



THE POLICY OBSERVATORY

April 2019 NEWSLETTER

WELCOME

Welcome to the April newsletter for The Policy Observatory. We have links for our new podcast on the major podcast directories, an update on David Hall's work in the low-emissions landscape space, and we profile the latest Briefing Papers.

PODCASTS

The Policy Observatory has a podcast! *The Policy Fix* is a series of 15-20 minute interviews with policy experts on the big problems that face us as a country and their ideas for solutions.

Check out our available episodes on our website: <https://thepolicyobservatory.aut.ac.nz/thepolicyfix>

You can subscribe to *The Policy Fix* on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Soundcloud](#), [Stitcher](#), [Spotify](#), or [TuneIn](#).

Our first four episodes were on the theme of inequality, and our current series is on water policy. Our first interview in the water series is now available:

Mike Joy on the Freshwater Crisis

Aotearoa New Zealand has pristine mountain rivers and lakes, but downstream in the lowlands our rivers are some of the most polluted in the world. Nutrients, sediment and human pathogens are pouring from farms into waterways, causing damage to ecosystems and threatening human health. Dr Mike Joy speaks with Keri Mills on the nature of the crisis in our lowland freshwater ecosystems, on its causes, and on the policy changes that are needed to improve the situation.

LOW-EMISSIONS LANDSCAPE

A number of collaborative projects have recently come to fruition for The Policy Observatory's Dr David Hall, which relate to his work on [the low-emissions landscape](#).

David worked with Auckland Council to develop the strategic framework for their Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy, which was [released](#) on 27th March 2019. The Strategy is available [here](#) and calls for Auckland to increase its urban canopy cover from 18 to 30 per cent.

David was also co-author for a review of the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry) Regulations 2017, published by the Environmental Defence Society (EDS), which can be accessed through this [link](#). For further information, see the media release [here](#) or the [RNZ interview](#) with co-author Sally Gepp.

In other related work, he spoke at the Auckland Climate Symposium, which can be seen [here](#) (from 3:02–3:33), as co-chair of the Independent Advisory Group for the Auckland Climate Action Plan. He reviewed the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment’s recent report on biological emissions and the New Zealand landscape, available [here](#). He became a member of the Technical Working Group for Aotearoa Circle’s Sustainable Finance Forum, which you can read about [here](#). He will be speaking about sustainable finance at MBIE’s upcoming Just Transitions Summit in Taranaki on 9-10th May 2019.

BRIEFING PAPERS

The [Briefing Papers website](#) hosts short policy-related papers. You can subscribe to new posts using an RSS feed, or have them sent to your mailbox. Latest papers include:

Local Government Role and Autonomy. By David Shand

This Briefing Paper is an extract from David Shand’s longer [paper](#) on local government finances and autonomy, released in February. Here, he focuses on the idea of centralisation – that local government has little autonomy. David distinguishes between different kinds of autonomy and argues in one regard, local government has high levels of autonomy: its financial policies and budget decisions are highly localised compared to much of the OECD.

<http://briefingpapers.co.nz/local-government-role-and-autonomy/>

Online Voting FAQ. By Julienne Molineaux

The online voting trial for the 2019 local government elections has been called off, but the online voting working party is calling on central government to fund it for 2022. This Briefing Paper address some of the common questions about online voting, including: does it increase turnout; and, I can bank and shop online so why can’t I vote online?

<http://briefingpapers.co.nz/online-voting-faq/>

Free Speech and Responsibilities. By David Hall

The debate over how to strike a balance between harm and free speech is in the news after the terrible events in Christchurch on March 15th. In this Briefing Paper from last year, Dr David Hall examines the appeals being made to long-dead philosophers such as Edmund Burke, Voltaire and John Stuart Mill. Are their ideas being thoughtfully applied to contemporary issues – or cherry-picked for self-serving purposes? And what might we learn from these philosophers, not only about rights but also the responsibilities that accompany them?

<http://briefingpapers.co.nz/free-speech-and-responsibilities/>

NEW PLACEMENT WITHIN AUT STRUCTURE

The Policy Observatory has moved, organisationally, to the AUT School of Social Sciences and Public Policy. Our physical location will change in due course. Our other contact details (emails, phone numbers) stay the same.

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

We have a Facebook page – like/follow us here:

<https://www.facebook.com/thepolicyobservatory/>

Our twitter handle is @PolicyObsAUT

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