



GOPAC New Zealand Chapter  
Parliament Buildings, New Zealand  
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Open Government Partnership Team  
Public Services Commission  
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Tēnā koutou

Thank you for the opportunity to propose matters for inclusion in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Fourth National Action Plan.

The Global Organisation of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) is an international network of parliamentarians dedicated to good governance and combating corruption throughout the world. Participation in the New Zealand chapter is voluntary and includes members from all the parties represented in Parliament.

GOPAC members support the OGP's work to promote open and transparent government as the basis for partnership with citizens. We note that open parliament commitments relating to parliamentary institutions are the second fastest growing area within the OGP.

OGP has recognised Parliaments as key OGP partners in delivering OGP reforms, through taking legislative action, securing financial backing and building cross-party support, and providing oversight of OGP commitments. It identifies Parliaments as having a role to play in a quarter of all OGP commitments.<sup>1</sup>

These observations about the role of Parliaments in the OGP underscore that recognition of the role of elected representatives is fundamental to building strong and open representative democracies.

The New Zealand Parliament is active in encouraging participation by the public in parliamentary democracy. Through the Parliamentary Engagement Strategy 2018 – 21, work is carried out that aims to increase public perception of and participation in Parliamentary processes, with a focus on:

1. Connecting and reaching out
2. Engaging –Parliament is interactive
3. Informing - Share the stories of Parliament

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/policy-area/open-parliaments/>

4. Inspiring and nurturing future voters
5. Making it easier to be involved
6. Building partnerships

The Parliamentary Engagement Strategy is currently being reviewed and several opportunities and challenges to increasing the public's engagement and participation in Parliament have been identified. These are:

- Making people feel connected to Parliament and a level of ownership over it.
- Increasing children's and young adults' interest and engagement with Parliament.
- Unlocking the potential of social media to promote outreach. Creating both digital and physical communities interested in Parliament.
- Finding new and engaging ways to communicate to the public about how they are able to participate in parliamentary democracy.
- Demystifying Parliament – Making it interactive.
- Changing perceptions of Parliament and MPs.
- Creating champions for Parliament.

The Parliamentary Engagement Strategy review occurring as the OGP 4<sup>th</sup> Action Plan is being developed creates an opportunity for Parliament and the Public Service to work together to promote open government and to set out the role of Member of Parliament in achieving open government objectives.

GOPAC therefore asks that, as part of the development of New Zealand's Fourth OGP Action Plan, consideration be given to an OGP action covering Parliamentary and local body elected representatives.

Questions to prompt discussion on an action could include:

- What is the role and responsibility of elected representatives in enabling open government dialogue and participation?
- How do politicians act responsibly to make sure that citizens/voters have the right information that lets them ask questions of those in power?

We thank you for your consideration of an action to support open government through elected representatives, which we would be happy to contribute to developing.

GOPAC wishes you every success in your work to develop New Zealand's Fourth OGP Action plan and looks forward to supporting its progress through our Parliamentary work.

Ngā mihi



Lousia Wall  
Co-Chair, GOPAC New Zealand

