General or the historical link to the Monarchy; thus, an Act of Governance under the new Constitution would dissolve the statute and all costs and related matters associated with the outdated tie.
The Constitution is such that:

1. Sovereignty is redefined
Sovereignty resides with the people of Aotearoa New Zealand —not the Crown. In fact, the Crown no longer exists.

2. Executive authority is reassigned
Instead of flowing from the Crown, authority is exercised by the Central Board, through the Regional Boards, and to Local Community Boards, through clearly defined constitutional rules.

3. The legislative process is updated
Instead of Royal Assent by the Governor-General, NZ will have certification by a Constitutional Authority. So a law will be created to remove the Governor-General's role and the Acts that refer to it.
Continuity and Replacement of Crown Functions to add to the Constitution
All powers, functions, and authorities previously exercised by or on behalf of the Crown, including those exercised by the Governor-General, are hereby vested in the institutions (the 3-tier Governance model) established under this Constitution and shall be exercised in accordance with this Constitution and the law.

Take-home points:
1. Our link to the Monarchy and Westminster system is outdated. The Governor General’s role is largely symbolic; they have no real powers over the Government and, in fact, report to the PM.
2. The Governor General's Office costs taxpayers at least $4.3 million plus[4] Every year, the role is on a high six-figure salary.
3. They endorse the Government's law but never challenge it, even when our Human Rights are being breached or if the lead party of the day are circumventing the parliamentary process.

The new Constitution will remove powers from politicians and the Governor-General and begin introducing the 3-tier governance framework.

System Change 2: Remove the outdated links to the Monarchy and the Governor-General's role.

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[44] All figures are what can be found on Government sites, however there are many other figures not publicly released or are ‘coded’ by government through appropriations in other ways. Which means there is little transparency in Government costs.

Chapter 3: The NZ Electoral System

This chapter gives you a brief snapshot of what we had (FFP), what we have now (MMP), and why it doesn't work to bring about democracy.

FPP (First Past the Post) – *NZ pre-1996*
How it worked

- One vote, one local electorate
- Whoever got the **most votes in each electorate won**
- The party with the most votes wins the government, even without majority support

Why NZ switched to MMP
Under FPP:

- Parties in the **1970s–1990s** repeatedly won power **without majority support**
- Major economic and social reforms were pushed through with weak mandates
- Public trust dropped sharply

After two referendums, NZ adopted MMP in 1993, and the first MMP election was in 1996. The change was supposed to fix the issues…

MMP (Mixed-Member Proportional) – *NZ's current system*
As of the 54th New Zealand Parliament (early 2026), there are 123 Members of Parliament (MPs) serving in the House of Representatives. These MPs represent electorates and party lists under New Zealand's mixed-member proportional (MMP) system.
Here's how that breaks down:

- 65 electorate seats — including general and Māori electorates, each represented by an MP, and
- 51 list MPs — added to ensure proportionality based on party vote.

Normally, New Zealand's Parliament is made up of 120 MPs. Still, overhang seats — extra seats created when a party wins more electorate seats than its share of the party vote would otherwise allow — can increase the total. In the current term, that's resulted in 123 seats.
How it works

- You get **two votes**:
    1. **Party vote** → decides the *overall makeup of Parliament*
    2. **Electorate vote** → chooses your local MP
- Parliament has ~120 MPs:
    - About half are **elected MPs**
    - About half are **list MPs** (used to "top up" parties so seats match party-vote share – who mostly we don't even know who these people are)

A party must either get 5% of the party vote or win one electorate seat to enter Parliament
What this means;

- The lead party gets MORE seats allocated, thus dominating the decisions again
- Smaller parties can win minor representation[5]
- Coalition or support agreements are farcical
- New independent candidates rarely get into parliament

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[5] Since the 1990s there have been investigations and accusations every election of ballot box tampering. The electoral system is flawed, making it difficult to ascertain the correct numbers counted. But that's an issue for another day.

- New, smaller parties can't get into Government with such a high threshold

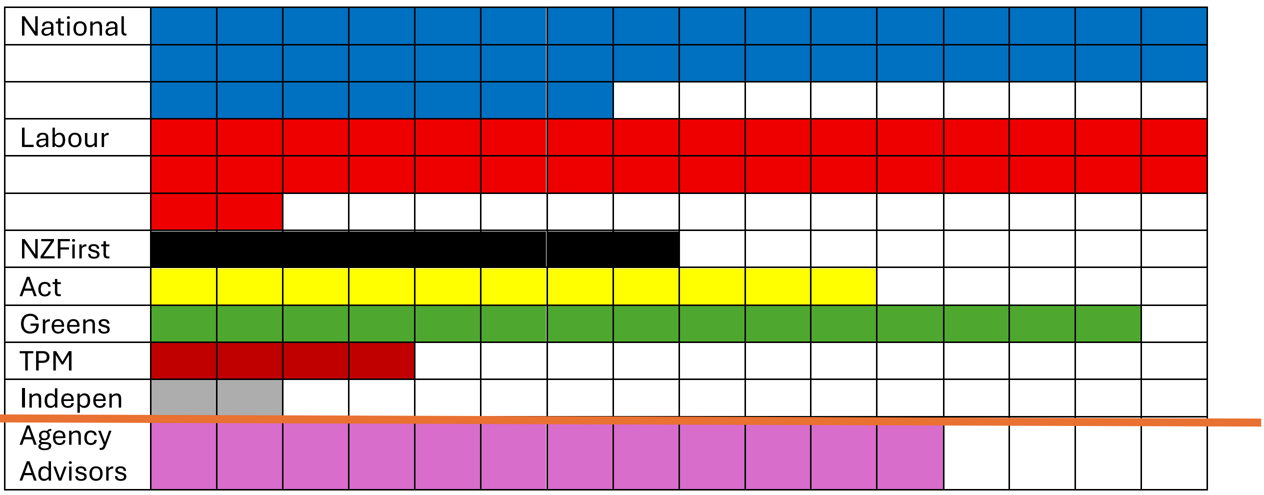
This system is confusing and hasn't solved the problems experienced under FPP.

Why Dominance Still Occurs Under MMP

MMP is another failed system. Dominance emerges when **multiple safeguards fail at once**:

1. **The List seats** stack the chairs for the main party and against smaller parties.
2. **High single-party vote share**
   - A party wins ~45–50% and governs alone or with weak partners
3. **Strong Executive control of Parliament**
   - Party discipline + whip system limits internal dissent
4. **Weak or captured oversight**
   - Watchdogs report *after* harm, not before
5. **Low citizen participation between elections because decisions are hidden**
   - Accountability collapses into a 3-yearly event, and our voices don't matter
6. **Opaque decision pathways**
   - Cabinet committees and regulatory bodies operate out of public sight

MMP doesn't fix *seat fairness*, nor *power behaviour*.
Even worse, the LIST MP roles allow the first party to gain more control over the % of seats in the house, whether people wanted that party in or not.
Another point is that the number of MPs has become bloated by this system. Up until the 1960s, there were 80 MPs; by 1993, the number had increased to 99, and under MMP in 1996, it was increased to 120. Now it's 123.
This is how the decision-making powers, or rather the 123 elected seats, look currently (March 2026).



Currently, NZ has a statutory base of 120 seats (currently 123 because of spillover party seats), which are divided as follows:
72 electoral seats - 16 for the South Island, 48 for the North Island, and 7 Māori electorate seats.
MESSY, FRAGMENTED, CROSSED AGENDAS – THE PEOPLE'S VOICES ARE SCATTERED.
The core principle: MMP controls *who* gets power. It has not improved transparency or accountability. Accountability systems control *how* power behaves – or not.

MMP did not fix the problem of power imbalances

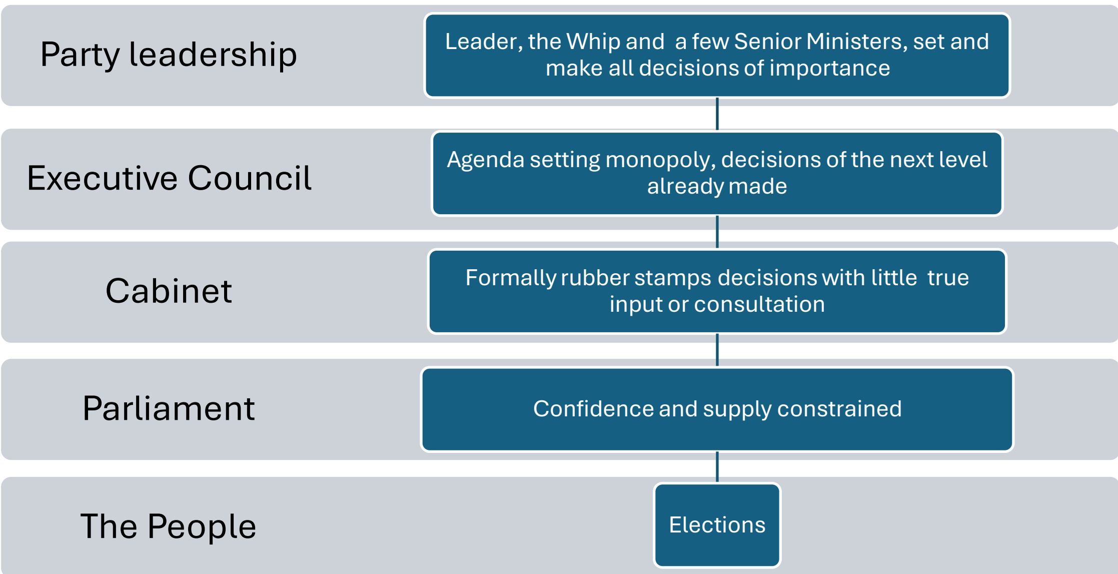
One option: eliminating party seats

If NZ eliminated party list seats and relied solely on elected representatives from geographical constituencies, the size of parliament would drop significantly to 72 MPs (based on 2023 boundaries) or 71 MPs based on the number proposed for 2026. This could be introduced through core reform.

Another Option: Having a central Governance based on equal shares per region

Simplifying to a Regional Representation of Governance, a Three-Tiered System means the Three-Tiered system at the centre would have 16 elected people (one from each region) as the 'Central Committee' (CP), replacing 123 Parliament/Cabinet/Ministers and most of the bureaucracy that covers their roles.
If, for example, we stayed with only 65 electoral seats, based on pure population statistics, the issue is that the bigger cities and districts would dominate decision-making by the mere fact of numbers. Hence one seat per region. There may be cause to create a few more region to divide larger regions into two, but this practice should be only absolutely justified. Every region could argue they are special and need more representation. So for simplification lets just go with 16 regions, 16 Board representatives supported by an independent Chair and Agency advisors.

Centrally based decision-making for national-level concerns only
Along with the regional representative, there would be Agency Advisors, including Reserve Bank and Treasury, A Judiciary Head, A Head of System Assurance, and one from each key Sector area (Innovation and Economic Development, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Defence, Social Development, Housing, Horticulture, Agriculture, Manufacturing, etc.). More on these later. A wholly simplified system where decisions are made close to where they impact would look like the one below, with transparency and accountability.
So a simplified, effective Governance would go from this…



To this…Example of a simplified 'Parliament' with regionally elected People, no Political Parties

Elected Regional People																
Agency Advisors																
A Chair																

This would significantly reduce costs and increase the transparency of decision-making because the people voted in to make national decisions are directly connected to us, not to layers of hidden party bureaucracy.

How Decisions Are Made Without Political Parties
Removing political parties from the electoral system does not remove structure. It simply changes **where structure comes from**. Instead of decisions being organised through party blocs.

1. Representation Still Exists — It Just Looks Different
Elected representatives still:
• propose ideas
• debate issues
• vote on decisions
But they are:
• not bound by party positions
• not required to vote along party lines
• directly accountable to the people who elected them

2. How Proposals Are Introduced
Instead of party-led legislation, proposals can come from:
• individual representatives
• regional bodies
• national committees
• structured public input processes

Each proposal must meet clear legal standards, transparency requirements and public visibility.

3. How Decisions Are Formed
Without parties, decision-making becomes **issue-based rather than bloc-based**.
Representatives: review proposals, form positions and collaborate with others who share similar views.

Groups may still form — but they are: temporary, transparent and based on the issue, not permanent party identity.

4. Voting Process
When it is time to decide:

• Each representative votes individually
• votes are recorded and publicly visible
• outcomes are determined by the majority (or defined thresholds)

This creates direct accountability, clear decision trails and less hidden negotiation.

5. How Leadership Works
Instead of party leaders, leadership roles are:
• selected through defined processes
• based on capability and trust
• subject to review and replacement

For example:
• A National Board will be supported with an independent Chair
• roles are fixed-term for five years non-renewable
• leadership is functional, not political branding

6. How Stability Is Maintained
A common concern is instability.
In practice, stability comes from clear rules, defined roles, structured decision-making processes — not from political parties.

The 3-tier governance model strengthens stability through:
• constitutional rules
• defined governance tiers (national, regional, community)
• transparent processes

7. What Replaces Party Discipline
In party systems, discipline comes from:
• party rules
• leadership control
• career incentives

In a non-party system, discipline comes from:
• public accountability
• transparency of votes
• community and regional expectations
• constitutional limits

8. What This Changes
Today
• decisions are often negotiated within parties
• Party positions strongly influence voting
• accountability can be indirect
Under the 3-tier model
• decisions are made openly
• representatives vote based on judgment and responsibility
• accountability is direct and visible

9. What Does NOT Change
• laws are still passed
• budgets are still set
• governance still functions
• decisions still require agreement

10. What Improves
• transparency
• flexibility
• responsiveness to local needs
• independence of representatives

Instead of: **fixed teams competing for power**. We will have: **people working together — issue by issue — in full view.** Without political parties:
• people still get elected
• decisions still get made
• laws still get pass

The difference is: **decisions are made openly, by individuals, for the people they represent** Then, under the Central Board (parliament), there are 16 Regional Boards (replacing Local Government Councils), as well as Community Boards and Subcommittees based on sector priorities and issues. Something like this, which we go into in more detail later. Here's an example.

NZ needs a system that creates a simplified structure replacing Parliament and local Government hierarchies with transparent processes and clear accountability.

Take-home points
The MMP system is flawed; it has not addressed the issues of transparency and one-party dominance. It has not delivered the promise that more voices are being heard.
The easiest fix, of course, is to abolish the political party and parliamentary system that allows obscurity and give the role to regional representatives as per the figure above.
The significant decrease from 123 Ministers to 16 underscores the sharpness of decision-making, transparency, and accountability. No party agendas, just the issues and the help people need, coming directly through the voices of elected officials.

Not to mention the significant cost savings on housing, transport, and airfares, which we get into later.

System Change 3. Change the Electoral Act abolishing all and any acts that support Political Parties.

System Change 4. Bring into law the 3 Tier Peoples Governance system.

Chapter 4: Parliament Decision-Making Processes and Powers

As you've learnt, NZ government decisions are made through a Westminster-style system characterised by the relationships between three branches: the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary.

1. The Executive (The "Government")
This is the primary decision-making body that makes all central and many regional decisions.

- **Executive Council:** Is represented by the PM and a few senior Ministers. These decisions are made before Cabinet and are formally enacted here, mostly by the dominant party in power because they have the numbers. The Governor-General gives legal effect to decisions through Orders in Council. That is why the party system prevails; it allows a power priority to override the integrity and transparency of decision-making.
- **Cabinet:** The central hub of power – currently National, consists of senior Ministers and the Prime Minister. They meet weekly to decide on major policies, government spending, and proposed new laws. The Coalition partners are at the mercy of the main party deciding what will be tabled in Parliament.
- **Collective Responsibility:** Once the Cabinet makes a decision, all Ministers must support it publicly, even if they personally disagree. Therefore, a person of integrity cannot stand up and speak out against rogue decisions, as we saw during COVID. This is where you see a Minister 'cross the floor'. Effectively, they are getting themselves sacked from their Ministerial position. This rarely happens.

2. The Legislature (Parliament)
Decisions regarding **new laws** (legislation) are made by the elected House of Representatives i.e. Parliament.

- **Law-Making Process:** Proposed laws (Bills) must pass three "readings" and a Select Committee review, where the public can provide feedback. Often, the Select Committee is stacked with carefully chosen people, Ministers, and high-profile supporters who will always be on the side of the government of the day rather than the public's current views. So when we, the people, make submissions to a Select Committee, they have already decided an outcome, and the process is a farce. There is little or no integrity in the current select committee process. I know this from sitting inside, writing papers, and waiting in the backroom of select committees.
- **Confidence & Supply:** The Government can only make decisions as long as it has the "confidence" of the House (the majority of its own MPs, or people who will bargain away to gain a political favour). If it loses a major vote on the Budget, it must usually resign or call an election. This never happens because all Ministers have self-interest, and none of them wants to lose their well-paid job or status.

3. The Judiciary (The Courts)
The Judiciary makes decisions by interpreting and applying the law to specific cases, but cannot override the Government.

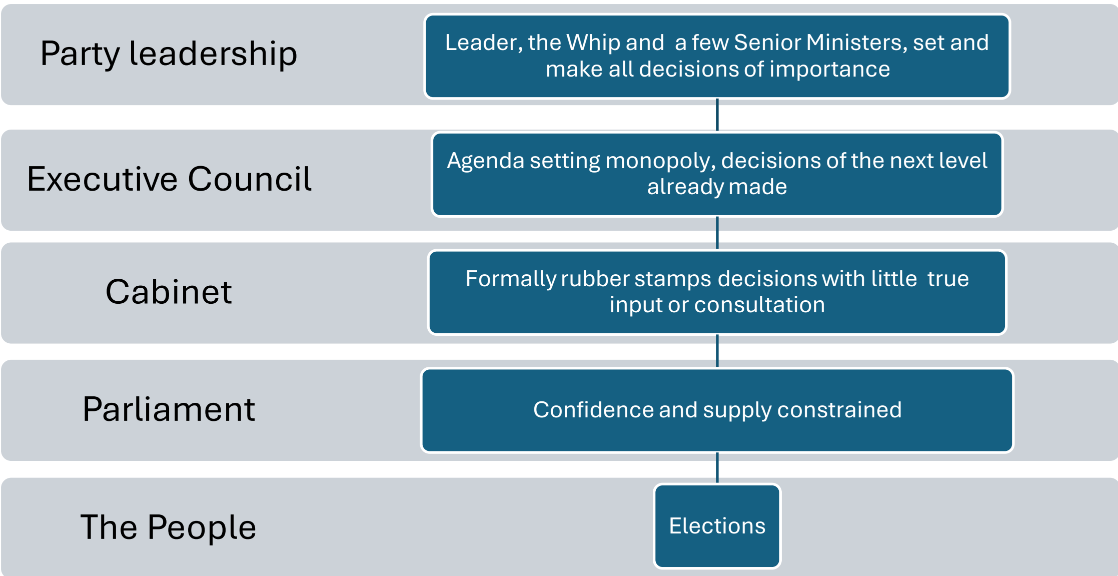
- **Independence:** Judges are supposed to be 'independent' of the other two branches. They ensure the Executive acts within its legal powers through a process called **judicial review**. Although, as you'll read later, these guys aren't independent because of their employment situation and guaranteed high salaries.

Key Influencing Factors

- **MMP (Mixed Member Proportional):** Since 1996, New Zealand's voting system has usually resulted in coalition governments. This means decisions often require negotiation and formal agreements between multiple political parties. But in reality, decisions are made behind closed doors, and shared decision-making rarely occurs.
- **Public Service:** Non-political government departments (like the Ministry of Health) provide "free and frank" advice to Ministers to help them make informed decisions. But as you will come to learn, just because the Ministers are given sound advice, they don't have to follow it – they can follow a 'whim', which is code for a pre-arranged deal with a vested interested party outside of government. Either within NZ or outside.
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** The Treaty is loosely considered a foundational document, requiring the government to consider Māori interests and rights in its decision-making processes. But they don't unless forced to, and the controversy is: why shouldn't the government consider the interests and rights of EVERYONE? More on this later.

House vs Cabinet vs Executive — Who Actually Holds Power?

This distinction is *critical* in NZ because much of the power lies **outside public visibility**. Do you think your elected local officials have a say in the decisions? You may not be right, depending on who they are; most have no say on your behalf at all. Here's where the power of decision-making sits. At the top is where the most power and decisions are made – mostly without us, the People, knowing what has been traded away.



Core functions of the whip

1. Controls how MPs vote

- Issues voting instructions ("three-line whip" style directions)
- Tells MPs when a vote is:
  - Compulsory
  - Strongly expected
  - Free (conscience) vote
- Tracks attendance and compliance

In practice, most votes are **not free**.

2. Enforces discipline (the real power)
If an MP defies the whip, consequences can include:

- Loss of speaking opportunities
- Removal from select committees
- Loss of promotions or ministerial chances
- Poor list ranking at the next election
- In extreme cases, expulsion from caucus

Under MMP, **list ranking is leveraged**, which gives whips *extra* power.

Democratic downsides – The Whip

✕ Suppresses genuine representation

✕ Enables executive dominance

✕ Turns Parliament into a rubber stamp

✕ Weakens scrutiny — especially under urgency

✕ Makes transparency depend on leaks, not process

In dominant-party situations, the whip becomes **a tool of control rather than coordination**. Power concentrates not because of elections, but because of **internal enforcement**.

Why the Executive Council dominates

Part Leadership controls:	**Parliamentary constraints:**
• The legislative agenda • What bills MPs vote on • Budget access • Ministerial appointments • Departmental priorities	• Party whip suppresses dissent • Confidence & supply discipline • Limited amendment power • Retrospective scrutiny (after damage)

Reality is…

- Parliament rarely refuses Cabinet advice
- There is no independent evidentiary test
- There is no clarity between legality, legitimacy, or effectiveness

This is why:

- Public debating chamber is scripted and a theatre
- Passes laws that have already been negotiated and bargained away
- MPs vote on confidence and supply, not on what is right
- There is no scrutiny through government (questions, select committees) anywhere.
- If the Cabinet agrees, the House usually follows (via party discipline and the Whip).

The Parliament

This is broader than Cabinet and includes Cabinet, Ministers outside Cabinet, Government departments as advisors on decisions, Crown entities, and State agencies.

This is where decisions are implemented, interpreted, and enforced.

Many choices that shape daily life happen here, including:

- regulatory interpretation
- funding decisions
- procurement
- enforcement priorities

These are often **not voted on in the House at all**.

Legally, the House (with the Crown) is supreme.

This is why you see Ministers on TV acting like children during debates. It is all for show and grandstanding for the public; there are no true debates, and everything has already been decided behind closed doors.

Cabinet agenda control

- Cabinet decides *what* legislation comes forward
- Cabinet controls urgency
- Cabinet controls sequencing

The House cannot meaningfully initiate most policy. This is why policies for the good of the people, brought forward by smaller parties, never see the light of day. The agenda is tightly controlled and manipulated by the status quo, the largest party in power.

Executive dominance of information

- Officials advise Ministers, not all MPs
- Select committees depend on departmental briefings, scripted by the lead parties' advisors
- MPs often read **after** policy is shaped

Knowledge asymmetry[6] weakens the challenge. This means the lead party and the main Ministers control the flow of information. Some Ministers intentionally hide parts of the information that others need to know. Or an official may advise, but a Minister may choose not to follow the advice and instead pursue their own hidden agenda.

Confidence and supply pressure

This is the only place, if at all possible, where a smaller party can make a difference in the current system of governance. Governing parties must maintain confidence. However, MPs are reluctant to destabilise the government; therefore, 'oversight' is traded for stability. This creates compliance**, even when** concern exists.

The result

[6] Knowledge asymmetry occurs when one party in an interaction, transaction or relationship possesses significantly more or better information than the other.

Parliament is legally all-powerful, yet structurally dependent and operationally reactive, with significant flaws in integrity. This gap is where public trust erodes. Other countries have tighter controls. Let's compare NZ with Ireland and Norway, both small countries.

New Zealand vs Ireland vs Norway

Feature	**New Zealand**	**Ireland**	**Norway**
Source of authority	Parliament	The people	The people
Supreme law	Acts of Parliament	Written Constitution	Written Constitution
Can Parliament override rights?	Yes	No	No
Are referendums binding?	No (advisory only)	Yes (mandatory for constitutional change)	Yes (constitutional authority)
Judicial review of legislation	Weak/interpretive	Strong	Strong
Local & regional authority	Delegated, revocable	Constitutionally recognised	Constitutionally protected
Risk of recentralisation	High	Low	Low
System stability	Politically stable, structurally fragile	Highly stable	Highly stable

Key takeaway
NZ's system relies on **Parliament's self-restraint**.
Ireland and Norway rely on **lawful limits enforced by courts**.

Parliamentary Sovereignty exists only because nothing limits it

NZ courts have repeatedly noted that parliamentary sovereignty persists **by convention and absence of higher law**, not by natural right.

Where Accountability Weakens in Practice

Accountability in NZ is **mostly retrospective** and largely ineffective, which is the core problem. Here is an overview of why there is a lack of accountability.

A. Accountability comes *after* harm	• Audits • Inquiries • Ombudsman reports • Reviews	By the time these acts: • money is spent • contracts are signed • policies are entrenched • damage is normalised
B. Decision-making happens off the public stage	• Cabinet committees • Minister–official interactions • Regulatory guidance • Procurement negotiations	These spaces have: • weak visibility • limited contestability • no real-time public check
C. Select committees are structurally limited	The government majority often controls outcomes • Time and resourcing constraints • Departments appear as both witness and expert	They improve transparency — but rarely shift outcomes.
D. Elections are a blunt accountability tool	Elections: • bundle many issues together • happens every 3 years • cannot correct mid-term failures • do not reveal *why* decisions were made	This leaves a long accountability gap.

The Systemic Consequence and the Improvement with the 3-Tier model

Decisions are made early, quietly, and centrally. **Whereas** accountability arrives late, formally, and diffusely. The new three-Tier governance model:

- shifts decision-making closer to scrutiny
- introduces **pre-decision transparency**
- breaks the political and oligarchy monopoly on bargaining
- creates accountability *while choices are still reversible*

The Start of Something Better

Don’t feel despondent, the Three-Tier Governance model we’re heading towards solves these power dynamics. The Built-in power brakes of the Three-Tier Model mean there is:

- No party whip
- In fact, no parties
- No confidence ‘blackmail’ negotiations
- Evidence flows upward, not downward
- Failure triggers activate *automatically*
- Executive authority becomes mechanical, not political

Cabinet-style dominance becomes **structurally impossible**, not just “discouraged”.

The take-home points:

New Zealand's system appears parliamentary but operates in an executive manner. While Parliament is sovereign in theory, real power concentrates in the Cabinet through control of the agenda, party discipline, and executive dominance. We the People are at the bottom of the food chain.

A Three-Tier governance model reverses this logic by distributing authority across community, regional, and national levels, ensuring scrutiny precedes power and participation replaces periodic consent.

System Change 5. Transparency of decision-making, with no hidden, dominating power; information flows back and forth through all three Tiers.

Chapter 5: Separation of 'Powers' The Judiciary System

There are highly paid watchdog agencies within the machinery supposedly created to keep the government in line and the People of NZ safe. Let's start with the judiciary system.

Separation of powers means that different parts of Government are set up to be independent from political interference and manipulation. The Judiciary and certain agencies are in place to ensure the elected party in power stays within the law and acts in the best interests of the people and the country. Policy advocates, pro-government figures, judges, etc., will say that the NZ system was created to allow a separation of powers among the Government (executive/Parliament), legislative bodies (lawmakers), and judicial functions (judges and courts).

YOU MAY ASK
If that is the case, why is the government allowed to pass laws without fully disclosing the pros and cons to the people? Where are the checks and balances, accountability, and protections through the courts?

Firstly, as you learned, due to Parliamentary sovereignty, the Government can override the Law. Secondly, there are additional circulatory accountabilities that undermine the system's independence and, therefore, its integrity. Let me give you the lowdown.

High Court and Supreme Court Judges

New Zealand's judicial hierarchy, **High Court** and **Supreme Court** judges serve as the primary guardians of the law, ensuring that legal disputes are settled fairly and that government power remains within its lawful boundaries.

High Court Judges
The High Court is New Zealand's highest court of "first instance," meaning it is where the most significant and complex legal cases begin.

- **Serious Criminal & Civil Trials:** Judges preside over the country's most severe criminal cases (such as murder and treason) and high-value civil disputes, typically those exceeding **$350,000**.
- **Judicial Review:** They have the "inherent jurisdiction" to review the actions of government agencies and public bodies to ensure they are following the law and acting fairly.
- **Supervisory & Appellate Role:** They hear appeals from lower courts like the **District Court** and various tribunals, correcting errors and providing authoritative declarations of law.

Supreme Court Judges
As the final court of appeal, the Supreme Court's purpose is to maintain the overall coherence and development of New Zealand's legal system.
Final Legal Decisions: They hear only a select number of cases that have "leapt" up from the Court of Appeal or High Court, providing the absolute final word on a legal issue.
Establishing Precedent: Because their decisions bind all other courts in New Zealand, their judgments clarify the law for the entire country.

Cases of Public Importance: They primarily focus on appeals involving matters of significant public or commercial importance, substantial miscarriages of justice, or critical issues relating to the Treaty of Waitangi—nothing to do with the Government.

Summary Table of Roles

Feature	**High Court Judges**	**Supreme Court Judges**
Main Function	Conduct major trials and first-level appeals	Final review of significant legal principles
Cases Handled	Murder, high-value civil claims, and judicial reviews	Cases of "general public importance"
Location	Sits in 18 locations throughout NZ	Sits primarily in Wellington

When The System Doesn’t Hold To Its Responsibility

In New Zealand’s legal system, the **High Court** does not technically "go against the law." Instead, it performs **judicial reviews** to ensure government actions comply with existing legislation. However, there are notable cases where the Court has either upheld controversial government directives or ruled in ways that appear to prioritise executive policy over individual rights.

Here are three prominent examples where the High Court’s role in balancing government directives and the law was tested:

The First COVID-19 Lockdown (Borrowdale v Director-General of Health):

In 2020, the High Court heard a challenge against the legality of the initial Alert Level 4 lockdown. While the Court ruled that the overall government directive was a justified limit on human rights given the pandemic, it found that the first nine days of the lockdown were **technically unlawful** because the government had not yet passed the necessary legal orders to back its public announcements.

Three Waters Reform (Timaru District Council & Ors v Minister of Local Government):

Several local councils challenged the government’s directive to transfer water assets to new regional entities, arguing it breached property rights and democratic accountability. The High Court dismissed the challenge, affirming the **principle of non-interference** in the legislative process. The Court ruled that it cannot stop the government from introducing or passing laws, even if those laws are controversial or appear to override existing local rights.

Climate Change Policy (Students for Climate Solutions Inc v Minister of Energy and Resources):

In this case, students challenged a government decision to grant petroleum exploration permits, arguing that the Minister failed to properly consider the impacts of climate change. The High Court upheld the government's decision, noting that while climate change is a critical issue, the judiciary must not intervene in broad policy or political decisions made by the Executive under specific statutory powers, even when the public criticises those decisions, or they are technically unlawful.

But as you read in the earlier section on decision-making powers, the 'government' can make any decision it wants, regardless of whether it is right or unlawful.

Why the High Court Often Supports the Government

In New Zealand, the **principle of Parliamentary Sovereignty** means that the High Court cannot strike down a law passed by Parliament. If the government issues a directive backed by a valid Act of Parliament, the High Court's only role is to check if the government followed the *process* laid out in that Act, not whether the policy itself is "good" or "fair". Therefore, there is no separation of powers between the judiciary and government.

Who Hires Who and What Does That Mean for Independence?

The appointment process further undermines the integrity of the judicial system. Here's a brief snapshot of who appoints whom in the upper echelons of power and decision-making, particularly those in place to keep the government 'honest'.

The Crown Law Office

Crown Law in New Zealand is the public service department that provides legal advice and representation to the Executive Government, ensuring its actions are lawful. Its purpose includes representing the Crown in significant legal cases, overseeing public prosecutions (such as high-level criminal trials), and providing expert advice on constitutional and Treaty of Waitangi issues.

Key functions of Crown Law include:

- **Legal Advice:** Serving as the principal legal advisor to the government, including Ministers and government departments.
- **Representation:** Representing the Crown in courts and tribunals, including judicial reviews, constitutional matters, and significant litigation.
- **Prosecutions:** Managing the Crown Solicitor network, which handles serious criminal offences like murder, manslaughter, and sexual offending, as well as conducting criminal appeals.
- **Constitutional Role:** Supporting the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General (the Law Officers of the Crown) in their duties, including upholding the rule of law and protecting the public interest.
- **Government Legal Leadership:** Guiding the wider government legal profession to manage risk and ensure legal consistency across the public sector.

Led by the Solicitor-General, Crown Law ensures the government acts within the law, aiming to give New Zealanders confidence in the legality of government decisions.

The Solicitor-General: As the Chief Executive of the Crown Law Office, the Solicitor-General's appointment is governed by the Public Service Act 2020 (specifically Schedule 7). While the Public Service Commissioner manages the selection process, the formal power of appointment remains with the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

Crown Law Staff: Most employees (Crown Counsel and support staff) are appointed under the Public Service Act 2020. These appointments must be merit-based and are made by the Solicitor-General (who is appointed by the PM).

Crown Solicitors: These are private legal practitioners who conduct Crown prosecutions in regional centres. They are appointed by warrant of the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Attorney-General. Their terms are described in the *Crown Solicitors: Terms of Office* document.

King's Counsel (KC): Appointments of King's Counsel are made under the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006 and the associated *Lawyers and Conveyancers Act (Lawyers: King's Counsel) Regulations 2012*. These are made by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Attorney-General, with the concurrence of the Chief Justice.

Attorney General and Solicitor-General

The Attorney-General is the principal legal adviser to the Government, in that capacity having responsibilities similar to those of any legal adviser to a client. The Attorney-General is also usually a member of the Cabinet. In Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings, the Attorney-General's role includes giving legal advice and encouraging Ministerial colleagues to seek appropriate legal advice in the course of government decision-making.[7].

Effectively, the PM is the employee of the judiciary, who are 'advising' them on the law and on whether the Government or the PM is staying within the law or breaking it—a circular authority with no teeth to stop a rogue government.

The Governor General appoints.	**The Attorney General appoints.**	**The Prime Minister appoints;**
Judges	Crown Law Solicitors High Court Judges	The Governor General The Attorney General The Solicitor General The Chief Justice

The appointment of High Court and Supreme Court judges, as well as personnel at Crown Law, is governed by several pieces of legislation and formal protocols that offer us, the people, no protection.

The Cost to Taxpayers For The Judiciary

Here are the specific details for each office's expenditure for the 2025/2026 year:
The Attorney-General is responsible for a single budget "Vote" which covers the functions of the Law Officers, including the Crown Law Office and the Solicitor-General.

- **Total Annual Appropriation (2025/26):** Nearly **NZ$135 million** is allocated for the discharge of the Law Officers' constitutional, criminal law, and system leadership responsibilities, including legal advice and representation services.
- This sum covers a range of activities, including:
  - Providing legal advice and representation to State Sector entities.
  - Conducting appeals arising from Crown prosecutions.
  - Oversight and supervision of the national Crown prosecution service provided by Crown Solicitors.

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[7] https://www.crownlaw.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/AGBriefingPaper.pdf

So the likes of SOS Doctors and people prosecuted during COVID, Barry the whistleblower, etc., good people are being prosecuted through this system of 'law'. And yet, the government cannot be held accountable for breaking its own laws.

Governor-General's Office
The costs for the Governor-General's office are primarily covered under the "Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet".

- **Annual Salary (as of Oct 2024):** The Governor-General's gross annual salary is **NZ$440,000**. The Remuneration Authority sets this, and it is subject to income tax.
- **Operating Costs:** The total ongoing costs for the office are generally estimated to be a few million dollars annually. Previous analyses have estimated the ongoing costs at around $7.6 million, including expenses for Government House residences and official transport. Still, exact annual operational figures can vary by project and are generally part of the broader Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet budget.

Chief Justice and the Judiciary

Chief Justice's Salary (as of Oct 2024): The yearly salary for the Chief Justice is **NZ$614,400**. This, like other judicial salaries, is set independently by the Remuneration Authority.
So that's over **140 million dollars** of our taxpayers' money per year going on bureaucracy, which does not give us satisfaction of transparency and accountability at the judicial level. To note, this does not include the other $1 billion a year spent on courts and routine judicial costs.

The take-home point:
There are no protective mechanisms for us, the people, to prevent rogue governance from violating any or all laws. There are massive costs to a judiciary bureaucracy that is not money well spent, and the judiciary's appointment process creates an ineffective circular accountability mechanism. There is no separation of powers.
In the Three-Tiered model, many of these functions would be extensively reviewed to only the true advisory capacity needed centrally. All decisions would be lawfully made under the Constitution, and we would use the Judiciary in its powers to hold the decision-makers to the Constitution.

System Change 6. The Judiciary will be given true independent separation of powers, and a higher Council will provide oversight over the Judiciary when necessary.

Chapter 6: The Bill of Rights and Human Rights Act

New Zealand has two key pieces of legislation intended to protect people from unfair treatment by the state and others: the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA) and the Human Rights Act 1993 (HRA). These fundamental Laws should protect farmers, businesspeople, community members, and anyone from unfair treatment by Government agencies.

Together, they are meant to protect fundamental rights, promote equality, and guide how government uses its power. The BORA promotes human rights, while the Human Rights Act 1993 promotes equality of opportunity through non-discrimination.
Unlike in many Western countries, they are not entrenched in a supreme law within the constitution. Instead, they sit alongside other laws passed by Parliament. So Parliament can pass laws that override rights, while Courts cannot strike down laws that breach rights.

Protections rely on judicial interpretation, complaint processes, and political goodwill.
Rights act as guidance, not enforceable limits on government power. If Parliament changes the law, rights change with it. In practice, Rights within NZ do not exist because they are conditional and fragile.

What protections do they actually provide?
The Bill of Rights Act 1990 is supposed to protect us, the people, from the State.

The Bill of Rights applies mainly to **government actions**, including:	It protects rights such as:
• Parliament • Ministers • Government departments • Police • Courts • Public bodies exercising government power	• freedom of expression, belief, and assembly • freedom from discrimination by the state • the right to natural justice and fair process • protection against unreasonable search, detention, or punishment

Importantly, it requires that laws be interpreted consistently with rights and, where possible, that government decision-makers consider rights when enacting laws. However, it does not invalidate laws; where the Government introduces unfair laws, the Rights Act does not matter. Even worse under Parliamentary sovereignty, courts cannot strike down legislation that breaches rights. Parliament can pass laws that override the Bill of Rights; the BORA has no authority or protections for people.

The Human Rights Act 1993 protects people from discrimination
The Human Rights Act applies mainly to employment, housing, education and the provision of goods and services. It protects people from discrimination on prohibited grounds such as:

- sex, race, ethnicity
- disability
- age
- religion or belief

- political opinion
- family status

It allows people to file complaints, seek mediation and/or pursue legal remedies. However, many government actions are exempt, while remedies are slow and procedural.
Enforcement depends on individuals navigating complex systems; this Act does not work for the People, either.

What problem are we fixing?
New Zealand has strong rights on paper. But many people still experience through Government decisions that have no consideration for the consequences; therefore, we have:

- homelessness
- untreated mental distress
- unsafe housing
- family separation
- exploitation
- high business failure and
- crisis-driven systems

This is not because true rights don't exist — it's because systems are **not designed to uphold them**.

What do these protections amount to in reality?
In practice:
These Acts **guide behaviour**, but do not bind Parliament
They provide **process rights**, not guaranteed outcomes
They rely on courts, agencies, and officials to act in good faith
They do not stop the government from changing the rules
They are **protective in intention**, but **fragile in structure**.

Why this matters for everyday New Zealanders
The Bill of Rights Act and the Human Rights Act are important — but they are **not shields**.
Because of Parliamentary sovereignty, they do not protect the people from parliament, this is why **constitutional sovereignty** is the first critical change NZ needs.
The Acts signal how government *should* behave, but they do not prevent government from:

- passing rights-limiting laws
- redefining protections
- prioritising policy objectives, political agendas over individual rights.

This means New Zealanders' rights depend heavily on:

- political culture
- institutional integrity
- and ongoing public vigilance, which is difficult when there is no transparency in the system.

From a decentralised governance perspective, this is a structural weakness. Rights are strongest when:

- power is close to the people
- decision-makers are directly accountable

- communities can challenge decisions locally, not just legally.

This is why **rights alone are not enough**. They must sit within a system where **power is limited by design**, not merely guided by principle. Hence, the next step is to enshrine rights in law under the renewed Constitution.

The Three-Tier Governance Model - What this change does

It keeps all existing rights — and adds one simple expectation:
Public systems must be designed so rights are protected before harm happens, not argued about afterwards. With the adoption of the Constitution and the 3-tier governance model, neither the BORA nor the HRA will be necessary, as both protect people's rights under the Constitution.

5. Enshrining the Three-Tier Model as a Rights Protection Mechanism
This is the key innovation.
New Constitutional Alignment Clause
Public power must be exercised through governance structures that provide transparency, accountability, and meaningful participation at both national, regional and community levels. Where services materially affect rights, well-being, or safety, governance must include mechanisms for early intervention, community oversight, and mandatory correction of systemic failure.

This makes the **Three-Tier model** the *means* by which rights are protected.

6. Rights of Future Generations (this is where NZ is behind)
Current law is **present-focused**. These reforms are **intergenerational**.
Draft Clause — Intergenerational Rights Protection
Public authorities must take reasonable steps to ensure that decisions made today do not create foreseeable and disproportionate harm to future generations, including through degraded services, unaffordable housing, environmental loss, or institutional fragility.

This ties directly to:
- housing affordability
- BTR safeguards
- Small business enterprises
- climate-linked service pressure
- debt and service hollowing

7. Embedding This Across All Sectors (one rule)
So in reality, we don’t re-litigate rights sector by sector. But rather, we will apply **one test everywhere**:

The Rights Design Test – that applies to all systems, policies, and structures.
Every major policy, funding model, or service design must answer:
Does this reduce or increase foreseeable harm?
- Does it rely on crisis response or prevention?
- Who carries the risk — the system or the individual?

- Are future generations better or worse off?
- Is there a clear failure trigger if harm increases?

If these aren't answered → the policy fails the rights test.
By aligning the Constitution with Three-Tier governance, this framework ensures that rights are upheld not only in law but also in budgets, structures, and daily decisions.
The Three-Tier governance model does not weaken rights. It operationalises them. It ensures rights are upheld not just in courtrooms, but in budgets, service design, and everyday decision-making.
Rights are no longer something people must fight for once harm has occurred. They are something the system is required to protect by design — for this generation and the next. Rights become something we design for — not something people must survive without.

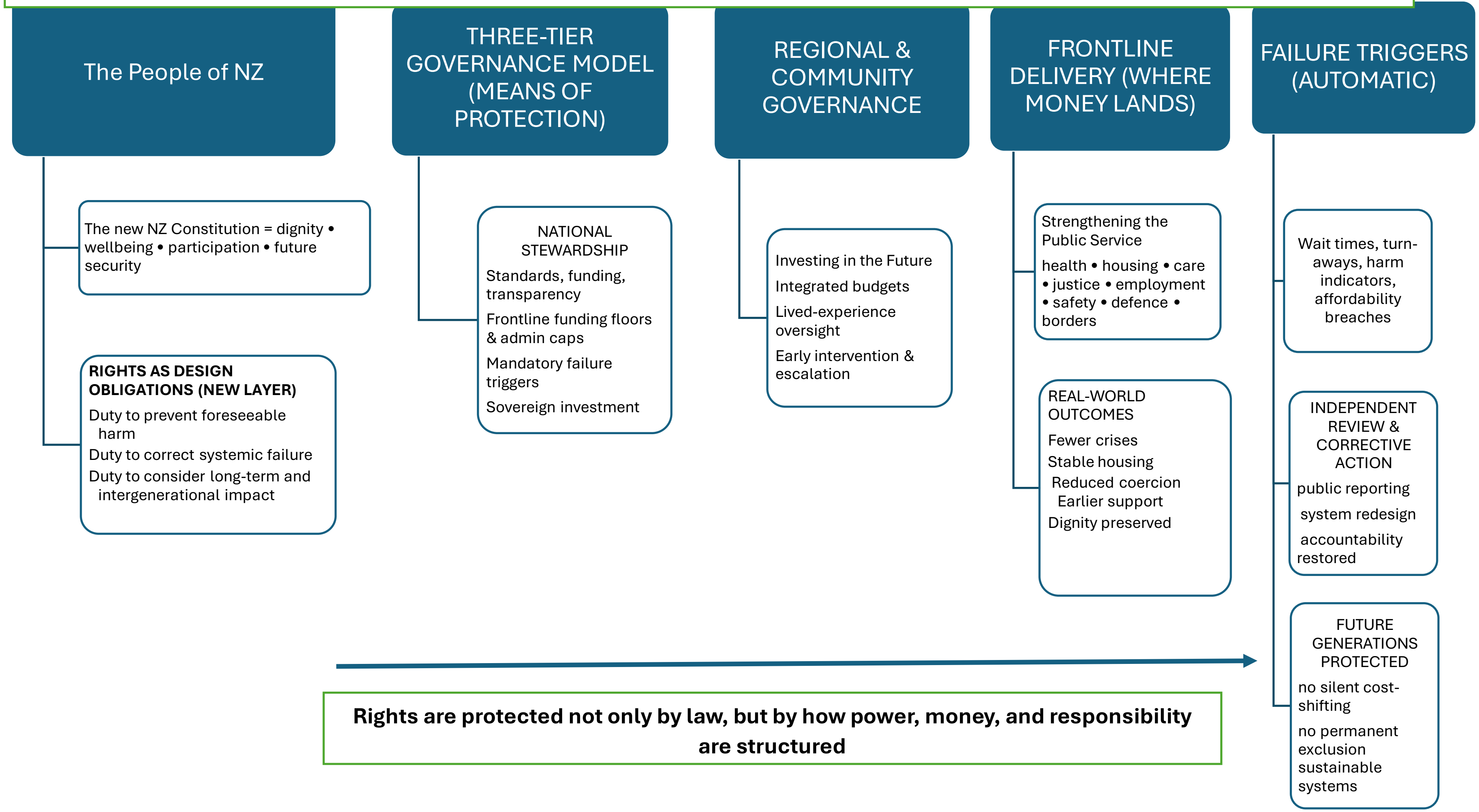
Below is a diagram showing where rights are woven throughout our country's system in the new 3-tiered governance model.

The take-home point
New Zealand's Bill of Rights and Human Rights Act were designed to protect people from the misuse of power.
But in a complex, interconnected society, harm no longer comes only from individual abuse — it comes from fragmented, opaque, and slow-to-correct systems. The greatest harm today does not come from single acts of abuse — it comes from systems that quietly fail, repeatedly, and without correction.

System Change 7. Remove the BORA and HRA, as they are now enshrined as People's Rights in the new Constitution, the supreme law.

Constitutional Diagram: Rights → Governance → Outcomes → Future Generations

This diagram shows how everything fits together **without changing New Zealand's constitutional character**.



Chapter 7: Costs to Taxpayers for 'the System'

Overall, the government is projected to spend $168 billion per year on public services. What do we see for this?
New Zealand **does not** have lifetime pensions; most of its historic MP perks were abolished in the 1990s. However, a small but real set of ongoing, legacy, and indirect costs remains, and the bigger issue is opacity, not scale. However, compared with what the normal hard workers receive in any industry or service in NZ, the perks are excessive.

1. MP Superannuation — the legacy scheme and ex/current super scheme
What actually exists
There is a closed Parliamentary Superannuation Scheme that applies only to MPs first elected before 1992 and who remained eligible when the scheme was shut. However, there is no transparency about who this is paid to and how much it costs taxpayers every year. This scheme is governed under the Parliamentary Superannuation Act 1979.
What it provides:

- A defined-benefit pension
- Paid for life and then to the surviving spouse
- Indexed
- Funded by taxpayers

Who still receives it

- A small, ageing group of former MPs and surviving spouses

Cost to taxpayers

- Still paid annually
- Declining each year
- Exact figures are not prominent in the budget documents
- Reported in Parliamentary Service financial statements, not the Votes most people read

There are NO other industries or professions that have this benefit, so why should MPs and past PMs?

And it gets worse…
Current and EX MPs and PMs after 1992 have access to a top-up of superannuation of up to 20% of their salary. This is by far excessive compared to what employees and KiwiSaver gain from superannuation in NZ.

2. Post-MP travel discounts and entitlements
Air travel
Former MPs retain reduced-rate or entitlement-based travel under historical determinations. These are administered through the Parliamentary Service, not as a line-item Vote, and are not reported to the public.
International travel

- No blanket lifetime international travel entitlement, some Ministers and ex-PMs get this as negotiated in their exit package deal. Again, no transparency into who gets this and how much it costs taxpayers.
- O**fficial travel** may still be funded for:

- state funerals
- constitutional events
- official delegations (case-by-case)

Transparency issue:
Costs are dispersed across departments and not aggregated as "former MP costs." So no one outside of Parliament knows the true cost to taxpayers.

3. Housing and accommodation subsidies (current MPs)
This is **one of the least understood areas**. MPs are entitled to accommodation support if they live outside Wellington. This includes:

- rent payments
- hotels
- leased apartments
- in some cases, mortgage interest support (historically broader than now)

This is controversial because MPs can own homes elsewhere and rent them out. In addition, Accommodation support is not means-tested, so wealthy multi-millionaire Ministers still receive it. This is because it is framed as "work-related" rather than personal benefit.

Who pays

- Taxpayers
- Via the Parliamentary Services
- Costs are bundled into "member support" expenditure and not reported on, so wealthy MPs receive this benefit even if they don't need it.

The key issue for taxpayers:
This is not corruption, but it reflects the unfairness that few workers get tax-free housing support. MPs are paid a salary; why don't they pay for part of the housing costs out of their salary?

4. Tax treatment of MP allowances (partially tax-advantaged)
Some MP allowances:

- are **non-taxable**
- are classified as "expense reimbursements" rather than income

These can include:

- accommodation allowances
- travel allowances
- communications allowances

So MPs can double-dip and also apply for a refund of reimbursements. This treatment is **legal and IRD-approved**, but:

5. The Parliamentary Service — costs outside ministerial scrutiny
The **Parliamentary Service** is a unique entity:

- It supports MPs and Parliament
- It reports to the Speaker of the House (who of course is a Minister)

What it pays for

- MP salaries administration
- Travel
- Housing
- Staff
- Security
- IT
- Former MP entitlements
- Select committee support

Why this matters

- These costs do not sit neatly inside a ministerial portfolio
- They receive less public interrogation
- They are often excluded from "government waste" discussions

This is an accountability issue and a structural blind spot in the current governance system.

6. Resettlement and exit costs

When MPs leave Parliament:

- Staff redundancy costs may be paid
- Office close-down costs occur
- Transition support is provided

These are:

- real
- variable
- largely invisible to the public

PM's annuity payments

Upon leaving the job, PMs negotiate a private settlement to have an annuity payment until the day they die, which could be their full salary; we don't know because there is NO transparency of who is getting this payment and how much it is costing taxpayers every year.

Key fairness question:

Why are MPs treated differently from most workers with work-related expenses? In the new 3-tier model, ALL of these expenses would be reviewed and potentially abolished – fairness and equity to everyday workers and taxpayers take precedence over ex-politicians.

Parliamentary Services and DPMC

Parliamentary Services (supports MPs and Parliament)

The Parliamentary Service is responsible for supporting the House of Representatives — including member services, staff support, travel, communications, IT, select committees, and related functions. The Parliamentary Service's funding is split across several appropriations that together cover support for MPs and parliamentary activity:

- Support Services to the Speaker and Parliamentary Services outputs:
  This includes departmental output expenses, such as administrative and service expenses, provided directly to Parliament and MPs.
  For the 2025/26 year, this is a relatively small baseline number for departmental output — around the low hundreds of thousands of dollars in the direct vote summary.

- Non-departmental expenses — Party and Member Support:
  A much larger item is non-departmental other expenses, funding parliamentary party support, Leader and Whips' offices, staff, research, communications, and member services.
  In the 2025/26 Estimates, this appropriation is approximately NZ$50.97 million and directly supports parliamentary parties and members each year.
- Capital expenditures:
  This includes long-term building and precinct costs, such as seismic strengthening and future accommodation strategies, which can be sizeable (e.g., tens of millions over multi-year projects) but are often behind the scenes and not listed as annual line items in the main vote figures.

Takeaway
Parliamentary Service annual baseline operational funding is in the tens of millions of dollars. Most of this relates to support for members and parliamentary party operations (around NZ$50 million in 2025/26), with additional capital costs for precinct buildings. BUT it is not clearly outlined in a single budget or across multiple budgets. With the reduction in MPs, these budgets would almost disappear.

2. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)
The DPMC is the central public service department that supports the Prime Minister, Cabinet and their committees, the Governor-General, and whole-of-government coordination and policy advice. Under Vote Prime Minister and Cabinet, Parliament appropriates funding for DPMC's work each year. While the full details are in Treasury budget documents, the 2025/26 Estimates show:

- A substantial ongoing appropriation for Advice and Support Services — which includes policy advice to Government and support services to the Prime Minister, Cabinet and the Governor-General.
- Capital expenditure — such as asset fit-outs and technology upgrades — also appears as part of the Vote.

The Estimates document shows that multi-category appropriations for DPMC's core services total tens of millions of dollars — meaning the department's annual funding to fulfil its central policy and coordination role is in that range. Why these matters

- Parliamentary Service funding goes directly into supporting the operations of Parliament — committees, MPs' offices, and services such as travel, staffing and communications.
- DPMC funding supports the core of executive government — policy coordination, advice to Ministers and Cabinet, and central governance functions across agencies.

Both are legitimate public functions: the one underpins the Legislature, the other underpins the Executive branch. In the 3-Tier Governance system, many costs would disappear or be significantly reduced, reducing the number of Ministers from 123 to 16. That 100s of millions of dollars are saved for taxpayers EVERY year.

Crown-funded Legal Action involving MPs costs On Taxpayers

While privilege itself doesn't have a cost, when MPs are involved in litigation in which the Crown or Parliamentary Service incurs legal costs, that *does* impose a cost on taxpayers. However, there is no central published total that aggregates all such costs each year.

Known examples in public records

Here are a few cases where legal costs related to MPs have been paid from public funds:

- Parliamentary Service paid legal costs for some MPs in defamation or employment cases. For example, in one widely reported 2020 defamation case involving a Speaker of the House, the Parliamentary Service paid around NZ$333,000 in combined legal and settlement costs arising from litigation related to comments made in Parliament – the payment was paid to a sitting MP.
- In earlier years, taxpayers covered legal fees for an MP's defamation cases totalling approximately NZ$270,000 for separate actions.

These are *individual cases* reported in the media or parliamentary records; they illustrate that legal costs can become significant depending on the dispute and its configuration (employment, defamation, privilege questions, etc.).

Limitations in transparency

- There is no dedicated budget line in Estimates or Supplementary Estimates labelled "legal costs for MPs' privilege litigation" or similar.
- Legal expenses for MPs' cases are usually recorded under Parliamentary Service expenses or the Office of the Clerk, and items are aggregated across many functions rather than isolated.
- Parliamentary Service disclosures include summaries of members' expenses, but they do *not* provide a consolidated figure for Crown-funded legal costs paid on behalf of MPs.

This means that while the taxpayer pays legal costs to support MPs in litigation, there is currently no official, published total for the annual amount across all such cases.

Legal immunity and indemnity costs

MPs benefit from:

- Parliamentary privilege (which means they can't be legally sued while a Minister)
- Crown-funded legal defence in many official contexts, which can be millions of dollars a year.
-

This includes:

- defamation protection for speeches in the House
- taxpayer-funded legal support for actions taken in an official capacity

Again — lawful, necessary for democracy — but rarely costed transparently.

For example, Winston Peters' "Wine Box Inquiry" cost millions.

Core cost of the inquiry

The inquiry ran from 1994 to 1997 and involved extensive litigation and appeals, which is why the total bill grew well beyond the base inquiry cost. The Winebox Inquiry itself cost over $10 million to run over nearly three years, paid for by the taxpayer, including legal fallout.

Contemporary government figures at the time put the cost higher at about $12 million for the inquiry process, plus roughly $4 million in additional legal costs outside the inquiry.

In round figures, minimum (just the inquiry): cost $10–12 million
Including legal and related costs: ~$16 million+. At today's costs, that's about $35 million. It was considered one of the most expensive inquiries in NZ at the time, but it achieved nothing. But it was paid for by taxpayers.

Why are clear totals hard to find
There are a few structural reasons:
A. Lack of a dedicated reporting category
Legal costs paid by the Parliamentary Service or other agencies are included in broader appropriations (e.g., "Party and Member Support", "Travel", "Personnel and Advisory Services") rather than itemised individually in budget summaries.

B. Multiple entities manage expenses

- Parliamentary Service
- Office of the Clerk
- Ministerial Services
- Sometimes Justice or Crown Law if the Crown intervenes

There's **no requirement under current reporting rules** to consolidate all Crown-funded legal costs for MPs into a single public figure. Sometimes legal costs are later recovered from other parties (e.g., damages awarded against the claimant), or the Crown issues ex gratia payments, and these are not always reported back in simple aggregated public figures.

4) Legal aid and the justice system are separate from MPs' privilege costs
It's worth clarifying that general legal aid spending or Crown-funded legal services for the public (e.g., legal aid for criminal or civil cases) are budgeted separately — and are large (e.g., roughly NZ$270 million per year for legal aid overall) — but this is not about MPs or parliamentary privilege.
That means that while taxpayers do pay for publicly funded legal services across the justice system, most of that is not connected to MPs' privilege or MPs' litigation costs. But cases like Barry the whistleblower, or prosecuting doctors for doing their job during COVID. There is no transparency for what is spent and the rationale or justification that is open to the public.

5) So what can be said clearly?
✓ Crown-funded legal costs related to MPs *do happen*, but there is no published annual total.
✓ Individual cases can cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars when the Parliamentary Service meets legal fees and settlements.
✓ Budget appropriations that could include these costs (e.g., Party and Member Support) run into the tens of millions annually, but they cover many things besides legal action.

Possible practical suggestions for public transparency
To improve transparency in a governance system, there needs to be:

1. Dedicated reporting on legal costs involving MPs in annual Parliamentary Service accounts
   – e.g., a specific line item for “legal costs on behalf of MPs”
2. Quarterly public disclosure of legal expenses paid for MPs or former MPs
3. Aggregated annual figures for Crown-funded litigation involving MPs, separate from other Parliamentary Service expenses
4. Cancelling all payments for post-Government Ministers and Prime Ministers.

These are transparency improvements — not accusations — and they make figures far easier for the public to understand and affordable for the country in the future.

Take-home point:

Parliamentary privilege itself doesn’t show up as a budget cost, but when MPs or their offices become involved in legal cases that the Parliamentary Service or the Crown funds, those legal costs — which can run into the hundreds of thousands in individual cases — are part of broader appropriations and currently cannot be extracted into a simple annual total from published official documents.

Ministerial Salary Setting

1. Ministers’ salaries

Ministerial salaries are set by the Remuneration Authority, which is appointed by the government and Parliament. They are always higher than inflation and much higher than wage and salary increases for everyday Kiwis. There is no fairness, equity, or transparency in determining MPs' salaries.

The issue with ministerial pay is not that it is set independently, but that it has become misaligned with the economic conditions most New Zealanders experience. When leadership pay rises faster than inflation and wages in both the public and private sectors, independence alone is not enough to sustain legitimacy.

Fairness in democratic systems depends not only on a transparent process, but on visibility between those who govern and those who are governed. Transparency without context is insufficient, and fairness without a shared economic framework cannot command public trust. Salaries should be adjusted to match the living wage for all NZers, not higher.

Transitional salary on departure

When an MP is unsuccessful at an election or does not stand again, they are generally entitled to:

A “run-off” or transitional payment — a continuation of salary for up to three months

This means the person continues to receive the equivalent of an MP’s pay for about three months after leaving Parliament. It’s designed to help with the shift back into private life after public office. No other industry or employment position has the luxury of this payment.

This transitional payment is not linked to length of service beyond being an MP; i.e., they can be a Minister for six months, be kicked out, and still receive the three months' pay. It also applies if they leave following an election.

2. Superannuation (retirement contribution)

Unlike some countries, NZ does not give MPs a special public pension solely based on tenure as an MP. However, MPs are entitled to a superannuation subsidy while they serve*. If an MP contributes to a retirement scheme (like KiwiSaver), the Remuneration Authority fixes a superannuation subsidy — basically an employer contribution — up to a maximum (currently the equivalent of 20 % of base pay). When they leave Parliament:

- they keep whatever balance they have built up (just like a normal saver)
- The subsidy does not extend beyond their time as an MP
- They do not get a special MP pension automatically if they weren't part of the old pension scheme

So serving as an MP for two years does not entitle a new MP to a taxpayer-funded pension today. (*Historical note:* MPs elected before mid-1992 could contribute to an old parliamentary pension scheme that offered a lifetime pension, but that scheme is being sunset.) Except as previously stated, we don't know to whom or how much is being paid.

3. Former Prime Minister's annuity

This is currently the only ongoing taxpayer-funded payment tied to former PMs. This annuity is not means-tested, so even wealthy ex-prime ministers receive this payment until they die. A former Prime Minister who held that office for at least two years will be paid an ongoing annuity after leaving office.

The Remuneration Authority sets the rate, and it is paid annually for life. The annuity is proportional to the time the person served as PM (up to a maximum). Former PMs may also have continued travel entitlements for work related to their former role. So, within the new Governance model, we would introduce reforms to make it fair, comparable to other industries, and affordable for the country in the future.

System Change 8. A complete review of all payments to ex-MPs and PMs, and an exit of all payments and benefits with a 3-month notice period. All ex-MPs and PMs are entitled to Government superannuation, as are all other NZers.

System Change 9. Abolish Parliamentary privilege. If a Minister or representative abuses their position and is sued, they must pay for the court litigation themselves.

System Change 10. All previous PMs' annuities are cancelled with 3 months' notice; they are paid the same superannuation as all NZers.

Public Office (Post-Service Entitlements Reform) Act

Section 1 — Purpose

To reform and standardise post-service entitlements for former holders of public office.

Section 2 — Application

This Act applies to all former:

• Prime Ministers

• Ministers of the Crown

Section 3 — Cessation of Existing Entitlements

All existing post-service entitlements are repealed or amended in accordance with this Act.

No entitlement shall continue beyond the transition period unless expressly provided for.

Section 4 — Transition Period
A 3-month transition period applies from the commencement of this Act.
During this period, entitlements may continue in reduced form while arrangements for cessation are implemented.

Section 5 — New Entitlements Framework
Former office holders are entitled only to:
• short-term transition support
• standard retirement provisions
• security where required for a maximum of 1 year

Section 6 — Prohibition of Lifetime Benefits
No lifetime or indefinite benefits shall be provided except where provided under general law applicable to all citizens.

Section 7 — Transparency
All entitlements must be publicly disclosed and subject to annual reporting.

Section 8 — Review
This framework shall be reviewed every 5 years.

In summary
Right now, some former Ministers and Prime Ministers receive benefits that continue long after they leave office. This proposal:
• phase those out over 3 months
• replaces them with short-term support
• aligns them with normal public sector standards
• makes everything transparent

This is not about diminishing service.
It is about aligning public office with public expectations — fair, transparent, and time-bound.
• reduces long-term fiscal obligations to the taxpayer and
• reinforces service-based leadership
Serve the country — be supported when you leave — but not for life.

Take-home point:
There are many other costs associated with MPs and parliamentary services that are NOT reported on and need to be reviewed in a new transparent governance system, which could include means-testing MPs. Also, based on fairness and equity, should taxpayers of today and the future continue to pay for PMs of the past? No other industry sector gets this privilege.

Draft Legislative Structure

Proposal: Reform of Post-Service Entitlements for Former Ministers and Prime Ministers

Purpose
To modernise and standardise post-service entitlements for former Ministers and Prime Ministers, ensuring:
• fairness across public service roles
• transparency to the public
• fiscal responsibility
• alignment with contemporary expectations

Core Principle
Public office is a position of service, not a lifetime entitlement.

Policy Overview
This proposal phases out existing lifetime or extended benefits and replaces them with:
• short-term transition support
• standardised entitlements aligned with other senior public roles
• full public transparency

1. Scope of Reform
Applies to:
• former Prime Ministers
• former Ministers of the Crown and their families

2. Benefits to Be Phased Out
The following entitlements will be phased out:
• lifetime pensions or extended annuities (if applicable)
• ongoing funded travel benefits
• permanent office or staffing provisions
• indefinite security or support arrangements (except where required for safety)

3. Transition Period
A **3-month transition period** will apply from the commencement of the Act.
During this period:
• existing benefits continue temporarily
• a structured wind-down occurs
• individuals are supported to transition

4. Replacement Framework
After the transition period, entitlements are limited to:

A. Transition Support (Short-Term)
• career transition assistance
• advisory or reintegration support

B. Standardised Pension Framework

Former Ministers and Prime Ministers move into:
• the same retirement framework as everyday NZers[8]
• no special lifetime arrangements beyond standard schemes

C. Security (If Required)
• risk-based security assessments
• protection only where justified and will be time-limited to a maximum of 1 year
• reviewed periodically

5. Transparency Measures
All post-service entitlements must be:
• publicly disclosed
• reported annually
• subject to audit

6. Grandparenting Approach (Important for Credibility)
Full Phase-Out
Applies to all current and former Ministers and PMs

The next few Chapters focus on the key Agencies that 'manage' the system in its current form.

[8] The scheme for senior public servants must also be reviewed, as they receive special compensation over and above normal everyday Kiwis. Judiciary roles also need reviewing. We need fairness and transparency across all sectors.

Chapter 8: The ‘System’ Agencies

There is a range of Agencies and Acts in place to maintain the integrity of political decision-making and the parliamentary system, and to preserve our rights. However, as you will learn, the system is flawed, creating loopholes and undermining the integrity of decision-making processes.
There are other agencies, like Land Information NZ and Customs, that I am not covering; those that follow in the next few chapters have a significant impact on how the governance system is led and managed, and how it functions.

The Ministry For Regulation

The Ministry for Regulation was established in March 2024 to serve as a **central steward**, effectively acting as the regulator of the Treasury's spending. It aims to address "executive paradise" and "short-termism" concerns through several key mechanisms:

1. Codifying "Good Lawmaking" Principles

The core of the strategy is the **Regulatory Standards Bill** (which is intended to become an Act). This law seeks to:

- **Establish Benchmarks:** It codifies principles for "responsible regulation," such as respect for property rights, individual liberties, and economic efficiency. Which effectively means the government can fast-track certain decisions it deems necessary.
- **Increase Transparency:** It requires the government to be transparent about the goals, logic, and alternatives considered for every new law, making it harder to pass "lazy" or poorly thought-out legislation. Except NZ has a Law that allows Ministers to hide financial decisions based on ‘commercial sensitivity’.

2. Independent Scrutiny and Accountability

To check executive power, the Ministry is establishing a **Regulatory Standards Board**.

- **Recourse Mechanism:** The board provides a path for the public to challenge regulations that don't meet the established principles.
- **Non-Binding Oversight:** Like the Waitangi Tribunal, the board will issue reports and recommendations, raising the "political cost" of keeping bad laws. However, this Board has no teeth or authority to override unethical government decisions.

3. Systematic "Red Tape" Removal

The Ministry addresses the "bloat" and complexity of existing rules through:

- **Sector Reviews:** Conducting deep-dive reviews into areas "bogged down in red tape," such as Early Childhood Education, agricultural products, and product labelling. The downside is whether it means the government can push through GMO laws and other measures that suit it without public consultation.
- **Red Tape Tipline:** There is an online portal where the public can directly report outdated or frustrating rules. This has already led to changes, such as simplifying building consent exemptions for small sheds, but not addressing the clogging of building consent processes for housing.

While the **Ministry for Regulation** was established to improve lawmaking, it has faced significant criticism from legal experts, government agencies, and the public for its perceived ideological narrowness and potential constitutional risks.

1. Narrow "Libertarian" Bias

Critics argue that the Regulatory Standards Act 2025 (formerly a Bill) embeds a narrow, **libertarian ideology** in law.[9], potentially narrowing viewpoints, while others argue it simply creates clearer rules to prevent poor-quality laws and protect people from unnecessary government overreach.

- **Property Rights vs. Public Good:** The principles strongly favour individual property rights and "economic efficiency". This could make it harder for future governments to pass laws for public health (e.g., alcohol/tobacco restrictions), environmental protection, or climate change if they "impair" business profits. However, where do environmental safeguards sit within this framework?
- **"Unequal" Equality:** The principle that everyone is "equal before the law" has been criticised for potentially blocking targeted support for disadvantaged groups, such as Māori, disabled people, or rainbow communities. More importantly, we have a large part of NZers who are now classed as the working poor.

2. Disregard for The Tiriti o Waitangi

A major point of contention is the absence of any reference to the **Treaty of Waitangi** in the Ministry's founding principles.

- **Waitangi Tribunal Finding:** The Tribunal held an urgent inquiry and found the Crown breached Treaty principles by advancing the legislation without meaningful consultation with Māori.
- **"Treaty Principles 2.0":** Some Māori leaders have described the framework as a "legislative pincer movement" alongside the Treaty Principles Bill, aimed at removing the legal force of Te Tiriti from policymaking.

3. Significant Costs and Bureaucracy

Despite its goal to reduce "red tape," the Ministry itself introduces a new layer of compliance.

- **Estimated Costs:** Official estimates suggested the new review requirements could cost government departments between $50 million and $60 million per year.
- **Agency Pushback:** Major departments like MBIE warned they might need hundreds of new staff to review existing laws for consistency, which could actually **slow down** the passage of new legislation by weeks.

4. Constitutional Tensions

Legal experts have voiced "misgivings" about the Regulatory Standards Board and its impact on New Zealand's tradition of parliamentary sovereignty.

- **Judicial Overreach:** While the Board's findings are non-binding, they create high political pressure. Critics fear this invites courts to "second-guess" the policy goals of democratically elected governments based on narrow economic tests.
- **Redundancy:** The Legislation Design and Advisory Committee argued the Bill was unnecessary as it duplicates existing checks like the Bill of Rights vetting and the Regulations Review Committee.

5. Consultation Concerns

The Ministry has been accused of "hollow" engagement.

- **Unread Submissions:** In 2025, reports emerged that officials did not read thousands of public submissions. Minister David Seymour dismissed many opposing submissions as "bots" or "fake," leading to claims that the process was undemocratic.

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[9] In everyday terms, libertarian-style laws are based on the idea that the freer the market and the fewer the government rules, the better society will function. Supporters believe this encourages innovation, efficiency, and personal freedom. Critics argue it can also weaken public protections, reduce oversight, and allow powerful private interests to dominate.

How the Board Functions

The Board acts as a "watchdog," checking whether proposed and existing laws meet the statutory principles of responsible regulation. Its work is divided into three main areas:

1. Reviewing New Legislation:
   When a new Government Bill is introduced, the Board reviews the Consistency Accountability Statement (CAS)—a document where the proposing Minister explains how the bill aligns with regulatory principles. The Board then reports its findings directly to the relevant Select Committee before the bill progresses.
2. Inquiries into Existing Laws:
   The Board can launch formal inquiries (red tape) into current laws to see if they have become "red tape" or are inconsistent with the Act's principles. These inquiries can be triggered by:
   a. Complaints from the public or businesses via the Red Tape Tipline.
   b. A direct request from the Minister for Regulation.
   c. The Board's own initiative.
3. Reporting and Recommendations:
   After an inquiry, the Board issues a public report. While its recommendations are non-binding (meaning the government is not legally required to change the law), the transparency of a public report creates significant political pressure on Ministers to justify keeping "poor" regulations.

The Cost to Taxpayers Every Year

Based on 2025 budget documents and Ministerial reports, the Ministry for Regulation and its associated Regulatory Standards Board are estimated to cost taxpayers approximately $18 million to $20 million per year.

Here is a breakdown of the costs:

- Ministry for Regulation Core Costs: The Ministry has estimated it will require roughly $1.1 million to $1.4 million per annum for staff to prepare guidance for ministers.
- **Regulatory Standards Board:** The board tasked with reviewing existing legislation is estimated to cost $1.04 million to $1.17 million per annum.
- **Total Regulatory Standards Bill Implementation:** Official estimates indicate the total annual cost for the ministry's regulatory standards work to be around $18 million.
- **Additional Departmental Costs:** Some officials have warned that the total impact on government departments could be higher, potentially ranging from $50 million to $60 million annually, according to early, high-level advice.

Take-home point

Given that the Ministry or Regulation has no authority to change unethical regulations, it's a bureaucracy of red tape created to reduce red tape. One has to conclude that the Government has created another bureaucracy to review bureaucracy and potentially create hidden shortcuts for government decision-making, while costing the country 100 million dollars.

The Reserve Bank of NZ (RBNZ)

What the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Does

The Reserve Bank of New Zealand is New Zealand's central bank. It is a *public policy agency* responsible for key functions that support the economy and financial system:

Core Roles

a. Monetary Policy

- Sets the *Official Cash Rate (OCR)* to achieve price stability (targeting inflation) and support maximum sustainable employment.
- Influences interest rates and credit conditions through financial markets.

b. Financial System Stability

- Regulates and supervises banks and other deposit-taking institutions to promote the *soundness and efficiency* of the financial system.
- Sets capital and risk standards for registered banks.

c. Central Bank Functions

- Issues and manages the *New Zealand dollar* and banknotes.
- Acts as banker to the government and to other financial institutions (settlement accounts).
- Provides *lender-of-last-resort* facilities in crises.

Purpose under Law

Under the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 2021, the Reserve Bank's statutory purpose is to promote the prosperity and well-being of New Zealanders, broadly expressed through price and financial stability, and central banking functions.
You will read in Part 2, Banking and Finance, that the RBNZ does not really control our OCR or bank interest rates and has very little power to maintain economic stability.

2. Cost of Running the Reserve Bank
Operating Costs

The RBNZ does not operate like a profit-making organisation — its activities are funded through an appropriation agreed with the government. The latest funding agreement covers 2025–2030 and allocates:

- NZ$750 million in operating expenses over five years, which equates to roughly NZ$150 million per year.
- NZ$25.6 million in capital expenditure over the same period.

These figures represent a 25% reduction from previous budget levels as part of wider public-sector cost-control measures.

Surplus and Dividend

The Bank typically earns revenue through activities (e.g., interest on foreign reserves), and the surplus is returned to the government. In the most recent annual results, RBNZ reported operating revenue far exceeding expenses, resulting in a surplus that contributed to equity and dividends payable. There is no visibility of where these millions of dollars were subsequently spent.

3. Governance Structure Today

Under the current governance framework:

- A Governor leads the Bank's operations, including decision-making in monetary policy via the Monetary Policy Committee[10].

[10] The Current Governor of Reserve Babk is NOT a NZer.

- A Board of Directors has oversight, particularly after the *Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 2021* strengthened board responsibilities beyond simple oversight[11].
- The governance arrangements separate *governance* (Board) from *management* (Governor and senior management), aligning more with standard corporate practice.

There are also moves to establish a **Financial Policy Committee (FPC)** with specific powers over prudential policy to support financial stability governance. For years, one international criticism has been that central banks were using interest rates to solve problems partly caused by banking-system structure, housing speculation, dependence on offshore funding, and financial concentration. Your broader financial sovereignty work is actually touching the same systemic tension.
The new FPC appears designed to separate:

- "price stability" issues (inflation/OCR)
  from
- "financial stability" issues (bank resilience, lending rules, housing leverage, systemic risk).

The FPC was formally announced in late 2025 and began operating in 2026.
According to the RBNZ:

- it includes the Governor,
- the RBNZ Board Chair,
- several Reserve Bank board members,
- and up to two external members.

Its role includes oversight of:

- prudential regulation,
- banking-system stability,
- macroprudential tools,
- mortgage lending restrictions,
- and broader financial-system risks.

That "macroprudential" term is important. In plain English, it means: trying to stop the whole financial system from becoming unstable before a crisis happens. Part 2. Focuses more on NZ's banking and financial systems.

4. Reconfiguring the RBNZ for a Three-Tier Governance System

A **Three-Tier governance system** refers to the separation of strategic governance (policy oversight) from operational management within the new governance model, with the sole purpose of creating financial sovereignty.[12]. Applied to central banking, this could involve:

A. Strategic (Governance) Tier

This tier focuses on *high-level goals, frameworks and oversight*.
In the RBNZ context, this might include:

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[11] The Board are made up of overseas ex bankers and investment financiers.
[12] Financial sovereignty means a country has enough control over its own money, banking, savings, and investment systems to make decisions in its own long-term interests — without being overly dependent on overseas lenders, corporations, or financial shocks.

- **A strengthened governance board** of NZers with statutory powers — beyond current oversight — in areas like financial stability, regulatory priorities, and organisational strategy[13].
- Clear role separation between governance directors (non-executive) and operational executives.

B. Decision/Tactical Tier
This tier focuses on *policy decisions and execution*. It could consist of:

- **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** — already exists under the 2021 Act — dedicated to setting monetary policy like the OCR.
- **Financial Policy Committee (FPC)** with clear powers and decision rights for prudential regulation and systemic risk issues; this is being developed.

Separating these committees from the Board strengthens governance by limiting the concentration of power and increasing *specialised expertise* in distinct policy domains.

C. Management Tier

- The **Governor and executive team** would handle day-to-day operations, implementing board and committee decisions.

Benefits of This Model

- **Checks and balances:** Separating strategic governance from policy decisions reduces the risk of undue influence by any single actor or group.
- **Expertise focus:** Policy decisions (monetary and financial stability) can be made by subject-specific committees with expert members, improving technical quality and credibility.
- **Transparency and Accountability: Clear roles support Accountability** to Parliament and the public.

This model resembles governance frameworks in other advanced central banking systems, in which commodity committees set policy, independent boards govern, and executives manage operations. As you will see later on in Part 2 Banking and Finance, we could benefit from reviewing Norway's banking models.
Implementation Considerations

- **Legislative change** — Altering the Reserve Bank Act or related statutes to define the roles and powers of each tier clearly.
- **Appointment Processes** — Transparent, merit-based appointments for board and committee members who are NZers to ensure independence and expertise.
- **Performance Monitoring** — Independent monitoring (e.g., by Treasury or Auditor-General) to assess outcomes (monetary and financial stability).

Aspect	**Current**	**Three-Tier Proposal**
Governance	Board with oversight, Governor central	Central Board with statutory strategic powers
Monetary Policy	MPC under the Governor	MPC as a distinct policy tier

[13] A new board with predominantly NZers with only overseas experts as advisors.

Aspect	Current	Three-Tier Proposal
Financial Stability Policy	Board + upcoming FPC	FPC with defined authority and CB oversight
Management	Governor & executive	Clear operational tier separate from governance

This structure strengthens separation of strategic oversight, specialist policy decision-making, and management execution — aligning central banking governance with modern institutional best practices. Decisions are made with NZ financial sovereignty and sovereign wealth as the sole focus.

1. The Principles

The Board's role

The Board of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand is meant to:

- **Set guardrails, not policy outcomes**
    - It does *not* set interest rates
    - It does *not* decide who gets credit
    - It does *not* run day-to-day banking or markets
- **Hold management to account**
    - Appoint and review the Governor
    - Ensure the Bank is acting within its legal mandate
    - Test whether systems, risk frameworks, and decisions are sound
- **Protect the institution, not private interests**
    - Its duty is to the *public mandate* set in law, not to markets, investors, or the government of the day.

That's the theory.

Now you can move to the tension.

2. Expertise vs Regulatory Capture

So the Reserve Bank Board makes the steering decisions for NZ, but what if some Board members are tied to large financial institutions and banks that hold NZ debt? Is there a risk of regulatory capture to benefit other outcomes?

For example:

- Financial companies manage **trillions** in assets
- They benefit from predictable monetary conditions
- It has deep exposure to bond markets, housing finance, and liquidity policy

So the fear is:

"How can a regulator be independent if people from the system it regulates help govern it?"

That concern for us, the people, is **reasonable**, not conspiratorial.

3. Current safeguards

- **Legal duty**; Board members are legally bound to act in the interests of the Bank's statutory purpose — not former employers.
- **Recusal rules**; Members must step out of decisions where a conflict exists (actual or perceived).
- **No operational power**; The Board does not execute trades, set the OCR, or design specific prudential rules.
- **Collective decision-making**; No single member can direct outcomes.

This explains **why defenders say "it's fine."**
But let's go further because our international debt is important to rescue.

4. Acknowledge the *real* problem: perception + culture
Here's the part most official explanations skip — and where trust is lost.
The issue isn't just conflicts of interest. It's epistemic capture.[14]:

- People trained inside global finance share:
    - Similar assumptions
    - Similar risk models
    - Similar views of "stability"

Even without bad intent:

- Financial system risks can be prioritised over household or regional impacts or long-term outcomes for a country.
- Distributional effects get treated as "outside mandate"
- Market confidence can outweigh democratic confidence

Even if every rule is followed, a board dominated by people from the same financial worldview can narrow what feels 'reasonable' or 'possible'.

This is a structural issue.

The Integrity of Transparency

Transparency is **not** just publishing minutes or bios; there must be more rigorous appointment processes and rules to safeguard the most important decision for NZ now and into the future.
Weak transparency (what we mostly have)

- CVs published after appointment
- High-level board minutes with no transparency for discussions, decisions, pros and cons, trade-offs
- Generic conflict declarations, no actual impactful relationship disclosure

Strong transparency (what people actually need)

- **Clear statements of the worldview** of what assumptions about markets, inflation, debt, and growth guide decisions?
- **Public conflict mapping**. Not just "no conflict declared", but *why* past roles are not relevant to current decisions.
- **Decision traceability**
    - Showing how board oversight influenced (or challenged) management choices.
- **Diversity of power, not just people**. Different professional backgrounds, not just different resumes.

6. How this fits the Three-Tier governance model
This is where we must get it right for NZ and our future generations.

[14] Epistemic culture refers to the practice of unspoken rules, practices, methods and norms that define how a particular group creates, validates or shares knowledge. In plain English it's the unspoken phrase of 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'. Benefiting only those doing the 'scratching'.

In a Three-Tier model

Tier 1: Public Mandate & Oversight	Tier 2: Technical Policy Committees

• The Board becomes a *mandated guardian*
• Members are selected to represent:
  ○ Economic diversity
  ○ Regional impacts
  ○ Non-financial system risks
Crucially:
• **Recent senior roles in regulated global finance are excluded**
  ○ Not as punishment
  ○ As a *cool-off firewall* (e.g. 5–7 years)
	• Monetary and financial experts (including ex-finance professionals) sit here
	• They advise, model, and stress-test
	• They do *not* govern the institution

This separation means: Expertise is still used — but it no longer governs itself.

Take-home point:
The Reserve Bank Board isn't meant to represent markets — it's meant to protect NZ's financial interests. When former global asset managers sit on boards, even with good intentions, trust erodes because people see the same system overseeing itself. Real transparency isn't about declaring conflicts — it's about designing governance, so conflicts don't arise in the first place.

The Cost to Taxpayers Every Year
The RBNZ costs taxpayers approximately $150 million a year.

The Role of Treasury

NZ Treasury is New Zealand's lead economic and financial advisor, responsible for guiding the government on economic policy, financial strategy, and public sector performance, with a core aim to lift living standards for all New Zealanders. Key functions include providing advice, managing the Crown's balance sheet and public finances, producing economic and fiscal forecasts, preparing the Budget, overseeing debt and asset management, and ensuring value for money in government spending.

Core Responsibilities:

- **Economic & Fiscal Advice:** Advises the government on the overall economic framework, financial strategy, and tax policy. However, politicians do not have to take the advice from the Treasury experts.
- **Budgeting:** Helps prepare the annual Budget, compiles proposals, and produces key documents like the Estimates.
- **Financial Management:** Stewards public sector financial systems, manages the Crown's assets and liabilities, and produces government financial statements.
- **Forecasting:** Produces economic and financial forecasts, including the Economic and Fiscal Update[15].

[15]https://www.google.com/search?q=Economic+and+Fiscal+Updates

- **Public Sector Performance:** Works to improve the performance and value for money of the public sector.
- **Long-Term Focus:** Uses frameworks like the Living Standards Framework to advise on long-term economic challenges and opportunities.
- **Specialised Functions:** Manages New Zealand Debt Management and New Zealand Export Credit.

Key Objectives:

- **Boosting Living Standards:** Aims to grow human, social, natural, physical, and financial capital for all New Zealanders.
- **Fiscal Stability:** Maintains prudent debt levels, balances revenue and expenses, and ensures sustainable long-term finances.

Unfortunately, due to the flawed system, they fail to meet many of these responsibilities and objectives. Under the law, Ministers are not required to follow the Treasury's advice, which is a clear example of why we are in so much debt: either the Treasury's advice is bad, or the government has chosen not to follow it. I suspect it’s the latter. Having worked with Treasury before, I know staff are highly trained and passionate people who make NZ a better place through improved financial responsibility. In my experience, Treasury staff are not the problem.

The Cost to Taxpayers Every Year
Treasury, as an organisation, costs taxpayers $150 million per year.
Take-home point:
The PM decides to take on more debt and to do so alone. Both the Treasury AND Reserve Bank have Boards that make decisions based on what the Govt is spending, using their skills and expertise are either ex Financiers, large global finance and investment firms, ex-bankers, and yes we want good people with the right skills, however we need the checks and balances and transparency to keep these experts, but where is the balance for regional growth and overall financial sovereignty and security for NZ?

If there is no transparency about when and why the NZ Govt can issue more overseas debt, how can we trust that they are making decisions based on what’s best for NZ’s future? How do we trust the competence of bureaucrats who may have no experience with National financial expenditure and balance sheets? How do we know that we aren’t falling into line with either bigger governments or the elites who are trying to control the world’s economic systems? Without this transparency, we can only guess.

Public Service Commission (PSC)

At its heart, the PSC is supposed to ensure public service agencies are doing what they are supposed to, according to their appropriations AND to the quality NZers deserve.
In essence, it is about how the public service behaves —not what policies are chosen, but how government agencies operate, lead, and remain neutral.
Think of it as the’ steward’ of the public service system, not a delivery agency. It is supposed to (with Treasury and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet) ensure that the public services, as agencies, are performing and delivering against their state plans and government directives.
1. The PSC employs and oversees public service chief executives

The PSC appoints Chief Executives of government departments (e.g. MBIE, MSD, MPI):
- Sets their performance expectations
- Reviews their performance

The issue:
While the PSC runs the recruitment process and recommends the preferred candidate, the Chief Executives are hired by endorsement from the PM and Ministers. There is no real buffer to protect departments from becoming political tools. The PM or Ministers can also have the CEO removed if they are not happy with the CEO's response, performance, or political affiliations.

2. The PSC is supposed to provide political neutrality and integrity
Having worked in the PSC, conducting CEO performance reviews and working on other performance-related projects as the watchdog for core public service values:
- It cannot guarantee political neutrality, after all, the Commissioner of the PSC himself is employed by the PM.
- While at times the PSC gives free and frank advice, it may hold back that information if it is unpalatable to the PM/Minister of the day.
- The PSC does not always uphold integrity and fairness at the risk of annoying the PSC's employer.
- Stewardship of public resources is not always maintained because Ministers can direct or redirect resources to where they wish them to go.

The PSC
- Investigates serious conduct issues but rarely acts on them
- Issues guidance on conflicts of interest but has no authority to act on the concerns
- Enforces the Public Service Code of Conduct as a guideline

3. The PSC sets system-wide standards and expectations
The PSC is supposed to be the setter and monitor of CEOs' performance and capabilities, ensuring these highly paid individuals do their jobs well. However, we have seen poorly performing CEOs allowed to remain in their roles for years, with bullying behaviour swept under the carpet while good staff beneath them leave. I have seen bad CEOs move from one agency to another because they have strong affiliations with a minister. I have also seen highly competent CEOs be stifled by Politicians' agendas that seek to fund flawed policies and programmes.

4. The PSC advises the Prime Minister on the machinery of government
The PSC:
- Advises on the creation, merging, or restructuring of departments – after Ministers have already made a decision.
- Supports transitions between governments
- Helps maintain continuity and stability of CEOs, hence the same CEOs cycle around the Agencies with very few new fresh perspectives entering the system
- The PSC is about **culture and conduct**, not enforcement of results.

This is about institutional continuity, not policy direction. It is supposed to shape how the system operates, not what decisions are taken. But it cannot force outcomes if:
- Ministers override advice,
- agencies meet minimum compliance but fail communities,

- structural problems sit outside conduct and leadership
- There are poor outcomes for the people due to a lack of leadership and delivery flaws.[16]

The PSC Costs to Taxpayers

The PSC costs taxpayers approximately $74 million per year. Total Appropriations for 2024/25 For the year ended 30 June 2025, the total appropriations (the amount Parliament allocated) were roughly:

- Departmental Output Expenses (core operations): *about NZ$53.4 million*
- Non-Departmental Other Expenses (chief executives' remuneration etc.): *about NZ$20.2 million*
- Departmental Capital Expenditure (assets like IT equipment): *about NZ$0.4 million*
- Other small items (e.g., Open Government Partnership costs): minor amounts

Total annual appropriations ≈ NZ$74.3 million for 2024/25. This is a VERY expensive recruitment company for the public services that does not hold them to account to improve performance. SO, under the 3-tiered framework, let's improve this gap.

Public Service Accountability and Transparency Act

Proposed Reform
This would be a **foundational Act** designed to close the gap by shifting from:
"observe and report" → "monitor, require, and enforce"

1. Purpose of the Act
To:
• strengthen accountability across the public service
• introduce real-time transparency
• ensure that identified failures lead to required action
• align responsibility with consequences

2. Establish a Public Accountability Authority (PAA)
Create a new independent body:
Public Accountability Authority
Role:
• monitor performance across agencies
• investigate systemic issues
• require corrective action
• publish public accountability dashboards

3. Key Shift — From Recommendations to Requirements
Current system:

[16] To note that the PSC, Treasury, and DPMC have negotiated confidential 'golden handshakes' for senior agency staff to remove them when either performance has been lacking, or the Minister wants them removed. The golden handshake circumvents the HR laws.

The agencies can receive recommendations, but may or may not act on them.

New system:
Agencies must respond and act within defined timeframes. Where a material failure or risk is identified, the responsible agency must implement corrective actions within a defined timeframe or publicly justify non-compliance. Removal of non-performing public servant CEOs will be strictly managed in accordance with the Employment Relations Act 2000 and by a smaller PSC or the Regional Boards Employment Committee.

4. Mandatory Public Accountability Dashboards
Every major public agency must publish according to its dashboard requirements, including:
• financial performance
• service delivery outcomes
• backlog / unmet demand
• complaints and resolution rates

These must be:
• standardised
• updated regularly
• accessible to the public

5. Real-Time Oversight (Not Just Retrospective)
Instead of only auditing after the fact:
• continuous monitoring of key indicators
• early warning triggers
• intervention thresholds

6. Clear Lines of Responsibility
Each agency must define:
• Who is responsible for outcomes
• Who is accountable for failure
• who must act when issues arise

7. Escalation Mechanism
If an agency fails to act:
A public notice was issued
It is Escalated to the Central Tier
A mandatory review or intervention

8. Integration with the Three-Tier Model
The National Board
• sets standards
• oversees system-wide accountability
Manages National public servant roles

The Regional Board
• monitors delivery
• responds to local issues

Manages public servants at the regional level

Community
• provides visibility and feedback
• sees performance clearly

9. What This Fixes With Reform
• issues identified early
• action is required
• responsibility is clear

10. Risks
• risk of over-centralisation if not balanced
• potential compliance burden
• requires strong capability and HR systems to implement

11. Strengths
• real accountability (not just reporting)
• improved public trust
• faster response to failures
• clearer system performance

Accountability is not just about knowing what went wrong. It is about ensuring something is done about it.

Take-home Point:
While it investigates conduct issues, the PSC has no authority to act on them. It also oversees the recruitment process for appointing Agency heads, but appointments are made only with the Minister's agreement. This Agency is another cost to taxpayers that does not help everyday NZers improve public services on the ground, where we, the people, feel it most.

System Change 11. 80% of public services and resources are devolved/allocated to the Regions to control, decide how to use, and distribute. Heads of agencies will be in place for a maximum of five years with no renewal.

System Change 12. Independence of the CEO will be created through the 3-tier model and a review of the agencies. Monitoring the agencies' performance will be conducted to merge them into one clearly defined Accountability and Transparency Agency.

In summary:
The System Agencies are presumed to be in place to uphold integrity, quality, and effectiveness (including the Treasury and Reserve Bank in the financial chapter) within public services. However, the system is flawed and can be manipulated, with decisions made by the political party of the day to reign supreme over Agencies, smaller parties, and the people.
So the proposed new Act gives the system agencies more authority to improve the system moving forward.

Chapter 9: The Security Agencies

The security agencies in NZ work to track whatever the government wishes to investigate/watch. In fact, they should be in place to protect NZ. Most of the time, we, everyday NZers, do not know what they are doing and why. It is assumed in the current age of secrecy and people's growing desire for sovereignty that anyone who challenges the government is being watched. We don't know due to a lack of transparency.

Government Communications Security Bureau

The Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) is New Zealand's lead agency for signals intelligence (SIGINT) and cyber security. Its primary mission is to provide the government with an "intelligence advantage" and "cyber resilience" to navigate national security threats.

Core Functions

Under the Intelligence and Security Act 2017, the GCSB has four legally mandated functions:

- **Intelligence Collection & Analysis:** Specialises in intelligence derived from electronic communications (SIGINT) to support the National Security Intelligence Priorities set by the government.
- **Cyber Security & Protective Services:** Provides advice and technical assistance to "organisations of national significance" in both the public and private sectors to defend against sophisticated cyber threats.
- **Co-operation with Public Authorities:** Assists the NZ Police, New Zealand Defence Force, and NZSIS in performing their lawful functions, such as counter-terrorism and maritime surveillance.
- **Response to Imminent Threat:** Cooperates with other entities to respond to urgent threats to life or security.

Key Operational Roles

- **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC):** A unit within the GCSB that serves as New Zealand's lead operational cyber security agency. Since 2023, it has integrated with CERT NZ to provide a "whole-of-economy" remit. In 2023, $326 million was spent on a data centre within the GCSB. No one knows why it was set up or what data it collects.
- **Five Eyes Partnership:** The GCSB is New Zealand's representative in the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance with the US, UK, Canada, and Australia.
- **Government Chief Information Security Officer (GCISO):** The Director-General of the GCSB also serves as the GCISO, setting information security standards for the entire public service.
- **Regulatory Authority:** Assesses telecommunications network changes under the TICSA Act and conducts national security risk assessments for outer space and high-altitude activities.

The GCSB is overseen by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security and the Intelligence and Security Committee to ensure all activities remain lawful and proportionate.

Critics of the GCSB typically highlight historical compliance failures, recent lapses in transparency regarding foreign partnerships, and operational challenges amid evolving technology.

1. Ministerial Oversight & Transparency Issues

- **Hosting Foreign Spy Systems:** A 2024 Inspector-General report found the GCSB hosted a foreign signals intelligence system from 2013 to 2020 without ever informing its Minister. The system was only "rediscovered" during an internal audit in 2020.
- **Inadequate Record-Keeping:** The same report noted "negligible awareness" of this foreign system among senior staff and "patchy records" that obscured its operations. The agency was working outside of the government directives and authority. Which raises the question, WHO were they working for outside of NZ?

2. Historical Legal & Compliance Failures

- **Unlawful Domestic Spying:** In 2012, the Kitteridge Report revealed that the GCSB had potentially spied on up to 85 New Zealanders illegally over a decade – that was found. This was most famously highlighted by the Kim Dotcom case, in which the agency unlawfully intercepted the communications of an NZ resident.
- **Complex Legal Framework:** The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS) has repeatedly noted that the agency struggles with "under-developed" operational policies that do not keep pace with legal or technological changes.

3. Operational & Capacity Gaps

- **Resource Constraints:** The agency has historically faced under-resourcing and a lack of legal staff, leading to systemic errors. Recent budget cycles (e.g., Budget 2025) have seen funding reductions despite they say increasing threat levels. How do we know? Again, no transparency.
- **Lagging Cyber Strategy:** Officials have acknowledged that New Zealand's national cybersecurity strategy is dated, with a planned refresh missing its 2023 deadline.
- **Failure to Scan Specific Threats:** The Royal Commission into the Christchurch Mosque Attacks found that the GCSB (and other agencies) failed to adequately monitor White identity extremism, focusing too narrowly on Islamic extremism.

4. Human Rights & Ethical Concerns

- **Intelligence Sharing Risks:** The IGIS has raised concerns about the lack of formal follow-up on whether intelligence shared with foreign partners contributed to human rights breaches.
- **Five Eyes Dependency:** Critics argue that New Zealand's role in the Five Eyes can result in the GCSB acting more in the interest of larger partners (like the US) than in New Zealand's independent national interest.

The cost to New Zealand taxpayers of the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) fluctuates annually due to large-scale infrastructure and capital projects.

What the GCSB Costs Taxpayers Every Year

Annual Expenditure

- **Budget 2024/25:** The GCSB's total appropriation for the 2024/25 financial year was approximately **$402.16 million**.
- **Capital Investment:** Expenditure often includes significant one-off costs, such as the **$326 million** data centre recently opened to house 'sensitive' government data. This was a major investment and contributed to the overseas debt burden, but how do we, as taxpayers, know it will help National security?
- **Combined Intelligence Cost:** When paired with its partner agency, the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS), the combined allocation for New Zealand's primary spy agencies is approximately **$375 million** for 2025.

Take Home Point:
The GSCC appears to operate outside of the law and government. How do we, the People, know they are working to support and keep NZ and NZers safe at a high cost to taxpayers? Under the 3-tier framework, I would recommend reviewing the GCSB's functions and operations.

The Security Intelligence Service (SIS)

The New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) is the country's primary domestic security agency and lead organisation for human intelligence (HUMINT). While the GCSB focuses on the digital sphere, the NZSIS works primarily through people and investigations to detect and mitigate threats to national security.

Core Functions
Governed by the Intelligence and Security Act 2017, the NZSIS has four statutory functions shared with the GCSB:

- Intelligence Collection & Analysis: Investigates threats such as terrorism, violent extremism, espionage, and foreign interference.
- Protective Security Services: Provides advice to the government on protecting people, information, and assets. This includes conducting security vetting (clearances) for government employees.
- Cooperation with Public Authorities: Assists other agencies like the NZ Police and NZDF.
- Response to Imminent Threats: Works with other entities to respond quickly to immediate dangers to life or safety.

Key Operational Roles

- Human Intelligence (HUMINT): Unlike the GCSB's technical focus, the NZSIS collects information by talking to people and using physical surveillance.
- Counter-Terrorism: Identifies individuals or groups with the intent and capability to carry out violent acts for ideological, political, or religious causes.
- Countering Foreign Interference: Detects and disrupts attempts by foreign states to subvert New Zealand's interests or intimidate diaspora communities through deceptive or coercive means.
- National Security Assessments: Publishes annual reports, such as New Zealand's Security Threat Environment, to inform the public about current risks.

Oversight and Constraints

- **No Power of Arrest:** The NZSIS is an advisory and investigative body; it cannot arrest or detain people. Enforcement is the role of the NZ Police.
- **Political Neutrality:** By law, the agency must remain politically neutral and cannot take action against anyone solely for lawful protest or advocacy.
- **Independent Oversight:** Its activities are reviewed by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS) and the Intelligence and Security Committee to ensure they are lawful and proportionate.

Under the Intelligence and Security Act 2017, the NZSIS can obtain warrants to perform several specific, highly intrusive activities that would otherwise be unlawful.

Warranted Surveillance Powers
Warrants grant the NZSIS broad authority to operate in the physical world through:

- Visual Surveillance: Using devices (like hidden cameras) to observe and record private activities in private premises.
- Interception: Monitoring and recording private communications, such as phone calls, emails, or face-to-face conversations.
- Tracking: Installing and using devices to track the movement of people, vehicles, or items.
- Physical Search & Seizure: Entering and searching private homes, vehicles, or offices, and seizing documents or physical items.
- Hacking/Electronic Search: Accessing "information infrastructure," which allows them to remotely or physically search computer networks and personal devices.

Special Physical Powers (NZSIS Only)
Unlike the GCSB, which primarily operates remotely, the NZSIS has specific physical powers under a warrant to:

- Break: Forcefully open or interfere with any vehicle, container, or building authorised by the warrant.
- Use of Force: Use "reasonable force" against property to carry out a search or seizure.
- Use of Specialist Equipment: Bring in any necessary tools for a search, including the use of explosive-detection dogs.

The "Triple Lock" Safeguard
For any warrant targeting a New Zealander (a Type 1 warrant), three layers of approval are required to ensure the surveillance is necessary and proportionate:

1. The Minister: Must approve the application as necessary for national security.
2. Commissioner of Intelligence Warrants**:** A former High Court Judge must also approve, acting as an independent judicial check.
3. Inspector-General (IGIS): Conducts a retrospective review of the warrant's execution to ensure the agency followed the law.

Warrantless Surveillance: The NZSIS can conduct surveillance in public places without a warrant, provided it does not involve trespass or technology that sees through walls or captures imagery not visible to the naked eye.

Crucial Limitations

- The "Glomar" Response: Because of the Intelligence and Security Act 2017, the IGIS often cannot confirm or deny if you were actually under surveillance in their final response to you. They may state that they have investigated and are satisfied that "no unlawful activity took place."
- National Security Secrecy: While the IGIS sees everything, their public reports are often redacted to protect methods and sources. You get a summary of the outcome, but rarely the classified details.

Whistleblower Support
The IGIS also acts as the "appropriate authority" under the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022. If an employee of the GCSB or NZSIS wants to report internal wrongdoing without going to prison for leaking secrets, they must go through the IGIS. This reflects a concern for transparency in whistleblowing. That is, the SIS boss will protect the individual from whistleblowing against the regime.

The costs to taxpayers for the SIS

The New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) currently costs taxpayers approximately **$123 million** per year, though this figure is forecast to decrease slightly in the coming year as major projects conclude.

Current and Future Spending

- Budget 2024/25: The total appropriation for the current financial year is $122.83 million. This includes approximately $116.5 million from initial estimates and an additional $6.2 million in supplementary funding.
- Forecast (2025/26): Funding is projected to drop to $111.89 million for the 2025/26 year. Officials noted this reduction is due to a large infrastructure project coming to an end rather than a cut to frontline security services.
- Actual Expenditure (2023/24): The agency spent $107 million in the most recent full reporting year for which actual data is finalised.

The Solution: “Structured Transparency”

Not everything is public — but everything is **accountable somewhere, at the right level**.

1. Create a National Security Accountability Framework (NSAF)

A new framework embedded in law (or Constitution):

Purpose

To ensure that all national security agencies:

• remain operationally secure
• are financially accountable
• are subject to independent oversight

2. Establish an Independent Security Oversight Commission (ISOC)

A specialised, high-trust body with **full classified access**.

Role:

• audit classified spending
• review operational integrity
• assess legality and proportionality
• investigate misuse of power

Key Feature (Critical)

ISOC has full access — even where the public does not.

3. Dual Reporting Model (Very Powerful)

This is the key design feature.

Layer 1 — Classified Reporting

Provided to:

• ISOC
• a tightly controlled cross-party or constitutional committee
• National Tier oversight body

Includes:

• full financial detail
• operational context
• risk assessments

Layer 2 — Public Reporting
Provided to citizens:
• total budgets (high-level)
• categories of spending
• performance summaries
• compliance statements

The public sees **enough to understand and trust** —but not enough to compromise operations.

4. Mandatory Financial Transparency Categories
Even classified agencies must publish:
• total annual budget
• percentage allocation (e.g. intelligence, cyber, operations, infrastructure)
• year-on-year changes
• administrative vs operational spend

5. "No Dark Spending" Rule
Draft Clause (Strong and Important)
A national security agency may expend no public funds without being subject to classified audit and oversight under this Act. This ensures:
• nothing sits outside scrutiny
• secrecy does not equal exemption

6. Real-Time Oversight Triggers
Instead of waiting years:
• spending thresholds trigger review
• unusual expenditure patterns flagged
• emergency powers automatically reviewed

7. Legal Compliance Certification
Each year, security agencies must certify:
• all activities were lawful
• all spending was authorised
• oversight bodies were given full access
False certification = serious breach.

8. Integration with The Three-Tier Model
The National Board
• sets rules
• hosts ISOC
• receives classified oversight
The Regional / Community Boards

• do NOT access sensitive details
• receive assurance through public reporting
• maintain democratic visibility

9. What This Fixes With Reform
• full internal visibility (to oversight bodies)
• structured external visibility (to the public)
• enforceable accountability

10. Risks
• risk of politicisation if oversight not independent
• risk of leaks if too many people access classified data
• requires very high-integrity oversight appointments

11. Strengths
• maintains national security
• strengthens democratic trust
• ensures taxpayer accountability
• removes “black box” perception

Secrecy may be necessary for operations — but it should never remove accountability for how power and money are used. Security agencies can keep secrets. But they cannot keep secrets from accountability.

How to Prevent Abuse of Power in Security Agencies

Security agencies exist to protect the country. But because they operate in secrecy, with specialised powers and limited public visibility, they carry a higher risk than most institutions when safeguards are weak.
The goal is not to limit their ability to act — it is to ensure that **power is used lawfully, proportionately, and accountably**.

1. Clear Legal Boundaries (Start Here)
The most important safeguard is clarity. Security agencies must operate within:
• clearly defined legal powers
• explicitly stated limits
• narrowly defined purposes

Key Principle
If a power is not clearly authorised in law, it cannot be used.

What this prevents
• “grey area” expansion of powers
• reinterpretation of mandates over time
• mission creep

2. Independent Authorisation for Intrusive Powers
Certain powers should never be exercised internally. This includes:

• surveillance
• data interception
• search powers
• emergency authorisations

Requirement
All intrusive powers must require prior approval from an independent authority (e.g. judicial warrant or constitutional commissioner)

Why this matters
It separates those who want to act from those who approve of the action.

3. Real-Time Oversight
Traditional oversight often happens months or years later. That is too late.

The new approach
• live or near real-time access for oversight bodies
• automatic alerts for high-risk activities
• continuous monitoring of key powers

What this prevents
• prolonged misuse
• hidden patterns of overreach
• delayed accountability

4. Mandatory Audit Trails
Every use of power must leave a record. This includes:
• who authorised it
• why it was approved
• what actions were taken
• when it occurred

Key Rule
If it is not recorded, it is not lawful.

What this prevents
• undocumented activity
• denial of actions
• lack of traceability

5. Strong Oversight with Full Access
Oversight bodies must:
• have full access to classified information
• be independent of operational agencies
• have the authority to investigate

This includes bodies like the proposed:
• Independent Security Oversight Commission

Key Design Principle
Oversight must be stronger than secrecy — internally.

6. Regular Legality and Proportionality Reviews
Security actions must be lawful, necessary and proportionate.

Requirement
Regular independent reviews must assess:
• whether powers were justified
• whether less intrusive options existed
• whether outcomes aligned with purpose

7. Whistleblower Protections (Critical but Often Missing)
Staff within agencies must be able to raise concerns safely.

Safeguards
• protected reporting channels
• independent investigation pathways
• legal protection from retaliation

Why this matters
Some of the most serious abuses are only visible from inside.

8. Time-Limited Powers and Automatic Review
Emergency or expanded powers must:
• expire automatically
• require renewal
• be reviewed independently

What this prevents
• temporary powers becoming permanent
• gradual expansion without scrutiny

9. Separation of Roles
Avoid concentration of power by separating:
• operational decision-making
• authorisation
• oversight
• review

Why this matters
No single institution should:
• decide
• act
• approve
• and review itself

10. Public Accountability Without Operational Risk

The public does not need operational detail — but it does need assurance.

Public reporting should include:
• number of warrants issued
• categories of activity
• compliance findings
• confirmed breaches (where appropriate)

This builds trust, legitimacy and confidence in the system.

What This Achieves
Together, these safeguards ensure:
• security agencies remain effective
• powers are used appropriately
• misuse is detected early
• accountability is real, not symbolic

The question is not whether security agencies should have power. It is whether that power is bounded, visible, and accountable. Security agencies need strong powers. But those powers must:
• be clearly defined
• be independently approved
• be recorded
• be reviewed

Take-home Point:
A secure country is not one where power is unchecked — it is one where power is used carefully, and always accountable. Even though the law and policy have parameters around what the 'security' agencies can and cannot do, we have seen many violations of people's rights, and therefore breaking of the law by these agencies under the current system of governance.

System Change 13. Security agencies will be required to have transparency on expenditure, priorities and will be focussed solely on NZs sovereignty. NO work for other countries or overseas consortiums will be tolerated.

Chapter 10: Quality Assurance Agencies

The quality assurance Agencies are supposed to ensure that the government and its departments are doing what they are supposed to do to serve the people and to ensure that money is being spent appropriately. However, there are a few system flaws that need changing.

The Auditor General

The Office of the Auditor-General is an independent parliamentary office. Its core purpose is to help ensure that public money is spent lawfully, wisely, and for the purposes Parliament intended. In simple terms, the Auditor-General is meant to act as:

- a financial watchdog
- a guardian of public resources
- and a check on government waste, misuse, or poor performance

While the Office does not work for Ministers or government departments, it reports to Parliament on behalf of the public. The Auditor-General's Office is supposed to protect New Zealanders in several key ways.

1. Auditing public spending

It audits: government departments, Crown entities, councils and public organisations. These audits check whether money was spent in accordance with the law, used for its stated purpose, and recorded accurately. This helps reduce fraud, misuse, and poor financial management. Except when politicians 'bend' the law.

2. Reviewing performance and value for money

Beyond financial audits, the Office conducts **performance audits**, which ask:

- Did this programme achieve what it promised?
- Was public money used efficiently?
- Were systems fit for purpose?

These reviews are meant to identify waste, inefficiency, or systemic problems that affect service delivery. But they are always retrospective – the money was already inappropriately spent or wasted.

3. Reporting to Parliament and the public

The Auditor-General publishes reports that:

- explain findings in plain language
- highlight risks and failures
- recommend improvements

These reports are one of the few ways the public can see **inside government operations** without submitting an OIA request.

THE LIMITS: Where the protection stops

Despite its importance, the Auditor-General's protection has clear limits.

1. It cannot stop decisions before they happen

Audits are **retrospective**. The Office reviews spending *after* money has already been spent, and harm may already have occurred.

2. It cannot enforce its recommendations

The Auditor-General:

- cannot compel departments to act
- cannot reverse decisions
- cannot impose penalties

Implementation depends on the same institutions being reviewed. Therefore, the Auditor General's Office, within the current political framework and bureaucracy, has no real teeth. The Office does not judge whether a policy is good or bad — only whether it was implemented properly and managed in accordance with the rules. This means major policy decisions with harmful outcomes can still pass audit scrutiny if procedures were followed. Audits are national or organisational in scale. They are not designed to:

- capture local lived experience
- respond quickly to community harm
- or involve people directly in accountability

The Auditor-General's Office plays a weak role in terms of democracy and transparency, and it is **not a shield** for citizens. It helps answer the question: "Was public money spent according to the rules?" It does **not** answer:

"Should this decision have been made in the first place?"
"Who is accountable to the people affected?"
"How can harm be prevented, not just reported?"

From a decentralised governance perspective, this reveals a structural gap. Transparency and accountability are strongest when:

- spending decisions are made close to the people affected
- oversight happens in real time
- communities can question decisions *before* money is committed

The Auditor-General is a necessary but flawed safeguard in the current system — it cannot substitute for local accountability and structural limits on power.

What the AG Office Costs Taxpayers

According to the New Zealand Budget estimates for Vote Audit (which funds the Auditor-General and related functions):

Total appropriations assigned for 2025/26 are roughly:

- About NZ$143 million for audit and assurance services (the bulk of the work the Auditor-General oversees, including audits of public entities like government departments)
- About NZ$1.25 million for the remuneration of the Auditor-General and Deputy Auditor-General (that's $1.2m for two roles).
- About NZ$4.5 million for capital expenditure (assets like IT or facilities used by the office)
- Plus a small amount (around NZ$7 million in transfers) included in the broader multi-category appropriations structure

Total annual taxpayer funding is NZ$150–155 million for the Auditor-General's statutory audit and assurance functions.

Parliament appropriates this money to ensure the Auditor-General can provide independent oversight and audit services of public organisations. Still, the AG's office lacks the authority to fix anything, and all reports are purely retrospective.

Take-home Point

The Auditor-General checks how public money was spent after the fact but cannot prevent bad decisions from causing harm. It is another expansive bureaucratic arm of government that has no power to hold the government or agencies accountable in the current system of governance.

Serious Fraud Office (SFO)

The SFO exists to investigate and prosecute the most serious and complex financial and commercial crimes in New Zealand. It focuses on cases that:

- involve large sums of money,
- show high levels of complexity or sophistication, or
- cause serious harm to public trust, markets, or institutions.

Think of it as NZ's white-collar crime specialist, not a general police force. The SFO typically investigates:

- Large-scale fraud (corporate, investment, or public sector)
- Bribery and corruption, including foreign bribery
- Complex accounting fraud
- Market manipulation
- Misuse of public funds
- Serious deception involving companies or trusts

Many cases involve: senior executives, professionals (lawyers, accountants, advisers), company directors and public officials.

The SFO is about **power abusing trust**, not petty dishonesty. The SFO: **decides whether to prosecute its own cases** and runs prosecutions itself (rather than handing everything to Crown prosecutors). This keeps:

- investigation strategy,
- evidential thresholds,
- and prosecution decisions are tightly aligned.

The SFO does **not** investigate every fraud.

A case is more likely to be taken by the SFO when:	The SFO does **not**:
• the financial harm is very large, • the conduct is systemic or organised, • the case requires specialist financial expertise, • public confidence in institutions is at stake.	• regulate industries, • audit government departments, • investigate poor policy decisions, • pursue ethical breaches that are not criminal, • act as an anti-corruption commission in the broad sense, • intervene in political decisions.

Bad decisions do not necessarily mean fraud. An unpopular policy does not necessarily indicate corruption. Harmful outcomes do not always suggest criminal intent.

The SFO needs provable criminal behaviour.

Independence and accountability

The SFO is:

- operationally independent
- not directed by Ministers on individual cases (yeah right)
- accountable through:
    - the courts,
    - judicial oversight of its powers,
    - Parliament (via reporting and select committees)

This 'independence' is crucial, because many cases involve:

- powerful individuals,
- large companies,
- politically sensitive issues.

Why the SFO matters in the wider accountability system

In NZ's accountability ecosystem:

Body	**Role**
Police	General criminal law enforcement
Serious Fraud Office	Serious, complex financial crime
Auditor-General	Financial & performance audit (non-criminal)
Public Service Commission	Integrity & conduct of officials
Ombudsman	Fairness & transparency (OIA)
Courts	Legal adjudication

The practical limitation (and the tension)

The SFO:

- has finite resources,
- must choose cases carefully,
- sets a very high bar for prosecution.

This means:

- Some harmful behaviour is never prosecuted,
- Many systemic failures fall between "legal but wrong" and "illegal but unprovable."

That gap is **not unique to NZ** — it's inherent in the criminal law system. That separation is essential.

The real issue is lack of transparency about what it investigates and where spending is going.

For example as an overview the Agency looks expensive…

Financial year	Reported total expenses	Useful case/output marker
2020/21	$12.003m	8 cases brought to prosecution; 100% defendant conviction rate reported for that year
2021/22	$13.873m	1 prosecution commenced; 45 defendants appeared before courts; $267m alleged fraud in cases brought
2022/23	$16.589m	8 prosecutions commenced; 21 defendants before courts; 6 trials; $15m alleged fraud in charges filed
2023/24	$15.969m	23 active prosecutions, 58 defendants, $172m combined alleged fraud across prosecutions

Financial year	Reported total expenses	Useful case/output marker
2024/25	$16.407m	23 active prosecutions; 10 defendants convicted across 8 cases, 140 charges, $174.5m combined alleged fraud across prosecutions

Verified recent completed SFO cases

These are some of the publicly identifiable SFO cases completed or substantially concluded within roughly the last five years:

Road maintenance corruption case: multiple defendants were sentenced between 2022 and 2025, including former contract manager Jason Koroheke and subcontractors. The SFO says the fifth and final defendant was sentenced in December 2025, concluding that prosecution.

Westland District Council corruption case: former council executive Vivek Goel and associate Amar Singh were sentenced in March 2023 after convictions on corruption and deception charges.

National Party donations case: Yikun Zhang, Colin Zheng, and Joe Zheng were sentenced in 2022 after being convicted of using sham donors. The SFO's 2022/23 annual report records the sentencing and the subsequent appeal.

Mortgage fraud case ($8.7 million): Bryan Martin and Joshua Grant were sentenced to prison in October 2023; further defendants in related mortgage fraud proceedings were sentenced in August 2024 and January 2026.

Auckland Council building inspector bribery case: former inspector Nicholas Bright was sentenced in February 2025 after pleading guilty to 21 corruption-related charges.

Spark IT contractors private-sector corruption case: two contractors were sentenced in May 2025 in what the SFO described as New Zealand's largest private-sector corruption case, involving more than $4 million in kickbacks.

Oranga Tamariki fraud case: Neha Sharma was sentenced in May 2025, and Amandeep Sharma in June 2025, after guilty pleas to approximately $2.1 million in fraud and related money laundering.

COVID-19 support fraud case: Hun Min Im was sentenced in November 2025 for attempted multi-million-dollar fraud against wage subsidy and other COVID support schemes.

Ponzi scheme involving almost $4 million: two offenders were sentenced in December 2025 after guilty pleas in a Christchurch High Court prosecution.

Medical equipment / former ADHB corruption case: charges were filed in 2022; guilty pleas were entered in March 2026 and a company director was sentenced in October 2025. This one is publicly in the late-stage completion phase, but not every defendant outcome appears fully completed yet.

Canterbury DHB false accounting case: a former employee who stole about $1 million was already serving her sentence by March 2021.

A few caution points matter. Some prosecutions were partly overturned or affected by appeals, so "completed" is not always as clean as it sounds.

SFO Costs to the Taxpayers

For the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years, the SFO's funding (through Vote Serious Fraud) is reported in the budget appropriations passed by Parliament:

Core operational appropriation

- Total allocated to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute serious financial crime (the SFO's main work): NZ$17.22 million in 2024/25 and similarly NZ$17.13 million in 2025/26.
- Most of this comes from Revenue from taxpayers, with a small portion from other revenue.

Total taxpayer-funded appropriation for the SFO is around NZ$17 million per year — give or take a few hundred thousand — depending on minor adjustments in annual budgets. This is the amount Parliament sets aside for its core work in investigating and prosecuting serious fraud and corruption.

Take-home Point:
There are no publicly available documents showing that the investigation costs is anything of substance to benefit the people. The SFO sits *outside* both tiers as an independent enforcement backstop — it does not govern, allocate power, or resolve policy disputes.

The Ombudsman's Office

The New Zealand Ombudsman is an Officer of Parliament tasked with ensuring that government agencies treat people fairly and follow the law. The office acts as a "watchdog" to hold approximately 4,000 public sector organisations accountable.
The office focuses on these primary areas:

- **Handling Complaints:** Investigates complaints about the administrative acts or decisions of government departments, local councils, school boards, and state-owned enterprises.
- **Official Information (OIA/LGOIMA):** Reviews cases where a person is unhappy with an agency's response to an official information request (e.g., if a request was refused or delayed).
- **Monitoring Places of Detention:** Regularly inspects prisons, court cells, and mental health facilities to ensure detainees are treated humanely.
- **Whistleblowing:** Provides advice and protection for "whistleblowers" reporting serious wrongdoing in their workplace under the Protected Disclosures Act.
- **Disability Rights:** Monitors how the New Zealand government implements the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Children in Care:** Specifically oversees complaints regarding Oranga Tamariki and its care providers to protect the rights of children and young people.

Key Facts

- **Independence:** The Ombudsman is not independent of the government because they report directly to Parliament. Another ineffective bureaucratic accountability mechanism.
- **Cost:** Their services are **free** for the public to use.
- **Powers:** They have the authority to demand documents and summon witnesses, but they generally make **recommendations** rather than legally binding orders (though agencies almost always follow them).
- **Own Motion:** They can launch "own motion" investigations into systemic issues even if no specific complaint has been made.

They:

- **Handle complaints:** Investigate complaints about the actions, decisions, and administrative conduct of central and local government agencies, like issues with benefit payments, housing, education, or local council services.
- **Promote fair treatment for disabled people:** Monitor and investigate complaints regarding the rights of disabled individuals.
- **Handle official information requests:** Investigate complaints when agencies improperly withhold information.
- **Monitor places of detention:** Inspect conditions in places like managed isolation facilities.
- **Support children in care:** Assist children, young people, and whānau involved with Oranga Tamariki.
- **Improve government:** Provide advice, training, and feedback to agencies to improve their administration and encourage good practice.

They don't:

- Provide legal advice.
- Investigate private individuals or companies.
- Act as a spokesperson or agent for you.
- Award compensation.

How they work:
They are appointed by Parliament, and suppose to focus on fairness. They can recommend changes, such as revising policies or explaining decisions, which carry significant weight. But they have NO authority whatsoever.

The Limits and Self-Imposed Restrictions of the Office
So what do we, the people, get from this bureaucracy?

The New Zealand Ombudsman's office does not "decline to respond" to questions as a politician might; rather, it determines whether it has the legal authority, or "jurisdiction," to investigate specific complaints.
During the COVID-19 period (roughly the 2020–2023 reporting years), the office received a record-breaking volume of complaints, many of which were not investigated because they fell outside the Ombudsman's 'legal powers'.

Handling of Complaints (2020–2023)
The following data from the Ombudsman's Annual Reports shows the volume of complaints that were either not investigated or resolved before a formal opinion was required:

- **2020/21 Fiscal Year:** The office received **1,718 Official Information Act (OIA) complaints**. Of these, approximately **half (50%)** were not formally investigated; often, they reported that they were resolved early or the Ombudsman exercised discretion not to investigate.
- **2021/22 Fiscal Year:** A record **7,321 total complaints** were received (a 31% increase). The Ombudsman investigated only **one-third** (approx. 863) of the 2,591 OIA complaints received, meaning roughly **6,458 cases** did not proceed to a formal investigation.
- **2022/23 Fiscal Year:** Complaints remained at historic highs, being **46% higher** than the pre-pandemic average.

Why Complaints Are "Declined" or Not Investigated

The Ombudsman generally does not investigate for the following reasons:

- Lack of Jurisdiction: They cannot investigate decisions made by private companies, lawyers, or court rulings- even if they breach human rights.
- Early Resolution: The office often "resolves" a complaint by contacting the agency and asking them to release information without needing a formal investigation (this happened in 40% of OIA cases in 2021/22). Once the request is passed on, the Ombudsman's office declares it has dealt with – regardless of whether the OIA was appropriately answered.
- Ministers Leaving Office: In at least one high-profile case, a complaint against the Minister for COVID-19 Response was discontinued because the Minister no longer held the portfolio following a cabinet reshuffle. This represents a miscarriage of justice for human rights.

Notable COVID-19 Refusals

While the Ombudsman investigates others' refusals, they also issued opinions on high-profile government refusals during this time. For example, the Chief Ombudsman investigated **17 complaints** regarding the refusal to release COVID-19 vaccine contracts. He eventually ruled that while there were valid reasons to withhold the full contracts, the public interest required the release of summary information.

Costs of The Ombudsman's Office

The Office of the Ombudsman costs New Zealand taxpayers approximately a staggering $56 million per year, according to the latest government financial data. This funding, managed through **Vote Ombudsmen**, is dedicated to investigating complaints against government agencies, monitoring places of detention, and ensuring compliance with the Official Information Act (OIA) .

Key Financial Trends

Budget Increases: The budget has grown significantly in recent years due to increased demand for services. For instance, in the 2024/25-year, record-high complaint volumes led to a 30% increase in completed cases compared to the previous year.

Recent Initiatives: Funding has been allocated to specific areas, including cybersecurity, retaining experienced staff, and overseeing Oranga Tamariki - and MIQ-related investigations.
Future Estimates: Budget forecasts for the 2025/26-year project a similar total cost of approximately $56.08 million.

Take-home Point:

Due to systemic flaws, the Ombudsman's Office has failed to fulfil its responsibility to hold the government to account through the OIA process. Another flawed part of the system. With much of the public service being devolved to the regions there will be no need for a centralised Ombudsman's office in the 3 Tier Governance model.

The Human Rights Commission

The New Zealand Human Rights Commission is a Crown entity responsible for 'protecting' and promoting human rights and fostering harmonious relations in New Zealand.
Its primary responsibilities include:

- Handling Discrimination Complaints: The Commission provides a free, confidential dispute resolution service for complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, racial harassment, sexual harassment, and conversion practices.
- Promoting the Human Rights Act 1993: It highlights non-compliance with the Act, which prohibits discrimination in areas of public life such as employment, education, housing, and government services based on grounds like age, sex, race, disability, and sexual orientation. But it has no authority to prosecute.
- Advocacy and Education: It works with the government and civil society to advocate for human rights, runs public education campaigns (e.g., "Give Nothing to Racism"), and publishes resources to help people understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Independent Monitoring: It monitors New Zealand's compliance with international human rights treaties and acts as a watchdog for rights in specific sectors, such as monitoring places of detention and disability rights.
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The Commission has a specific mandate to promote an understanding of the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi).
- Legal Proceedings: Through the Office of Human Rights Proceedings, it can provide free legal representation to individuals whose complaints remain unresolved after mediation and need to be heard by the Human Rights Review Tribunal.

Important Distinction

Unlike the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commission does not investigate or decide if a law has been breached; its role in disputes is to facilitate mediation to help parties find a resolution.
The Human Rights Commission (and the Amendment Act 2001) was established to ensure against discrimination by individuals in the private sector and Public Sector Agencies.
The Human Rights Commission (HRC) does not have the legal authority to "research" and then override the government's decisions. In the New Zealand legal system, the HRC and the government operate within specific boundaries:

1. Limited Legal Authority

The HRC is not a court and cannot strike down laws or mandates. Under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, the government may limit certain rights (such as the right to refuse medical treatment) if those limits are "demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society". The power to decide if the government has met this high bar lies with the **High Court**, not the Commission.
During the COVID mandates, the Commission was silent and unresponsive to the public for support and clarification regarding the human rights breaches, having decided early on that the COVID mandate decisions were the 'government's business' and that the Commission would not intervene.

3. Reliance on Public 'Experts'

The HRC's role is to apply human rights law to the facts provided by experts based in government departments. During the pandemic, the Commission accepted the medical consensus from the Ministry of Health that vaccination reduced the risk of "Right to Life" for the broader population. Human rights law often requires balancing one person's right to refuse treatment against another person's right to life and health. However, the HRC does not fact-check nor research the integrity of the government's 'advisors'.

What the HRC Costs Taxpayers

In New Zealand, the Human Rights Commission costs taxpayers approximately $13.2 million per year, based on the most recent budget allocations from Vote Justice.

Budget Breakdown (2024/25)

The funding for the Commission is provided through non-departmental output expenses within the Justice sector:

- **Core Operational Funding:** The Commission's total annual appropriation is roughly **$13.23 million**.

Key Expense Areas:

  - **Education & Advocacy:** Promoting human rights and monitoring compliance with international instruments.
  - **Dispute Resolution:** Handling and mediating complaints of unlawful discrimination.
  - **Legal Services:** Providing legal representation and bringing proceedings under the Human Rights Act 1993.

Take-home Point:

You must also remember that the Commissioners are all employed by the PM and the Government of the day, which is another circular accountability flaw in the current system. Therefore, standing up and speaking out against the government is not going to happen under the current system of governance. The system that created the HRC does not allow it to stand up to the government and hold it to account for people's rights because of the appointment and accountability structures. With the decentralisation of the public services to the regions there will be no need for a centralised Human Rights Commission. Now and then NZ may want to create or review a Human Rights issue, but it does not need a fulltime dedicated $17 million dollar resource. Some of these resources may sit in one or two bigger regions as a side service.

Te Puni Kokiri

TPK is the Government's principal policy and delivery agency for Māori development.
It does three main things:

- advises Ministers on Māori policy,
- administers and monitors funding to Māori organisations and initiatives,
- supports capability and development in Māori communities.

The audit function sits inside this funding and stewardship role — it is not a general anti-corruption body.

TPK's audit function assures the use of public money

At its core, TPK's audit function exists to answer one question:
Was public funding used for the purpose it was given, and in line with the agreement?

This includes checking:	The audit function:
• funds were spent on agreed activities, • spending matches approved budgets, • records are complete and accurate, • governance and financial controls exist. This is **assurance**, not investigation.	• reviews whether recipients met contractual obligations, • checks delivery against milestones and outcomes, • assesses whether reporting is credible and timely.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Importantly:
This focuses on performance against agreed terms, not redefining success after the fact.</td></tr>
</table>

Risk-based reviews and internal controls
TPK uses a **risk-based approach**, meaning higher-risk funding arrangements get more scrutiny, while lower-risk arrangements rely more on standard reporting. Audit activity may include: desk-based reviews, on-site visits, governance capability assessments and/or follow-up reviews where issues were found.

This is about **protecting the integrity of funding**, not punishing organisations. Therefore, there is no accountability for poor outcomes.

Supporting improvement, not just compliance
Unlike law-enforcement auditing, TPK's audit function often has a **developmental dimension**.

<table>
<tr><th>It may:</th><th>It does not:</th></tr>
<tr><td>identify gaps in governance or financial capability,
recommend improvements,
connect organisations with support or training,
allow remediation where issues are fixable.
This reflects TPK's dual role as steward of public funds and supporter of Māori capability.</td><td>investigate criminal fraud,
prosecute wrongdoing,
override Boards or governance entities,
make policy decisions,
replace independent financial audits,
act as the Auditor-General.
If serious misconduct is suspected:
matters may be referred to the Police, the SFO, or other authorities,
TPK itself does not investigate crimes.</td></tr>
</table>

How it differs from other oversight bodies

Body	**Role**
TPK audit function	Contractual & funding assurance
Auditor-General	Independent audit of public entities
Serious Fraud Office	Serious & complex financial crime
Public Service Commission	Integrity & conduct of officials
Courts	Legal judgement

TPK's audit function is **administrative and contractual**, not judicial or criminal.

Independence and limits
TPK's audit function:

- operates within the Ministry,
- reports through internal governance structures,
- is subject to external scrutiny (including Auditor-General review).

It is **not fully independent** in the way the Auditor-General is — and is not designed to be. That's intentional: it is a **management control**, and evaluative tool, not a constitutional watchdog.

TPK costs Taxpayers

Te Puni Kōkiri's funding comes from Vote Māori Development, which covers its core roles as *the government's lead advisor on Māori development and wellbeing* and its administration of related programmes.
Approximate annual appropriations according to the Budget 2025 Estimates of Appropriations for Vote Māori Development:

- About NZ$64 million for departmental expenses (TPK's core operations and policy work)*
- Nearly NZ$41 million for Māori development initiatives (grants & funding programmes)
- Nearly NZ$35 million for housing and whānau support initiatives administered through TPK
- About NZ$18 million to purchase related services from other providers (e.g., Māori Trustee)
- About NZ$13 million to support Māori governance and community organisations
- Over NZ$3 million for departmental capital expenditure*
- Around NZ$2 million toward historic care settlement administration
- Plus smaller items such as legislative and administrative expenses

Total annual appropriations for TPK in 2025/26: ~NZ$176 million (excluding the Whānau Ora commissioning appropriation of ~NZ$179 million, which is a separate Vote but connected to the broader Māori Development portfolio).

Take-home Point:
While TPK does search out poor performance of those delivering services under the umbrella of Maori Development, as an agency, it has no authority to correct or withhold money from contracts if they are going wrong. But they do actively try to improve poor performance similar to the ERO. With devolving the operations of TPK to the regions $67 million dollars wil not be needed.

Education Review Office (ERO)

ERO exists to provide independent assurance and improvement-focused evaluation of New Zealand's education system. Its job is to answer two big questions:

1. Are learners being well served?
2. Is the education system improving over time?

It is not a school operator, funder, or policy-maker.

What ERO actually does
A. Reviews education providers

ERO reviews:	Reviews look at:

• early childhood education (ECE) services • primary and secondary schools • kura Kaupapa Māori • some tertiary and alternative education providers	• learner outcomes • teaching and leadership quality • wellbeing and inclusion • governance and internal evaluation • compliance with key legal requirements

The emphasis is increasingly on **ongoing improvement**, not one-off inspection.

B. Evaluates system performance

ERO also looks beyond individual schools to: • identify system-wide strengths and weaknesses • evaluate major education initiatives and reforms • highlight inequities and gaps in outcomes	These reports inform: • Ministers • the Ministry of Education • Parliament • the public

ERO is a **system mirror**, not a system controller.

C. Promotes improvement (not punishment)

Modern ERO practice is deliberately:

- developmental
- improvement-focused
- relationship-based

ERO:

- works with schools to build internal evaluation capability
- identifies what's working and what isn't
- supports continuous improvement over time

This is a major shift from older "inspection" models. If serious issues arise:

- ERO can recommend intervention,
- but **another body must act**.

How ERO's powers actually work

ERO:

- makes findings and recommendations,
- publishes reports (with transparency),
- can escalate concerns to the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry decides on interventions (statutory managers, funding changes, support).
ERO has influence, not command.

Independence and accountability

ERO is:

- operationally independent from the Ministry of Education
- accountable to Parliament through its reporting
- subject to oversight by the Auditor-General

This independence allows ERO to:

- speak honestly about system failure,
- publish uncomfortable findings,
- maintain public trust.

Where ERO fits in the wider accountability ecosystem

Body	Role
Boards / kura governance	Local decision-making
Ministry of Education	Policy, funding, intervention
Education Review Office	Independent review & improvement
Public Service Commission	Integrity of officials
Auditor-General	Financial & performance audit
Courts	Legal accountability

ERO sits **between governance and intervention** — it shines a light, but doesn't wield the hammer.

The key limitation (and the tension)
ERO can identify failure early, name inequities and recommend change. But it cannot force improvement if:

- support isn't provided,
- governance resists change,
- system settings remain misaligned.

So sometimes ERO findings are very clear — and change still takes too long, or doesn't happen.
That's a system issue, not an ERO failure.

The ERO Costs Taxpayers every year

For the 2025/26 financial year, the funding appropriated by Parliament for the Education Review Office — which reviews and publicly reports on the quality of education in schools, kura, and early childhood services — is approximately:
Total annual appropriations for the ERO are around NZ$52–54 million in 2025/26 (including a small capital component). What this funding covers
The ERO's budget covers:

- nationwide education reviews
- evaluation and reporting services
- assurance of education quality
- independent monitoring of the oranga tamariki system via Aroturuki Tamariki (since 2023)
- assets and systems needed to support these functions

This budget is appropriated through Vote Education Review Office, the designated part of the New Zealand Government's annual budget process.

Take-home Point:
Politicians do not sign off school review reports in New Zealand — but the system around them still shapes what gets seen, measured, and acted on. Of all the assurance agencies and functions I have worked in, the ERO is the most concise on reporting on whether services are

being delivered according to the contracted appropriation; however, again, the 'system' has not given it any authority to act on negligent performance.

So overall over $450 million is spent every year on quality assurance that has no authority to enforce improvements

The Cost of the Bureaucracy and Then Some

Agency/Function	**Approximate Annual Cost**[17]
Parliament and the control centre	
Governor General	7.6 million plus salary of $440,000
Parliamentary services	50 million plus
Ministerial salaries housing transport etc	Can't tell hidden in multiple lines
MPs legal protection	270 million uncapped
Ex Ministers superannuation and benefits	
Ex Prime Ministers Annuity Fund	$314,000 for other costs, $481,000 for travel, $310k for self drive cars, other costs are not transparent
Reserve Bank	150 million
Treasury	150 million
Whips office	Not transparent
The Judiciary	140 million plus $614 for the Chief Justices' salary
Department of Prime Minster and Cabinet	54 million
System Agencies	
Ministry for Regulation	60 million
Regulatory Board	20 million
Public Services Commission	74 million
Security Agencies	
Government Security C Bureau	267 million (in 2024 $326 million was spent on setting up a data center that we the people had no idea the debt we were incurring)
Secret Intelligence Services	123 million
Watch Dog Audit agencies	
Auditor Generals office	143 million
Serious Fraud Office	17.2 million
Ombudsman's Office	69 million
Human Rights Commission	176 million
Te Puni Kokiri	176 million 179 million for Whanau Ora
Education Review Office	54 million
Annual total approximate of the Centre	**2.181 billion dollars every year PLUS**

This does not include public service Ministry costs of delivery agencies, nor salaries and operating costs (e.g., nurses, teachers, police, prison officers, etc.) for those on the frontline doing the work. That is in Part 3. There are many other smaller bureaucratic functions and costs

[17] In some cases the operations versus salaries sit in different money buckets called appropriations. In some cases it is not clear exactly how much is provided by searching, also in some cases the amount is open unlimited, uncapped, and in some cases the $ are totally hidden and can't be found at all.

not covered here, and I have not addressed the bureaucratic machinery at the local government level these changes are covered in other blueprint chapters.

Fixing the system gaps

New Zealand has **plenty of review —** but not enough **authority to require change**. The issue isn't the number of agencies. It's that most are designed to:
• observe
• report
• recommend
—but not **direct, enforce, or trigger consequences**.

System Audit and Evaluation Functions in the 3 Tier Governance Framework

The issue is one of lack of integrity in the system**,** even without sign-off power, influence can still happen through:

- What gets reviewed (work programmes)
- What is prioritised (e.g. cost savings vs results vs political interests)
- Funding signals from government
- System-wide expectations and narratives

So audit and evaluation is shaped by the system around it

In the 3 Tier decentralised system, the functions of audit and evaluation would:
1. Become Regional evaluation bodies (closer to communities)
2. Create Real-time public dashboards (not retrospective reports)
3. Require clear accountability loops (who must act, and by when)
4. Have Constitutional transparency requirements (not optional)

This would move these functions from: "Reports after the fact" to "Visibility and accountability in real time". Under the Part 3. We go into more detail of how to devolve the Public Services functions to the regions.

The Core Shift Needed
In the new 3-tier governance model watchdog agencies move from "advisory oversight" → "enforceable accountability" Without losing independence.

<u>The Structural Fix</u>
1. Create a "Duty to Act" Framework (Across All Agencies)
This is the single most important change.
Draft Principle
Where a material failure is identified, the responsible agency must take corrective action or publicly justify why it has not done so.

What this changes
Today, reports can sit on shelves while responses are delayed, partial, or indifferent.
With the new system:

• action becomes mandatory
• inaction becomes visible
• accountability becomes real

2. Introduce "Binding Response Requirements"
Every formal review (audit, evaluation, inquiry) must trigger a required response within a fixed timeframe. For example 60–90 days to respond with a clear plan of action and named responsible person.

Draft clause added within CEOs Employment Contracts
All public agency CEOs must formally respond to oversight findings within a defined timeframe, either by providing an implementation plan or by offering a reasoned public refusal.

3. Create an "Accountability Escalation Ladder"
If agencies don't act, there must be consequences.
Step-by-step escalation:

a. Agency response required
b. Public reporting of response
c. Escalation to National Tier / Minister
d. Mandatory intervention review
e. Formal accountability action (if required)

This ensures:
• issues cannot be quietly ignored
• pressure builds in a structured way

4. Consolidate Oversight Power
We will need fewer agencies at the centre; however, the regions need a coordinating accountability authority to support their broader responsibility for managing regional public services. One option is to consolidate and strengthen the watchdog agencies, system , security agencies to focus accountability and create separation between delivery, auditing and decision-making.

Change 14. Create: Public Accountability Authority (PAA) (by merging the accountability agencies)

Their Role:
• receive findings from all oversight bodies
• track whether action is taken
• escalate where necessary
• publish system-wide accountability reports

Key shift
Agencies keep reviewing — but someone ensures **something happens next**

5. Introduce Named Accountability
Every major finding must link to:

• a responsible agency
• a named senior leader
• a required response

Why this matters
Without named accountability:
• responsibility becomes diffuse
• no one "owns" the outcome

6. Link Findings to Performance and Funding
Within the HR laws repeated failure to act affects: the next performance assessments, may trigger a leadership review and shift funding prioritisation.

Not punitive — but structural
If issues are not addressed, the system responds.

7. Real-Time Tracking (Public Dashboards)
All major findings and responses should be visible:
• what was identified
• what was promised
• what has been completed

This creates:
• public visibility
• ongoing pressure
• reduced ability to delay

8. Standardise Review Impact Levels
Not all findings are equal.
Create categories:
• Minor — monitor
• Moderate — required response
• Significant — mandatory action
• Critical — immediate escalation

This avoids:
• overload
• overreaction
• inconsistency

9. Integrate into the Three-Tier Model

National	**Regional**	**Community**
• sets rules • enforces accountability • manages escalation	• monitors delivery • ensures implementation	• sees outcomes • provides feedback • adds visibility

10. What This Fixes With Reform
• clear expectations
• required action
• visible consequences
Accountability is not complete when a report is written. It is complete when something changes. Right now agencies can point out problems but can't make them be fixed.
This change means:
• problems must be fixed
• or clearly explained
• and everyone can see what happened

System Change 15. Review the accountabilities of system and accountability agencies the goal is not to give oversight bodies unchecked power. It is to ensure their findings carry weight — and lead to action. Devolve these where appropriate to the regions.

Chapter 11: Maori, He Whakaputanga and Ti Tiriti

For the record, before we get into this topic, I can say categorically I AM proud to be a bista kiwi, a bista Maori (Ngati Ruapani, Ngati Kahunganu, Ngati Ranginui, and, according to my brother, just about all other tribes). I'm a bit Scottish, a bit Welsh, etc. Like ALL of Kiwis today our ancestors hails from all corners of the globe.
There are important facts to show where democracy has been eroded from ALL NZers over time, not just Maori, through the undermining of the founding documents.

He Whakaputanga — A Decentralised Origin of Authority

Before the formation of the modern New Zealand state, authority in this land was already localised, relational, and decentralised.
He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (1835) affirmed that political authority rested collectively with rangatira, exercised at hapū and iwi level. There was no single central ruler, no distant authority, and no separation between leadership and community.
Decision-making was place-based, accountable, and visible. Authority was not something held above the people, but something exercised *with* them.
This matters for all New Zealanders today because it demonstrates that decentralisation is not a radical or foreign idea. It is part of this country's earliest DNA of governance. He Whakaputanga expressed a principle that sits at the heart of this book:

power is legitimate only when it comes from the people and remains close to them.

Then Came Te Tiriti o Waitangi — Centralisation as the Breach

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is often discussed as a legal disagreement or a historical grievance. But from a decentralisation perspective, its greatest failure was not merely broken promises — it was the progressive removal of authority from local communities. Many Rangatira understood Te Tiriti as a means to:

- protect their people and lands
- retain local authority (rangatiratanga)
- allow cooperation without surrendering self-determination

What followed instead was a rapid centralisation of power by the British who then imparted the Westminster Governance system on NZ including:

- land decisions made far from the people affected
- laws imposed rather than co-created
- authority transferred to institutions unaccountable to local communities

This centralisation harmed Māori (and other settlers) first and most severely — but over time, it affected all New Zealanders. Today, many people feel disconnected from decision-making, powerless in the face of bureaucracy and governed by systems they neither designed nor control. This is not a coincidence. It is the predictable outcome of governance that removes authority from place and concentrates it at the centre.

Here's a clear, side-by-side comparison of: He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni and Ti Tiriti o Waitangi
with a tight focus on governance, control, and power—so you can see where the tensions sit.

Theme	He Whakaputanga (1835)	Treaty of Waitangi (1840)	Tension / Issue
Who holds sovereignty?	Chiefs collectively hold full authority (*rangatiratanga*)	Māori text: Chiefs keep *rangatiratanga*; Crown gets *kāwanatanga* (governance) English text: Crown gains sovereignty	**Direct contradiction** between English Treaty and He Whakaputanga
Nature of power	Decentralised – shared among many rangatira	Mixed/unclear – Māori version suggests shared roles; English implies centralised Crown power	Shift from **collective authority → potential central control**
Who makes laws?	Chiefs, through the consultation of their village elders and whanau, together, make laws	Māori text: Crown can govern settlers; Chiefs retain authority over their people English text: Crown can make laws overall	**Overlap / ambiguity** about who actually governs
Governance structure	Confederation of independent hapū/iwi working together	Introduces a Crown governor (central authority)	Move from **networked system → hierarchical system**
Control over land & resources	Full control remains with Māori	Māori text: confirms control (*tino rangatiratanga*) English text: Crown gets pre-emption (first right to buy land)	Control shifts **indirectly through land purchase mechanisms**
External authority (Britain)	Britain invited as protector only	Crown gains formal governing role	Protector → **governor shift**
Decision-making model	Collective deliberation (chiefs meet regularly)	Governor + Crown institutions make decisions	Loss of **localised, participatory decision-making**
Accountability	Chiefs accountable to their own people	Crown accountable to British system (not directly to Māori) or other settlers	**Accountability shifts away from local communities**

The core problem is if you strip away the legal language, the tension is this:
He Whakaputanga says:
"Power stays here, with us, shared across our communities."
The Treaty (depending on version) says:
"Power is either shared… or transferred to the Crown."
The issue:
Those two ideas cannot both fully operate at the same time.

Where the real conflicts sit

1. Sovereignty vs Governance (the biggest fault line)

He Whakaputanga: Sovereignty = full authority (no separation)
Treaty (Māori): Splits authority into:
Kāwanatanga (governance – Crown)
Rangatiratanga (authority – Māori)

It sounds workable… but:
These roles were never clearly defined. In practice, governance expanded into sovereignty
The issue being that Governance (administering) gradually became control (deciding). Which is what we are all suffering with now. Controlled by a political system, not a governance system.

2. Language mismatch = power shift

Māori text → suggests **shared system**
English text → asserts **Crown sovereignty**
Two fundamentally different constitutional meanings
The issue is that the system that was developed followed the English interpretation, not the Māori one.

3. Decentralised vs Centralised power

He Whakaputanga:

- Many decision-makers
- Local authority
- Collective coordination

Treaty system (as implemented):

- Central government
- Parliament
- National law overrides local control

The issue is that a top-down system replaced the bottom-up system.

4. Control through systems (not just statements)

Even where Māori authority was “recognised” through Land laws, Courts, Titles, and purchasing rules, these systems gradually shifted real control away from Māori.
The issue is that power moved through institutions, not just words.

5. Accountability gap

He Whakaputanga: Leaders are accountable directly to their people i.e. the three-tier governance system.

Crown system:
Decision-makers accountable to:

- Parliament
- Political system
- Not directly to iwi/hapū or the people

The issue is that Communities have lost direct influence over decisions that affect them.

How this align with the Blueprint and three-tier governance

This comparison reveals a deeper systems insight:

The He Whakaputanga model = :

- Distributed authority
- Collective governance
- Local accountability
- Coordination without domination

The Treaty (as implemented) = :

- Centralised authority
- Layered bureaucracy
- Indirect accountability
- Control through institutions

He Whakaputanga keeps power local and shared — the Treaty (as applied) is centralised power and blurred the boundaries between governing and controlling. Unfortunately for greedy Maori they don't relaise they have just brought into another form of manipulation. Because the only ones paying for the debt created by Treaty payouts are our mokopuna, grandchildren, future generations.

Why this matters (today)

This isn't just historical—it explains:
Why accountability feels distant
Why decision-making feels centralised
Why there's ongoing debate about sovereignty and authority

The Crown, the State, and the Problem of Distance

As authority consolidated under the Monarchy, Crown and Parliament, governance became increasingly abstract. Decisions about land, resources, health, education, and industry were made by people who would never live with the consequences. For Māori, this represented the erosion of rangatiratanga. For non-Māori, it created a political system that feels remote, procedural, and indifferent.

Different histories — same structural problem.
Centralisation does not create unity. It creates dependency, resentment, and disengagement. So the payment structure is a tool for divide-and-conquer. As we have seen, the Treaty payouts go to a few and are not distributed to support health, housing, and education unless agreed to by a different power structure within the Iwi. You could argue that it has improved outcomes for Māori marginally, but not enough to justify the cost to taxpayers; it goes to making a few Māori richer while the rest miss out.

I know this firsthand from my whanau, who, like many others, are struggling to secure affordable housing as tenants, let alone as owners. Like many who are on a long waiting list to be seen by a health professional, and like many of all races, are let down by a diminished education system. And yet there are very small pockets within our Iwi that finally benefit greatly.

The Waitangi Tribunal was established as a mechanism to 'address' breaches of the Treaty. While it has played an important role in documenting history and recognising harm, it has

caused division among Iwi (the haves and have-nots), between Maori and non-Maori (who see the Crown as breaching everyone's rights), and has created Maori Oligarchies.
Worse still, we are creating more debt for future generations. As you have probably realised, the money we are paying for treaty settlements is funded by overseas debt as with many Govt projects.

Decentralisation as Common Ground

Te Tiriti does not require an ever-expanding central state to be honoured. It requires authority to be exercised where life is lived. A decentralised three-tiered governance model:

- aligns with Māori concepts of rangatiratanga
- supports non-Māori communities seeking local voice and control
- reduces competition between groups by removing central gatekeepers and 'gift givers'

When power is shared locally, it is no longer a zero-sum game decided in Wellington. This is where unity becomes possible — not through sameness, but through shared stewardship at local and regional levels.
This means the payouts through the central government system, which is abolishing the Governors-General and loosening the attachment to the Monarchy, are going to stop – or be managed through the regions. The system is creating an imbalance of power across all races in NZ, including Māori. More money and decision-making should be going out to the regions to benefit Māori and all races.
As a younger generation of Māori, we could pick up He Whakaputenga and use it as the founding governance document for Māori and all NZers alongside the Constitution, or create a hybrid of both He Whakaputanga and the Treaty alongside the Constitution, thereby rewriting history. In this context, the new hybrid becomes:

- a foundation for the local authority alongside the NZ Constitution
- a guide for respectful coexistence
- a reminder that governance should serve people, not manage them

Decentralisation is not a rejection of He Whakaputenga and Te Tiriti. It is one of the clearest ways to give it practical, lived expression today through both documents and for Māori. In the case of the 3 Tier governance Boards it is essential to have Māori (not Iwi) representation on the National, Regional and Local Community Boards.

Take-Home Point: Decentralisation and All Peoples' Rights

- Authority in Aotearoa was originally decentralised and local
- The greatest Treaty breach was the centralisation of power
- Centralised systems have failed Māori and non-Māori alike
- Decentralisation offers a unifying, future-focused pathway
- Power must return to communities for trust, dignity, and accountability to be restored

System Change 16. Hold Regional forums on how He Whakaputenga and Te Tiriti can be utilised as a unifying way to grow Maori with NZ sovereignty and Constitution in absence of the Crown.

Chapter 12: Current Links to Overseas Organisations

We're taking a side step now and looking at out international relationship management by the system. New Zealand contributes millions of dollars every year to international forums that have no elected authority, and we, the people, do not know the positive or negative consequences of these 'contributions'. This Chapter provides a snapshot of the key partnerships linked to the UN, but there are many more linked to specific countries, such as India, China, the US, and the UK. These are hidden from us; we don't know what the government has signed us up for or what publicly owned resources have been bargained away.

The World Economic Forum

The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** is an independent, international non-governmental organisation (NGO) headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Founded in 1971 by Klaus Schwab, it is legally structured as a **not-for-profit foundation**.

Legal Status and Authority

- **No Legally Binding Power:** The WEF has **no formal legislative or government authority** over any country or the world at large. It cannot pass laws, enforce regulations, or issue legally binding mandates on sovereign nations.
- **Advisory and Influential Role:** Its primary function is to serve as a platform for "public-private cooperation," bringing together business, political, and academic leaders to "shape global agendas". While it does not make decisions, it has significant influence over the narratives and policies adopted by those who *do* i.e. the UN Council.
- **Official Status in Switzerland:** In 2015, the Swiss Federal Government officially recognised the WEF as an **"international entity"** under the Swiss Host-State Act. This provides the foundation with privileges similar to those of other international bodies (such as certain tax exemptions and personnel recruitment facilities) but does not grant it any global governing power.
- **Relationship with International Bodies:** The WEF has consultative status with the **United Nations Economic and Social Council** but is not part of the UN system. It works alongside these institutions rather than governing them.

Structure

- **Board of Trustees:** Acts as the guardian of the WEF's mission and values are all millionaires, billionaires and are connected to trillionaire investment firms. As a not for profit, billions of dollars flow through the WEF every year from billionaire and trillionaire families and companies unchecked and not taxed.
- **Managing Board:** Serves as the executive body responsible for day-to-day operations.
- **Funding:** It is primarily funded by its approximately **1,000 partner companies and governments, including NZ**, which include many of the world's largest multinational corporations.

Critics often argue that while it lacks legal authority, the WEF exerts "discretionary governance" by carefully selecting which leaders and ideas get a global platform, thereby shaping the world through consensus rather than law. New Zealand has engaged with the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** on several specific policy and technology initiatives, often serving as a "pilot" for new global frameworks without the general NZ population knowing.

Specific Initiatives with New Zealand

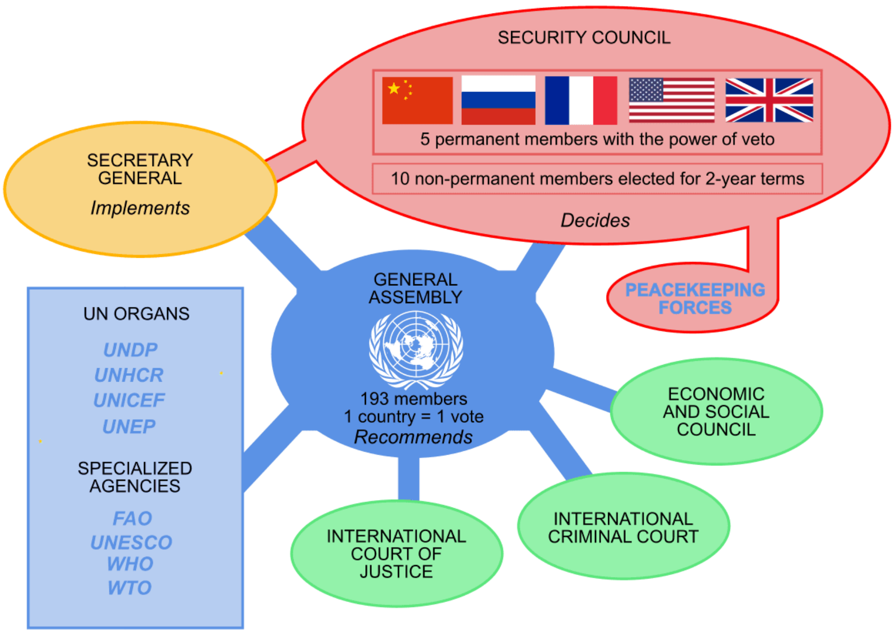
- **AI Regulation Pilot:** New Zealand was a lead partner in the WEF's Reimagining Regulation for the Age of AI project. This initiative used NZ as a testing ground to develop "agile" regulatory tools for artificial intelligence, which the WEF later promoted to other governments.
- **Indigenous Trade:** NZ has led WEF discussions on incorporating indigenous perspectives into international trade, focusing on how Māori economic models can inform sustainable global trade. Were Māori consulted?
- **Cybersafety and Manufacturing:** The New Zealand Treasury has noted active engagement with the WEF in cybersafety and advanced manufacturing, aimed at modernising New Zealand's industrial capabilities. What have been the benefits to NZ industries?
- **Wellbeing Economy:** New Zealand's **Wellbeing Budget** was highlighted at Davos as a template for "redefining success" beyond GDP, a concept central to the WEF's Great Reset and stakeholder capitalism narratives. Effectively, true wellbeing of the people is not the focus, but control and resource limiting are.

The United Nations

The United Nations is a **global forum of countries**, created in **1945** after World War II to reduce the risk of large-scale conflict and to coordinate cooperation on shared problems.
The UN, as you can see in the figure below, has many branches that good countries like NZ contribute to, such as food and health programmes. Except that much of the money goes to back-office bureaucracy or corporate contractors, in fact, only 7.5% of the money for food programmes directly reaches local and national providers[18]. The UN's overall intention has changed significantly over the past 30 years, with the takeover of wealthy individuals. They are using the UN and its subsidiary groups as a vehicle to create **a 'one world government'**.

While it has no taxing power, it annually seeks billions of dollars from 'donor' countries like NZ. While it has no authority over national laws, countries voluntarily agree through hidden agreements with the government, without us, the people knowing. Let's dive deeper into this incestuous system to identify its flaws and how to change it.

[18] www.activelearningnetworkforaCCountability.org



These bodies **advise, assist, and coordinate** — they are NOT meant to govern and control countries. Unless the countries accept it. The UN's original intention was to:

1. Prevent and manage conflict

- Provide forums where countries talk instead of fighting[19]
- Deploy peacekeeping missions *only when states agree*
- Mediate disputes and support ceasefires.

2. Coordinate global cooperation

Through specialised agencies (each with its own mandate), the UN coordinates:

- health (WHO)
- children's welfare (UNICEF)[20]
- refugees (UNHCR)
- labour standards (ILO)
- development and aid (UNDP)

And yet human rights breaches, including trafficking and child sexual abuse, have been found to oCCur within some of these agencies' systems established to protect children.

3. Set international norms for safety and security (not laws)

Facilitates agreements on:

- human rights (you may ask why it allowed the false claims and lockdowns at the onset of the Covid fiasco?)
- refugees (you may ask where it intervenes in trafficking?)
- climate (you may ask what they are doing about geo-engineering?)
- weapons support (and yet it is supposed not to encourage war)
- health goals (you may also ask why the UN/WHO have sickness engineering as one of the depopulation goals if it is for the People?)

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[19] The UN is funded by Blackrock and other finance institutions that produce and sell war products. So the second point and third are only orchestrated to suit the narrative of sales and profits from war.
[20] 1000s of UNICEF staff have been investigated for child abuse and sexual exploitation although due to their secrecy it is difficult to obtain clear information.

These become treaties or conventions. Countries <u>must</u> choose to sign and ratify them to belong to this group.

4. Humanitarian response

- Coordinates disaster relief
- Supports food aid, shelter, and emergency response
- Works alongside NGOs and national governments

How the UN is structured (simplified)

General Assembly

- All **193 member countries**
- One country = one vote, that is not binding
- Resolutions are **non-binding**
- Political legitimacy, not enforcement power

EXCEPT the Security Council has

- 15 members
- 5 permanent members with veto power (US, UK, France, Russia, China)[21]
- Can authorise sanctions or peacekeeping

This is where **power politics**, not democracy, dominates.
The Secretariat is the administrative arm, led by the Secretary-General which implements decisions, but doesn't make them.

The UN's power is persuasive, coordinative, and symbolic. Where democratic accountability is thin. This system directly relates to our issues of democracy and transparency.

- Citizens do **not vote** for UN officials
- Governments negotiate positions via executives
- Treaties are often debated *after* signing
- Funding and agenda-setting can skew priorities

So the UN sits in a **grey zone**: legitimate by consent of states, but distant from citizens. That's a design trade-off, not a conspiracy. The United Nations is a forum where countries coordinate on peace, security, and global problems — it can guide, support, and convene, but it cannot govern nations without their consent. Our Government conforms.

The United Nations can coordinate and recommend, but the New Zealand Government (executive council) alone decides what becomes law and how power is used inside its borders. So when the WHO, for example, declared the world needs to shut down its countries and vaccinate everyone, the Government followed, not for the good of NZ. There was no rigour around the intention, outcomes or transparency of information to the public.
In NZ, several ex-PMs and Ministers have been given key roles within the UN organisations after donating to the UN bucket of taxpayers' money. When the UN and WEF advocate for Digital IDs, the NZ Government does so without consulting us, the People. When the WEF wants digital

[21] As of today February 2026 the US may be withdrawing from the UN entirely siting capture by Oligarchies and the UN no longer striving for the humanitarian outcomes it was established for.

wallets and a one-world currency, the NZ Government is going down that track without consulting us, the People. No consultation, no democracy. A flawed system.

Where NZ Sovereignty Begins

Currently, NZ sovereignty means:

- Politicians of the day through parliament is the **only body** that can make NZ law
- Executive power is supposed to trace back to NZ law
- Courts interpret NZ statutes, not UN resolutions
- International agreements are voluntary and revocable

Even when NZ Executive Council signs a treaty, it has no legal force domestically until Parliament implements it.

3. The treaty pipeline (where confusion happens)

This is the **critical accountability bottleneck**:

Step 1 — International agreement

- UN body drafts or facilitates a treaty
- NZ government negotiates and signs through back-room deals via the Executive (The PM and senior Ministers)

This is executive power, not democratic lawmaking

Step 2 — Ratification

- Cabinet confirms NZ intends to be bound internationally, but we, the people, are often unaware of the 'conditions' of the agreement.

Step 3 — Domestic incorporation

- Parliament passes legislation
- Only here do citizens become aware of the agreements and where it affects us e.g. lockdowns, or cashless societies.

False Sovereignty is exercised at Step 3, not Step 1. Except this step comes too late, but realistically, this is often the first time we've heard about the government signing these agreements.

4. Why do people *feel* sovereignty is lost through the "messaging and manipulation" by the government?

This isn't irrational — it's structural.

The pressure points

- "International obligation" language closes debate
- Time pressure reduces parliamentary scrutiny
- Guidance becomes framed as inevitability
- Emergency framing concentrates executive power

So while parliamentary sovereignty remains legally intact, it can become politically hollowed out, through no coalition involvement and no transparency to the public.

5. UN resolutions vs NZ law (clear comparison)

Instrument	Binding on NZ?	Binding on citizens?
UN General Assembly resolution	❌ No	❌ No

Instrument	Binding on NZ?	Binding on citizens?
UN treaty (signed only)	❌ No	❌ No
UN treaty (ratified)	✅ Internationally	❌ Domestically
NZ implementing legislation	✅ Yes	✅ Yes

It is Government choosing to impose restrictions on NZers.

6. Where democratic accountability weakens
The real issue is **who decides**, not **who rules**. Accountability thins when:

- Parliament debates *after* commitments are made by backroom discussions
- MPs feel constrained by "global consensus"
- Citizens can't clearly see decision ownership

That's not UN control — it's a **domestic process failure**. The question is: what to get from this agreement and contribution, and what 'good' does it do for the people here in NZ and elsewhere?

Change 13. Review all and every international agreement to ensure they align with NZ sovereignty, otherwise amend or cancel them.

How the 3 Tier Governance Model Clarifies the role of International Agreements

The Three-Tier framework simplifies and clearly strengthens NZ Peoples sovereignty.
Tier 1 — Democratic authority (NZ-only)
Central Board (consulting with the people through their regions) approves:

- negotiating mandates
- treaty ratification
- domestic implementation

AND establishes Public reporting + sunset clauses

Tier 2 – Implements and coordinates

- shares data and feedback concerns and impacts
- coordinate responses from public feedback and concerns
- advises on standards, boundaries and conditions that impact on the country at ground level.

There is no shortcut between Tier 2 advice and Tier 1 authority.

This restores a simple rule:

International coordination must always pass through domestic consent.

The UN can coordinate countries, but only the Central Board through agreement with the Regional Boards can govern New Zealand. If sovereignty feels lost, it's because domestic accountability weakened — not because the UN took control. This means our government has not consulted, communicated, or shared the parameters of the agreements with us, the people. The system is flawed.

The World Health Organisation (WHO)

It was created in 1948, after World War II, on the idea that health threats don't stop at borders, so countries need a shared system to deal with them. The WHO is currently a UN agency that coordinates global public health advice and emergency responses — it can guide countries, but it can't govern them. Big donors, including big Pharma heavily influence them.

What the WHO actually does

1. Sets global health 'standards'[22]

It defines international guidelines on: diseases, vaccines, medicines and public health responses. For examples: disease classifications, treatment protocols, emergency health guidance. Important to understand that **guidelines are not laws**. Countries choose whether and how to follow them.

2. Coordinates responses to global health emergencies

The WHO helps countries respond to pandemics, disease outbreaks, and health emergencies (e.g., Ebola, COVID-19). They share limited data, pharmaceutical-funded research, and technical advice across countries, all provided by researchers who pharmaceutical companies salary.

The WHO **cannot force** a country to act — it coordinates, advises, and supports. So even when the pharmaceutical companies create the harm, they are also selling the solution. The WHO has no authority over the wrongdoers because the wrongdoers fund and control it.

3. Supports weaker health systems

The WHO provides technical assistance and funding support to lower-income countries and helps with:

- vaccination programmes
- disease surveillance
- maternal and child health
- emergency preparedness

4. Collects and publishes global health data

The WHO tracks: disease trends, mortality rates and health system capacity. This 'data' generated by big pharma is used by governments, researchers, and NGOs worldwide.

What the WHO is *not*

This is where much of the confusion comes from. The WHO:

❌ does **not** govern countries but influences

❌ does **not** override national laws but requires agreement to belong

❌ does **not** enforce lockdowns or mandates but encourages them through guidelines

❌ does **not** control national health systems but influences medicine purchasing policy

[22] The WHOs significant donor and partner are Big Pharma, the ones who contract, sell and disburse medical and pharmaceuticals through the UN system. They set the parameters for what pandemic will oCCur next and provide the 'medicines' through the UN global system.

❌ does **not** hold pharmaceutical companies to account for harm inflicted on populations

Each country remains *in charge of their decisions*. Except they can 'negotiate' countries into following any mandates or vaccine rollouts and regimes, and Government individuals within NZ are agreeing to these without public consultation. As with earlier issues, the current governance system in NZ is flawed.

Who controls the WHO?

- It is made up of **194 member countries**
- Each country sends representatives to the **World Health Assembly**
- Major decisions are made collectively, influenced by Pharmaceutical and banking investment companies oligarchies who provide billions of dollars every year (the main funders are Blackrock, Vanguard and State Street – Bill Gates).

Funding also comes from:

- **Assessed contributions** (member country fees)
- **Voluntary contributions** (from governments, foundations, big Pharma, and organisations)

This mixed funding model is also the source of many **legitimate critiques**.

The Accountability Chain

Citizens → National governments → International bodies → Policy guidance → Back to citizens

Democracy works when **each arrow is visible, contestable, and reversible**.
Now let's map where it fractures.

1. At the citizen → government link
Problem: weak mandate transfer
What breaks
Citizens **do not vote** on: WHO positions, treaty negotiation stances nor emergency health frameworks. Health ministers often act under **general executive authority** rather than explicit public consent.
Result
Governments speak *on behalf of people* without a fresh or specific mandate. Citizens are told outcomes are "international obligations" rather than political choices.
Accountability failure:
Consent is assumed, not renewed.

2. At the government → WHO link
Problem: delegation without recall
What breaks
Once a government delegates representatives, The public cannot recall them, and Parliament often have limited oversight during negotiations. WHO decision-making is **one-country-one-vote**, regardless of: population size and internal democratic strength. Except the power and influence of donors direct what they want countries to support.
Result

- Executive branches gain power

- Legislatures lag behind
- Citizens lose visibility

Accountability failure:
Authority flows upward, but accountability doesn't flow back down.

3. At the funding layer (the quiet power shift)
Problem: money does not provide democracy
What breaks

A large share of WHO funding is: • voluntary • earmarked • donor-directed	Donors are: • states • foundations including Big Pharma • large institutions

Citizens do not vote on earmarks that is, the WHO spending priorities
Result

- Priorities follow funding signals, not democratic ones
- "Global need" is shaped by big donor preferences

Accountability failure = Influence without representation.

4. At the expertise layer
Problem: epistemic authority replaces democratic authority
What breaks
WHO guidance is framed as: "technical", "evidence-based" and "non-political". But:

- Evidence selection involves value judgments (whos values?)
- Trade-offs (health vs liberty, risk vs harm) are political.

Result

- Debate is closed prematurely
- Citizens are told disagreement is "anti-science"

Accountability failure:
Contestability disappears behind 'expertise' funded or employed by big pharma laboratories.

5. At the implementation layer (inside countries)
Problem: guidance becomes a defacto mandate
What breaks
WHO advice is: non-binding in law, but binding in practice. Governments cite WHO to justify:

- emergency powers
- fast-tracked regulations
- reduced parliamentary scrutiny

Result
Responsibility becomes diffuse:

  - WHO says "we only advise"
  - Governments say "we had to comply"

Accountability failure:
No one fully owns the decision.

6. At the feedback & correction layer

Problem: no meaningful recall or redress
What breaks

- Citizens cannot:
  - vote out WHO officials
  - trigger independent review
  - access binding appeal mechanisms
- Reviews are:
  - internal
  - retrospective
  - advisory

Result

- Errors are acknowledged without consequences
- Trust erodes

Accountability failure:
Power without correction.

Why this matters
This isn't about bad actors. It's about **structural drift**. The system allows obscure discussions and decision-making. When:

- authority globalises
- expertise concentrates
- funding earmarks priorities
- singular, focused, hidden decision outcomes

...democracy no longer has procedural integrity, nor is it participatory.

The Costs to Taxpayers for WEF, UN and other related International Programmes

NZ contributes over 150 million dollars every year to these UN related organisations that make no difference to NZ overall[23]. There are other overseas programmes in the Pacific that we support. The total multi-lateral budget is over 1.2 billion dollars (2025)[24].

Democratic accountability breaks down when international advice shapes domestic power, but citizens can't see, contest, or recall the decisions being made.

The Change: How the Three-Tier Model Fixes This

Tier 1: Democratic Mandate Layer
International positions require:

- Central and Regional Boards' approval
- public consultation and reporting to Local Boards

[23] This figure is hard to pin point because government 'documents' are not open about where, how and why we are giving money to the UN and to which branches.
[24] www.treasury.govt.nz

- time limits and rights protections with NZ being supreme over any other country or organisation.

Treaties = opt-in + renewal clauses

Tier 2: Technical Coordination Layer

NZ Health or any other body :

- advises
- coordinates
- model risks

They **cannot** bypass national and regional democratic checks.

Many countries in 2026 are reviewing their membership and financial contributions to the UN and its associated Agencies. This is a critical point for NZ. It's not to say NZ would not legitimately support true aid programmes, just not political or elite-based forums.

Under the Three-Tiered model, the International Agreements and Democratic Safeguards Act would be enacted to safeguard against any future Government giving away NZ's sovereignty to an overseas international forum. As an example of an International Agreement and Safeguards Act to ensure future Governance decision-makers operate democratically and transparently. International organisations can advise and coordinate, but they cannot govern New Zealand. Any international agreement must be approved by Governance, published openly, reviewed regularly, and cancelled if it no longer serves the public, NZs best interests or the humanitarian outcomes intended.

International Agreements and Democratic Safeguards Act

Purpose

To ensure that all international agreements, arrangements, commitments, and coordinated frameworks entered into by the Governance of New Zealand remain democratically accountable, transparent, and subordinate to Central Board and NZ Constitution.

Part 1 — Scope and Definitions

1. Meaning of "International Arrangement"

An *International Arrangement* includes, but is not limited to:

- Treaties, conventions, accords, compacts, or protocols
- Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)
- Frameworks, regulations, guidelines, or action plans
- Standing coordination mechanisms or emergency arrangements

Whether legally binding or non-binding, including those facilitated by:

- the World Health Organization
- the United Nations
- the World Economic Forum
- or any similar multilateral or transnational body.

Part 2 — Central Board Mandate Before Commitment

2. Regional and Central Boards' Mandate Required

The Central Board may **not**:

- sign
- ratify
- accede to
- formally endorse
- or operationalise

any International Arrangement **without prior Regional Board and Community Board endorsement**, where that arrangement:
a) may influence domestic law, regulation, or executive power
b) may affect fundamental rights or freedoms
c) may impose ongoing obligations or expectations
d) may trigger emergency, health, financial, or security responses

3. Negotiating Mandate
Before negotiations commence, the Central Board must table the agreement to the Regional Boards:

- the purpose and scope of negotiations
- known or anticipated obligations
- risks to sovereignty or democratic accountability
- proposed duration and exit conditions

The Central Board must approve a **Negotiating Mandate Resolution**.

Part 3 — Transparency and Public Scrutiny
4. Mandatory Public Disclosure
All draft texts, guidance, side letters, and interpretive materials must be:

- published publicly
- accessible in plain language
- disclosed **before** Central Board meeting

Confidentiality may only apply to:

- genuine national security matters
- and must be justified in writing.

5. Independent Impact Assessment
Every International Arrangement must include:

- legal impact assessment
- democratic accountability assessment
- rights and freedoms assessment
- fiscal and operational impact

These assessments must be conducted independently of the negotiating ministry.

Part 4 — Central Board Approval and Limits
6. Affirmative Central Board Approval
No International Arrangement has effect unless approved by:

- an affirmative vote of Central Board 75%
- following full debate
- with all assessments available.

7. Non-Delegation Clause
No International Arrangement may:

- override NZ sovereignty
- create self-executing powers
- transfer law-making authority
- bind future Parliaments

Any such clause is **void**.

8. Domestic Supremacy Clause

In the event of conflict:

- New Zealand law prevails
- International guidance is advisory only
- Courts may not treat international instruments as binding unless expressly enacted.

Part 5 — Sunset, Review, and Withdrawal

9. Automatic Sunset

All International Arrangements:

- expire after **5 years**
- unless renewed by the Central Board.

10. Central Board Review

A standing select committee must:

- review implementation annually
- assess scope creep
- hear public submissions
- recommend continuation, amendment, or withdrawal.

11. Right of Withdrawal

The central Board retains an explicit, non-derogable[25] right to:

- withdraw
- suspend
- or limit participation

at any time, without penalty clauses restricting democratic choice.

Part 6 — Emergency Safeguards

12. Emergency Limitation

Emergency coordination arrangements may be entered **temporarily** by the Central Board only where:

- delay would cause serious harm
- duration does not exceed **10 days**
- Regional Boards are notified immediately

All emergency arrangements must:

- lapse automatically unless ratified
- be reviewable by Parliament in real time.

Part 7 — Accountability

[25] Non-derogable means in international law refers to the specific human rights that are so fundamental that they can never be suspended, limited, or taken away by a government, even during times of extreme crisis, or a declared state of emergency.

13. Central Board Responsibility
Members remain fully accountable for:

- decisions taken domestically
- regardless of international advice or pressure

"No obligation under international coordination" is **not** a defence.

Why this works

- It doesn't ban international cooperation
- It doesn't target specific organisations
- It restores visibility, consent, and recall
- It prevents "soft law" from becoming hard power
- It reinforces sovereignty through process, not rhetoric

System Change 17. Review all and every international agreement, partnership, or treaty to ensure NZ sovereignty is the utmost priority. Initiate the International Agreements and Democratic Safeguards Act to ensure that all potential agreements go through the Central and Regional Boards.

Chapter 13: Where Corruption Creeps into the System

Many Kiwis ask why the politicians aren't doing what they said they would do. Or why are they doing 'something' to our industries, environment, and our future that seems to undermine our country's future? So let's address this first, before going any further.

Corruption or 'Structural Advantage'

In my years of working as an auditor, evaluator, and CEO troubleshooter, I've found that people in power don't like the words "corruption," "fraud," or anything similar; they seem to have allergic reactions, so instead of calling it "corruption," let's call it "structural advantage." Different leg of the same trousers.

Defining an Oligarch

An Oligarchy is a system in which power is concentrated in a small, secretive elite segment of society defined by wealth, family, or military influence.
The person or group restricts/influences political decision-making to benefit themselves. There is another term associated with oligarchies: asymmetry. That is the control and manipulation of a 'resource' over others to benefit themselves. Oligarchies rely on asymmetry. You can have information asymmetry.[26]political oligarchies, war, food and water restrictions, disease, manufactured famine, digital currencies – all lend themselves to asymmetry and oligarchic behaviour.

Oligarchies can come from within or outside of NZ. Internally, they can be wealthy individuals, industry bodies, Boards of large companies (monopolies), or figureheads. Within NZ, they tend to be big corporate entities that push small local businesses out of tender and contracting processes. They can be wealthy individuals, ex-politicians or families who influence government to further their own interests, while outcomes for the people don't matter.

Externally, they can come from political, economic, or other agendas, e.g., WEF/UN/WHO biases. Their only agenda is to pursue profit for themselves at the expense of NZ and the people. Even overseas interests that have been allowed to 'invest' in NZ have become citizens or own significant portions of land, primary sectors and important strategic assets of NZ. How many politicians have we seen over the years end up with cushy, high-paying roles with no transparent appointment process?
Part 3 goes into industry sectors in more detail, where 'structural advantage', influence, and restrictive behaviour have caused the downfall of NZ's primary sector and undermined economic sustainability. Anyway, back to the topic at hand.
This part discusses how they enter the government's bureaucratic system to corrupt decision-makers. Here are the **main entry points** — let's call them the choke points.

[26] Information asymmetry means one party controls and manipulates the information for their own gain.

Table 1. Where oligarchy influence, corruption and dishonesty can sneak into our system

What	Why it matters	Why is it vulnerable	Why Oligarchic advantage
Outside Government			
Ministers' community and business interests' infiltration	Donations to Ministers 'pet projects' are usually family-related business ventures. Tickets and memberships, Exclusive overseas trips.	• Sets up a system for manipulation, whether it is bribery or blackmail	• Establishes future contractual, favours and political advantage expectations.
Pre-election persuasion	Donations to campaigns can run into the hundreds of thousands, hidden by circumventing election rules.	• Secrecy and dispersed donor names • Creates an unfair marketing advantage for small, honest, genuine campaigners	• Political promises and favours once the campaigner is in office. • Competitive advantage over high-value government contracts. • Policy influence to benefit oneself.
Election day prompting and control	Ballot box manipulation, free taxis or shuttle buses to voting booths	• Flawed and insecure system of counting and securing voting booths and transportation of boxes[27]	• Secured a promised outcome.
Inside Government			
A. Cabinet agenda-setting sway (pre-Parliament)	Cabinet decides: • What arrives in the House • What problems are "real" • Which options are viable	• Small group • High trust • Low transparency • Time pressure	• Early Access • Reputational authority • "We've already consulted" narratives • By the time Parliament debates, the bargaining is over.
B. Executive policy advice & interpretation pressure	Departments shape: • regulatory detail • implementation choices • enforceable priorities	• information asymmetry • specialist knowledge • repeat interaction with large actors	• Scale • Legal expertise • Ability to absorb complexity and delay • This is where value is quietly traded away.
C. Procurement and contracting control	• Most public money is spent here • Outcomes are locked in for years	• Complexity • Confidentiality norms • "trusted provider" logic.	• Capital • Risk tolerance • Ability to survive long tender processes • This is the single biggest material capture point.

[27] Every election has seen voting boxes disappear and the Ombudsman Office finding issues with irregular voting in particular regions. If it s weakness in one region than it's a weakness in ALL regions. The political arm just does not want to allow a recounting. So they fabricate an issue in one area to distract us the people from asking, the BIG question, are these really the true results across all voting booths?

D. 'Consultation' as a legitimacy cover	• Signals democracy • Rarely shifts decisions	• Occurs late • Has no leverage • No obligation to change course	• Negotiates upstream • Uses consultation downstream to stabilise outcomes • False consultation
E. Retrospective accountability	• Reviews happen after harm	• No correction mechanism • No bargaining consequence	• Costs are already sunk • Deals are already normalised
F. Local Govt	• Lobbying for preferred candidates • Trips overseas, elite group memberships, corporate boxes at sporting events, expensive gifts.	• Controlling the direction of developments • Little safeguards	• Financial gain over efficiency and effectiveness for communities and rate payers
G. Large NGO, Maori Iwi	• Influence social spending, preferential delivery of programmes	• No or little safeguards • Little accountability or responsibility when things go wrong	• Issues with delivery have little accountability as a fallback • Dominate multi-year contracting rounds

If **oligarchic influence** (money, concentrated interests, regulatory capture) is shaping decisions, then *formal constitutional change alone will not work*.
So the transition has to be designed to bypass, fragment, and expose oligarchic control, rather than politely asking it to reform. Hence, the removal of Political Parties from the Parliamentary system is total.
Oligarchs don't need to "run" government. They only need to control choke points.

Those choke points are:	So the transition must:
• Party funding & career pipelines • Policy drafting (behind closed doors) • Cabinet agenda-setting • Regulatory interpretation • Information opacity • Media framing and public fatigue	1. Reduce the value of those choke points 2. Move decision power to places oligarchs can't easily capture 3. Force exposure rather than confrontation

3 Tier Governance: Eliminating Corruption

The Three-Tier Governance model, which does away with Party list/seats and the number of Ministers, will reduce these issues at the first choke point.

The core strategy is *power dilution, not power replacement*
You do not defeat oligarchic power head-on. You make it uneconomic, unstable, and visible. If oligarchs dominate the central government:

- Central reform bills get diluted
- Watchdogs get defamed
- Crises are manufactured to justify urgency
- And they will block this change from happening by discrediting the decentralised model.

1. So, we create authority *outside* the main capture zone...
We establish and utilise regional resources - through Regionalising. **Most** of the decisions made:

- By Regional Boards and authorities
- Through Citizen assemblies and Local Community Boards
- Open participatory budgeting bodies
- Regional Statutory service boards

Through these, decision-making becomes efficient, locally innovative, and cost-controlled, and allows for more pilot programmes and greater transparency.

2. We move *functions* before we move *power*
This is crucial.

What shifts first to the Regions:	**What stays central (at first):**
• Service design • Procurement decisions • Local regulatory adaptation • Infrastructure prioritisation • Contracting authority	• Macro policy • Standards • Funding envelopes Why? • Oligarchic influence depends on **scale and standardisation**

	• Decentralised procurement destroys cartel logic • Influence costs explode when decisions fragment

Power follows function — quietly.

3. Make capture expensive and visible - Structural anti-capture design is this…

Each Region must have:

- Radical transparency by default
- Public meeting requirements
- Automatic publication of:
    - Lobbying contacts
    - Contracts
    - Draft decisions
- Mixed membership reflects:
    - Elected members
    - Randomly selected citizens
    - Skilled independents

This breaks the insider script. Oligarchs rely on *private, repeatable access*. Randomisation destroys that. There's more on the elections and related topics in Part 5.

5. Shift legitimacy before authority
The Three-Tiered system flips the ability to engage in corruptive behaviour because the Regional Boards solve visible problems, spend money better, include real people, and show their workings.
Public trust migrates **downward**. At that point:

- Central government *cannot* claw power back without backlash
- Media narratives shift
- The current Parliamentary dominance looks out of touch

Power is now politically constrained.

6. Use crisis *defensively*, not opportunistically
Oligarchs exploit crises to centralise. The regional transition uses crises to **lock in decentralisation**: For example:

- Central system failure → automatic regional fallback powers
- Regulatory scandal → regional override trigger
- Infrastructure collapse → devolved procurement authority

These triggers must be **pre-written** into law, as you saw in the earlier chapter talking about risks.

You don’t wait for good faith. You design for bad faith.

Take-home points

An oligarchy has several entry points for influence that allow for bargaining without public scrutiny, even before a Minister is ‘selected’ by voters. Once in Parliament, there are so many choke points that can be influenced that the public is never aware of. The system allows for secrecy. The 3 Tier Governance model changes that.

In later chapters, we cover corruption in industry sectors, local and community governance, and how to reduce the likelihood of its occurrence.

Chapter 14: Designing the System to Reduce the Single Power Base

Most democratic systems are designed as if power will be exercised in good faith. They assume:

- decision-makers will act with integrity
- transparency will be honoured in spirit, not just in law
- institutions will self-correct when problems arise

But history — including our own — tells a different story. Power concentrates. Influence follows money. Decisions drift away from the public, even while elections remain formally intact. This is not an individual moral failure. It is a **design failure of systems**. And until we are willing to design democracy for the world *as it is*, rather than the one we wish we lived in, reform efforts will continue to disappoint. There is a comforting belief that if we:

- elect better people
- improve transparency rules
- strengthen watchdogs

...then democratic systems will behave as intended. But this belief misunderstands how power actually works.

Power does not need to control everything. It only needs to control the **choke points**.
Those choke points are predictable:

- who gets access before decisions are made
- who sets the agenda
- who drafts the options
- who controls procurement and regulation
- who decides what information is visible — and when.

When influence concentrates at those points, democracy can hollow out **without ever formally breaking**. This is how oligarchic dynamics emerge inside systems that still look democratic on paper.

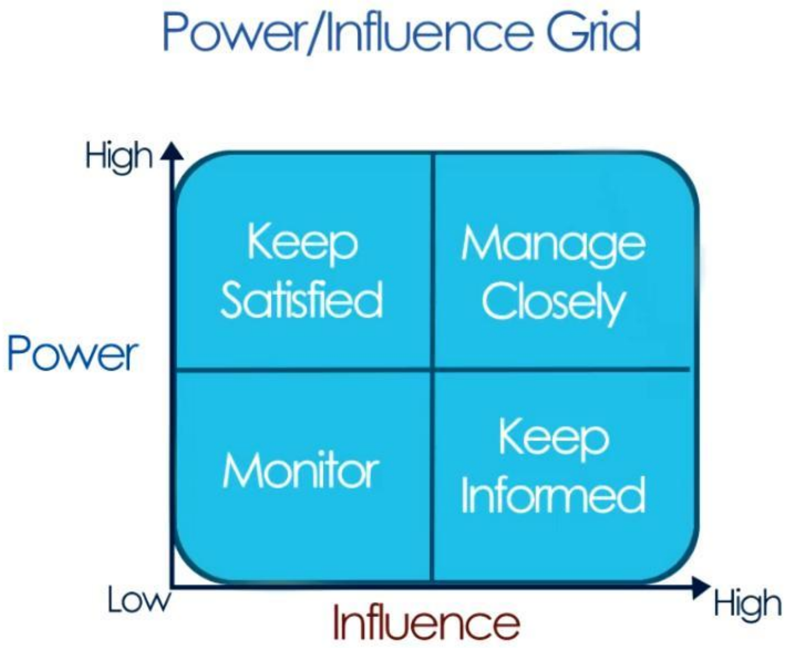
Why MMP - Proportional Representation Is Not Enough

New Zealand's move to MMP fixed a real problem: distorted representation. But representation is not the same as **distribution of power**. Even under proportional systems:

- executive control can dominate Parliament
- Party discipline can suppress dissent
- centralised decision-making can remain opaque
- influence can still cluster where scale and money matter most

MMP decides *who* governs.
It does not, by itself, decide how power behaves once it gets there. That distinction matters.

Because when too much power sits at the centre, every election becomes a high-stakes fight for control of the whole machine — and influence follows accordingly. By following the grid below, you can see that when power and influence are low, relationships and actions are only monitored. However, when power is high, you must keep these people satisfied; when influence is strong as well, you must manage them closely. That is how Oligarchies, Unions, industrialists, and big, powerful people have, over time, managed to manipulate decision-makers who are unaware of the power-and-influence dynamic.



The Design Principle That Changes Everything

Here is the principle this blueprint rests on:

Democracy should not depend on politicians and elites behaving well. It should function even when they don't.

That single sentence forces a radical shift in design. Instead of asking: "How do we get better leaders?" We ask: "How do we make abuse of power difficult, visible, and correctable?" What systems will protect the integrity of decision-making?

That question leads us to a Three-Tier governance model in which the bulk of decision-making occurs at the regional level and is carried out by a mix of elected, balloted, and salaried members. By minimising Wellington and eradicating the political party bureaucracy, we achieve savings and focus on what the country and its people actually need, not a select few. This chapter will cover the high-level design features, while the other volumes and parts will tackle how to bring the system to improve NZ's financial situation, public services, etc.

The Three-Tiers, High-level

Tier 1: Central Board (CC) Stewardship

The central tier exists to do what only a national body can do:

- protect constitutional limits and rights
- set national standards and minimum outcomes
- manage the fiscal envelope and long-term stewardship
- handle foreign affairs and defence

Crucially, this tier **does not manage delivery**. It sets the boundaries of the playing field — not the plays themselves.

Tier 2: Regional Boards (RBs) Governance with Local Input

This tier is where decisions actually happen. This tier:

- designs and delivers services
- prioritises infrastructure
- manages procurement and contracting
- adapts regulation to local conditions

Power here is **statutory**, not at the minister's discretion. Funding is ring-fenced. Functions are protected from quiet clawback. This is not decentralisation as a favour. It is decentralisation as architecture.

Tier 3: Community Boards (CCs) -The Community Layer: Democracy Between Elections

Beneath both tiers lies a layer most systems miss entirely: **continuous public accountability**. Local community Boards and assemblies — selected partly by random process — are embedded in governance, not bolted on as a form of consultation. They:

- see decision trails early
- ask uncomfortable questions
- trigger reviews when thresholds are met
- force explanations while choices are still reversible

This is where legitimacy is renewed — not every three years, but continuously.

Designing for bad faith (because it will appear)

A system designed for good faith collapses under pressure.
A system designed for bad faith bends — and survives.

The Three-Tier model does this in four ways.
1. It dilutes the value of capture

When procurement, regulation, and service design are fragmented across regions, influence becomes expensive and unreliable. There is no single door to knock on.
2. It makes influence visible

Publication-by-default rules mean that decisions leave a trail: options are considered, evidence is used, reasons are given, and contracts are awarded. Influence that relies on secrecy loses its oxygen.

3. It uses automatic failure triggers

When things go wrong, response does not depend on courage or politics. Defined signals trigger:

- transparency release
- independent review
- temporary reassignment of functions

No waiting for a scandal. No waiting for elections. Real-life fixes.

4. It makes reversal harder than continuation

Once authority and legitimacy move downward, recentralisation becomes politically and structurally difficult. Power does not disappear — but it stops pooling.

What These Changes Mean in Real Life

Under a Three-Tier system:

- A national policy failure does not automatically become a national catastrophe
- captured regions become visible through comparison
- public trust migrates toward institutions that show their workings
- elections become about stewardship, not control of everything

Most importantly, **democracy no longer feels distant**. It means you and I can see and feel the differences in our everyday lives through reduced noncompliance, better public services, happier public servants, and growing businesses. Our local economies start to flourish.

People can see where decisions are made. They can see who influenced them. And they can intervene before damage becomes permanent. This model does not promise perfect outcomes. No system can. What it promises instead is something more realistic — and more powerful:

When power concentrates, the system pushes back.
When secrecy grows, visibility increases.
When trust erodes, participation deepens.

That is not ideology. It is engineering a system that provides democracy and transparency. And in an age where democracy is failing not through coups but through capture, engineering is exactly what is required.

Take-home Point

The question is no longer whether power will be abused. It will.

The only question that matters is whether our systems are designed to notice — and respond — while there is still time.

The Three-Tier model is not about perfect people. It is about **resilient democracy**.

If you remember only one thing from this chapter, it is that people are fallible. Hence, a system that catches those human weaknesses early saves the country a lot of money by preventing wasted expenditure and improving outcomes.

Chapter 15: A Three-Tier Governance Model for Integrity

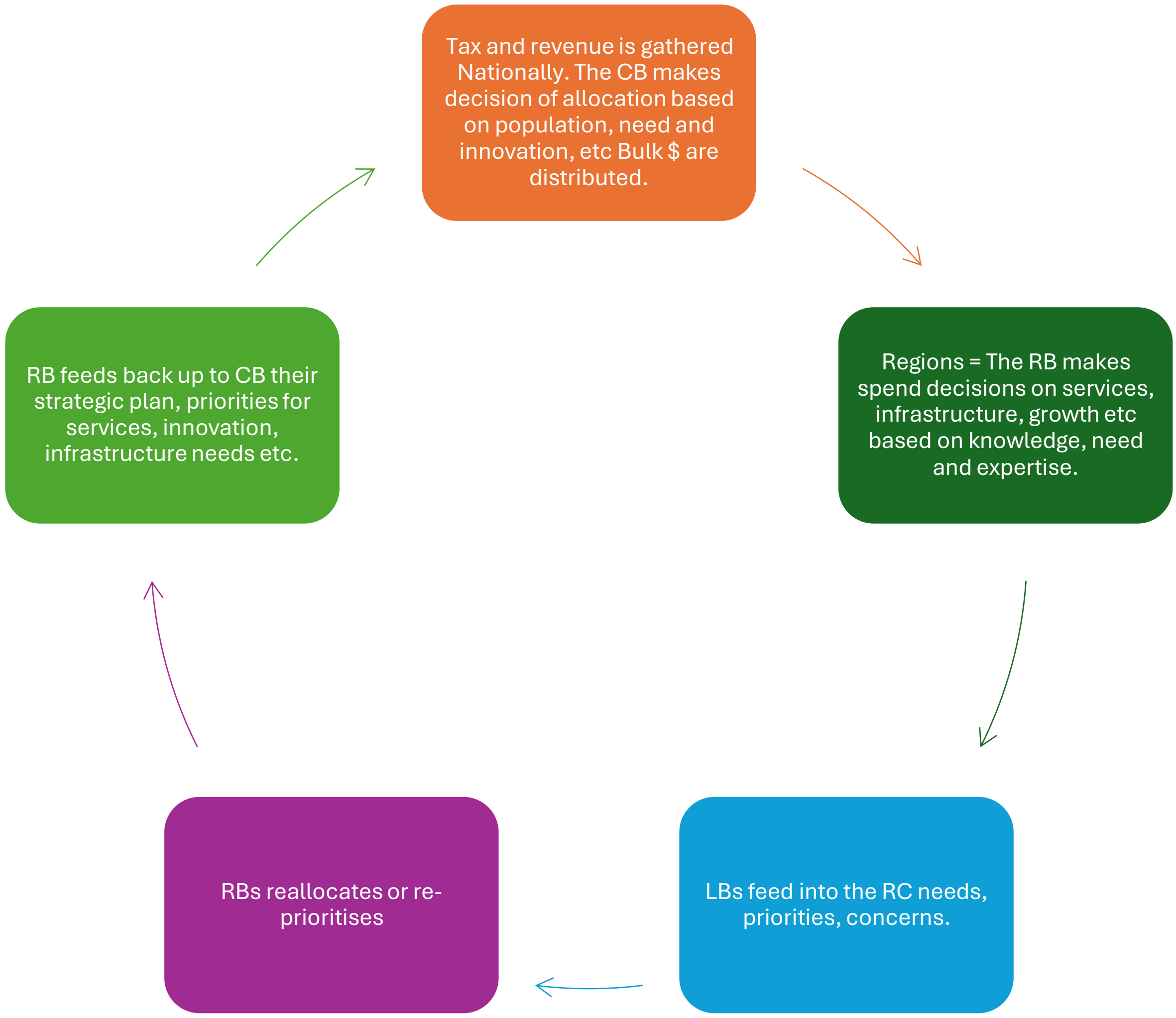
This chapter begins the conversation about moving to a decentralised model of governance that specifically addresses the issues of Power and control, and puts integrity back into the country's leadership. A governance system where the people's choices are heard. Other chapters go into more detail on how to implement the new system and who the system guardians are.

All Parts and Chapters of the blueprint keep referring to the model and how it interacts with each topic. Because it is so complex, by unpicking the system into parts, we can make a better Governance system. Parts 5-6 provide more detail on how this system would work in practice for those of you who are pragmatists.
So, effectively, for a transparent, accountable democratic system, no political parties would be allowed to enter the NZ electoral scene. Several countries have this as a matter of law.

Let’s get back to the parliamentary ‘system’ level of this model. The table below gives an overview of the Three-Tier model.

Tier One	**Tier Two**	
Central Board (CC) (16 regional Reps, plus advisors) replaces Parliament	Regional Boards (RB)(replaces local councillors)	Community Boards (LB) are beefed-up Local Boards that give more responsibility and authority to local communities.
10% of decisions are made here	90% of decisions are made here, with 10-year plans and priorities identified	Priorities identified, issues passed onto the regional team, some $ to make quick, locally based decisions
Decide on matters of national security, international trade, monetary policy, special regional allocations, etc.	Decide regionally where public services $ are best spent: infrastructure, industry growth support, primary sectors, and innovation.	Inform feedback and recommendations made to the RB.
This means a significant reduction in bureaucratic roles and costs in the machinery of government.	This means an increase in roles, powers, and costs at the regional level, requiring a change to LG governance—greater accountability where impact is felt most.	This creates meaningful feedback loops and requires involvement from all parts of communities.

Here’s another way to look at it.



Why a Three-Tier Governance Model Is More Transparent

Transparency fails when the system is designed around **distance, complexity, and control of information**.
A Three-Tier decentralised model changes this by building transparency into the decision-making process, rather than relying on requests, complaints, or watchdogs after the fact.

Tier One Transparency: Central Coordination, Not Control
Tier One exists only for matters that genuinely require national coordination. Because Tier One does not control local outcomes, its transparency obligations are **clearer and narrower**.

How transparency works at Tier One

- **Limited mandate**: Tier One cannot expand its authority without constitutional approval
- **Automatic disclosure**: national agreements, funding allocations, and standards are published as a default
- **Clear decision trails**: each national decision must show:
  - what came from regions
  - what was coordinated nationally

   - what cannot be altered locally and why

This prevents information from being buried inside large departments or classified as "policy advice."

Tier Two Transparency: Local & Regional Decision-Making

In a Three-Tier model, **most decisions are made at Tier Two —** the local and regional level. This immediately increases transparency because:

- decision-makers live in the communities affected
- meetings are accessible and visible
- consequences are experienced locally
- relationships are ongoing, not abstract

The regions carry out the bulk of decision-making through the Regional Boards (RBs), which comprise elected and balloted members, as well as specialised senior members from Police, DHBs, Education, and other agencies. The decisions focus on priorities of need, spending, and strategy. More details of this are later in Part 4 of the Blueprint.

Regions where a unique service serves more than one region, i.e., Starship Hospital, would be allocated monies by the Central Board for that purpose and for that region to manage on behalf of other regions. Again, other Parts within the Blueprint go into more detail on how utilities and other nationally led services are allocated funds.

How transparency works at Tier Two

- **Open decision forums**: local meetings where proposals, trade-offs, and impacts are discussed before decisions are made
- **Published advice and options**: information is shared upfront, not requested later
- **Named accountability**: people know who made the decision and why
- **Continuous feedback loops**: communities can respond in real time, not years later

At this level, secrecy is harder to maintain because **people are close enough to notice**.

How This Replaces the OIA Model

Under the current system: • information is released **on request** • Delays are normal • redactions are common • people must complain to get answers	In a Three-Tier system: • information is released **as part of the decision process** • disclosure happens **before implementation** • only genuinely sensitive information is withheld • communities do not need to "ask permission" to know There will be no need for the OIA process because **transparency is the default**.

Structural Transparency, Not Reactive Transparency

The current system relies on:

- trust in institutions
- after-the-fact scrutiny
- legal and procedural challenges

A Three-Tier system relies on:

- proximity
- visibility
- shared responsibility
- built-in limits on power

This is the difference between **asking for transparency** and **designing for transparency.**

Why This Matters for Everyday People
For ordinary New Zealanders, a Three-Tier model means:

- fewer surprises
- fewer “decisions already made”
- clearer explanations of trade-offs
- less need to navigate legal processes
- greater confidence that information is not being hidden

Transparency becomes **practical**, not technical.

Take-home point
There will be no need for overt bureaucratic systems in a clean devolved system of leadership and decision-making.

Chapter 16: Capacity and Capability of the Three-Tier System

The first question is;
In a decentralised governance system, what resources would we need from the existing bureaucracy? For example;

a. Couldn't the performance of public services mostly fall to 'directors' at the regional level, with very few at the central level?
b. Could they all be appointed and managed by an appointed regional or central committee?
c. Would we need 2.2 billion dollars spent on bureaucracy to support the machinery of 123 Ministers?

Technically, yes and no, roles that support the true political bureaucracy would disappear, while others would play an important role in supporting the central and regional committees. There would be significant savings, billions of dollars and moving some skilled people out to the regions, while a few stay in the centre.

As a practical example, the only reason you may want a centralised Public Service Commission is to take away the burden of recruitment and performance management for the public services, so the RBs can get on with leading their regions. Alternatively, in a Three-Tier model, the PSC remains the **guardian of the public service as a profession**, nothing else.

The Regional team would be involved but would not have to manage it.
Many of the 'watchdog' agencies lacking central authority would not be needed, as auditing and evaluation services are provided regionally.
Many of these decisions would be assessed and made as the form, functions, and structures are dispersed across the regions.

There would be changes to most, if not all, Wellington-based Agencies, with many of their roles and functions disappearing or being devolved to regions. For example, why do we need a centrally based LINZ (Land Information NZ) function, or QV Agency? Could that not sit in the regions as a database?

Some regions may share expertise, others with bigger functional responsibilities, like DHBs, might need more experts. In education, health, and all public services, the ability to take the lead in sharing decisions – some of those could come from Wellington, resources, and research across their regions would fall to them and the RBs. This makes for a devolved, accountable, and shared approach across sectors, agencies, services, and regions, without centrally based choke points: more cohesiveness, less waste.
The Region-based public services can't act in isolation from the elected or balloted RC members. The leaders of these decentralised agencies sit on the Board and have equal voting rights when decisions are made on the region's priorities. They aren't just paid staff within an agency; they are members of the public, a resident who knows the issues firsthand.

The design and size of the decentralised public services will depend on what is currently in place and how it needs bolstering to enable decentralisation, with the Regional Boards leading. Parts 4-6 go into this in more detail.

Other Country Examples

This is where looking at other models can help you see the pros and cons of decentralised governance. Here is Norway again.

Norway = strong central ethics + strong regional power

Norway separates:

- national public service integrity
- from the regional decision authority

Key point:

- Norway's equivalent public administration bodies maintain neutrality and standards
- While regions and municipalities have real decision power, especially over:
    - resources
    - infrastructure
    - regional development

United Kingdom = strong centre, weak place (a warning)

The UK Cabinet Office / Civil Service Commission model is similar in spirit to NZ's current system; of course, we followed the Westminster system. The central system of control:

- protects 'neutrality' and information flows
- manages senior appointments
- sets standards

But:

- extreme centralisation
- weak regional institutions
- little fiscal or decision autonomy outside London

Result:

- hollowed-out regions
- strong centre, brittle system
- growing public distrust

Lesson for NZ

- A neutral, professional public service **cannot compensate** for missing regional power.
- You don't need to politicise the public service to decentralise power
- Integrity and regional autonomy can coexist — *if roles are clear*

Skills and knowledge of the Centre and Regional Teams

Officials and advisors would support skills at the CC level; however, there still needs to be some form of skills or knowledge, such as governance, finance, industry, economic, and social development, among regional elected officials. Part of the implementation plan would include equipping Central, Regional, and local teams with the skills they need to fulfil their responsibilities.

Take-home points

Very few agency resources will be required at the central level because regions will be devolved resources and advisors to lead their increased regional powers.

The Three-Tiered system of governance provides public servants with more freedom to work within their regions and helps people in those regions feel connected to their public services. There will be fewer requirements for the machinery-of-government roles that are purely bureaucratic support for 123 Ministers. The key is not only efficiency (savings with less waste) but also effectiveness (spending money more wisely to achieve greater results).

The Conclusion: A Final Thought on Democracy and Power

Democracy does not fail when people lose faith in it. It fails when power overrides democracy.

Democracy endures not because people are better than power, but because power is never allowed to forget it is being watched.

This is where:

- The Three-Tier governance model is pivotal
- bargaining is redistributed
- power is fragmented deliberately
- legitimacy is allowed to migrate downward
- failure is made visible and correctable

Tier One Central Board becomes stewardship, not control.
Tier Two Regional Board becomes decision-making rather than discretionary.
While Community Boards become the oversight, drivers, not spectators.
Importantly, oligarchy is not "defeated"; it is made unstable.

A democratic system that relies on good people behaving well will eventually be governed by those best able to exploit it. This is not cynicism. It is realism. And realism is where responsible design begins.

Corruption did not arrive — it emerged.
Oligarchic influence did not replace democracy in New Zealand or elsewhere. It grew inside it.
It grew because:

- bargaining was hidden
- power pooled at scale
- negotiation lacked walk-away options
- accountability arrived too late
- value was defined narrowly
- and decisions drifted away from lived experience

No one needed to take control. The system simply stopped pushing back. And we, as the people, can't push back what we can't see.

What the Blueprint and Three-Tier model really offers
The Three-Tier governance model is not a promise of better outcomes. It is a promise of **better behaviour under pressure**. It does not:

- eliminate power
- purify politics
- end influence

It does:

- fragment authority
- expose bargaining
- shorten feedback loops
- make failure visible
- allow correction before collapse

It replaces blind trust with structural humility and integrity. What it can guarantee is this:

When power concentrates, the system responds.
When decisions drift, they are questioned.
When value is traded away, it becomes visible.
When trust erodes, participation deepens — not disappears.

This is not perfection. This is resilience. We become a country resilient to any national and international corruption. And the question is not whether democracy can survive pressure, but whether we are willing to design it to do so.

Democracy does not fail when people lose faith in it.
It fails when we refuse to redesign it for the world we actually inhabit.

To Sum Up Part 1. Parliament – Power and Decision-Making

The statutes in the current system work alongside other constitutional conventions, principles, and practices to provide the outdated foundations on which a flawed system of governance operates. These foundations include:

- the unnecessary bureaucratic institutions of the State, including the head of state (the sovereign and the Governor-General), the legislature (Parliament), the executive (the government), and the judiciary
- false constitutional principles such as the separation of powers, parliamentary sovereignty, the rule of law, and representative democracy
- the incestuous relationship between the head of state, the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary, including unbridled limits on the executive's power to legislate

It seems, in reality, there is no independence, no accountability, no separation of powers, nor any limits on power. It seems that not many of these conditions have been upheld over the last 140 years, and certainly over the last 40 years.

The Constitution describes the Westminster 'system' by which the Government *is suppose*d to rule and abide, as well as the decision-making bodies, such as Parliament. The Governor General is supposed to be the Queen's representative and to report back to the Monarchy if the Government breaks the law. But this doesn't happen because Parliament, the Executive Council and the Prime Minister appoint the Governor General. You see, it's a circular authority with no accountability to us, the PEOPLE.

The decision-making processes of parliament and Cabinet are not done as a shared, cohesive process with different representative views from the elected parties; they are made by a select few who sit behind closed doors and have pre-negotiated with oligarchies what the determined costs and outcomes will be. We signed up to MMP, not knowing the full story. We were tricked.

Public-sector performance is poor in pockets at the leadership level, with a lack of transparency in public services, local government contracting, expenditure, and service delivery. And for the most part, it is not the people in these roles, but the system and structures that have let good public servants down. The lack of accountability at the top causes much frustration for those below, who are trying to do their best.

A retrospective set of auditing functions within government is too late; the damage is already done to both the people and the budget. These agencies' roles need to be changed to enable real-time learning and performance fixes.

To Summarise the System Changes to Correct Democracy, Power and Decision-Making

System Change 1. Protecting Democracy
Upgrade the Constitutional Act to make it legally binding, protecting people’s rights, and reflecting the NZ of today, including the enforcement of Citizens' Initiated Referendums.

System Change 2: Governance not Politics
Remove the outdated links to the Monarchy and the Governor-General's role. Change the Electoral Act, abolishing all and any acts that support Political Parties. Enact the 3-Tier People's Governance system into law. Representatives on all three tiers are paid and accountable to performance-based agreements.

System Change 3. Independent Checks and Balances
The Judiciary and watchdog agencies will be given true independent separation of powers, and a higher Council will provide oversight over the Judiciary when necessary. System agencies are devolved to the regions where appropriate and given clearer powers. Security agencies have clearer accountabilities.

System Change 4. Transparency and Fairness of Costs to The People
A complete review and cancellation of all payments to ex-MPs and PMs, and an exit of all payments and benefits with a 3-month notice period. Ex Ministers and PMs are entitled to the same Govt superannuation as all other NZers, nothing else.

System Change 5. Raising the integrity of Representatives:
Abolish Parliamentary privilege. If a Minister or representative abuses their position and is sued, they must pay for the court litigation themselves. Investigate past MPs' and PMs roles if it is found to be corruption and knowingly making decisions to cause harm to the people, they will be prosecuted.

System Change 6. Public Services and Resources Decentralised to the Regions
80% of public services and resources are devolved/allocated to the Regions to control, decide how to use, and distribute. Heads of agencies will be in place for a maximum of five years with no renewal. Independence of the CEO will be created through the 3-tier model and a review of the agencies. Monitoring the agencies' performance will be conducted to merge them into one clearly defined Accountability and Transparency Agency.

Let’s move on to Part 2. This introduces NZ's fragility, the banking system, financial risk and how we can turn our situation around into one of financial sovereignty, stability and security.
Then we will go over how the Three-Tier system of people's governance can help shape a more economically resilient future for our country.

Ok, let’s go on to Banking and final sovereignty, I hope you are excited.