

## Everyday democracy: New Zealand perspectives

The structure of Anne Pattillo's presentation was:

- The International Association for Public Participation approach
- New Zealand Examples
- Discussions about the experiences of workshop participants
- Building a case for engagement

### ***The International Association for Public Participation approach***

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) ([www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)) uses the spectrum (below) to describe public engagement.



The IAP2's critical factors for successful public engagement are that the engagement should be:

- about the values that underlie an issue
- about a decision on which the public can be influential
- aimed at achieving clear goals

Furthermore, it is highly desirable for policy and decision makers to make clear in advance of engaging how they will consider the public's advice. It is equally important for that promise to be honoured.

### ***New Zealand Examples***

#### **Example 1. Secondary Futures - Hoenga Auaha Taiohi**

The goal of the public engagement was to encourage discussion and debate about the role and purpose of secondary education twenty years from now and to create a mandate for change.

Secondary Futures got people involved in conversations about the future of secondary education through workshops, meetings, projects and its website. After conducting research, Secondary Futures was able to ask the following clear strategic questions to discover relevant public values:

- What is the purpose of secondary education?
- How can secondary education best enable young people for their future?

- How could learning happen?

Secondary futures used a range of techniques to engage the public and specific stakeholders. These included scenario-based futures thinking and an interactive website.

## Example 2. Social House Strategy

The goal of the public engagement was to:

1. rebuild the relationship of the state provider of social housing with the social housing sector, the housing sector, tenants, potential tenants, and low income New Zealanders
2. develop a Social Housing strategy that matched New Zealand needs over the next 10 – 20 years.

The process encouraged the members of the public to engage by inviting them to create the strategy in **collaboration** (see IAP2 spectrum) with each other and the government.

The key elements of the process were simply worded “technical information”, Open Space Technology workshops, shared leadership (7 Advisory groups and “a peak body”), specific industry and interest networks, and a full public information programme. Open Space Technology ([www.openspaceworld.org](http://www.openspaceworld.org)) is a simple group process that allows all participants to set the agenda and is best used when there is no pre-determined outcome, the issue is complex and there is a diversity of experience or views.

Although the process of developing a social house strategy started well, a new political imperative emerged around ‘leaky homes’. The social housing process stalled and was eventually reworked as a discussion about a New Zealand housing strategy.

The context for the new discussion was a single state housing delivery agency, an increasing number of social housing partnerships, two policy agencies and the involvement of the Treasury, and an emerging national not-for-profit body that was concerned about the shift of focus from social housing to all housing.

Participation stayed at the heart of the new process although only at the “**involve**” level (see IAP2 Spectrum above). There was an expanded analysis of stakeholders. Key elements included simply worded “technical information”, a combination of world café ([www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)) and open “home” workshops across the nation, discussion guides, specific industry and interested networks, a full public information programme, and national submission process.

## Other examples

Other examples discussed during the presentation included:

- the New Zealand Food Safety Authority’s strategic commitment to engagement with consumers on food
- the Wairarapa District Health Board public engagement to “Save our hospital”

### ***Discussions about the experiences of workshop participants***

Workshop participants were asked to discuss in terms of inclusion, deliberation, influence their experiences of democracy that engages people in decisions that matter

Next, workshop participants were asked to discuss the smacking debate and how IAP2-style public engagement might have resulted in a different decision.

### ***Building a case for engagement***

The presentation concluded by 'rethinking' Government. Through the use of public engagement methods our democracy could be deepened by:

- focusing less on delivering better services to people, and more on solving problems with people
- creating space for discussion of long-term strategic challenges, involving the public
- creating cultures of learning and innovation
- create new ways for the state and citizen to communicate
- creating new mechanisms for dialogue between service users and professionals and avenues for personalisation