

# **New Zealand Political Studies Association - Te Kāhui Tātai Tōrangapū o Aotearoa**

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## **Newsletter | Autumn 2025**

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## Message from the President He karere nā Te Tumuaki

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Kia ora koutou,

I hope you've all had some time over the Easter break to rest and recuperate following the hectic and mind-boggling start to the year that I think we've all had. It's now very clear that the study of politics and international relations is of major importance to the current moment, but that this is also a time in which threats to academic freedom seem to continue to increase.

I would like to reiterate that you should think of the NZPSA | TKTOA as a supportive and safe point of contact should you experience any threats to your academic freedom (in teaching or research) or otherwise feel threatened as a consequence of expressing your views on political issues. The very least we can offer as an Association is support and solidarity with members (and with the broader academic community) facing varying forms of threats to employment, harassment, intimidation, and arbitrary removal of research support for the work that they do. We will also be keeping a close eye on the challenging funding situation facing universities in Aotearoa and the potential consequences of that for our membership.

On a more positive note, planning for the NZPSA | TKTOA Biennial Conference - around the very apt and needed theme of 'Political Hope' - is well underway at the University of Otago. The [call for papers](#) is out and I understand that some submissions have started to come in. We'd like to see as many people attending and presenting at this conference as possible, so please encourage your colleagues and postgrad students to come along to what should be a wonderful event. If you are looking to form panels for submission, the [Member Forum](#) or [Network Forums](#) would be great starting points to get the word out to others.

A reminder that submissions for our annual prizes are open. Please have a look at what is available and encourage your postgraduate and undergraduate students to enter. The as-yet unawarded 'Publication Prize' will be awarded for the best published article or book chapter published within the two years to 30 June 2025. Please nominate yourself or others for this award if you have a recent publication that you like or are proud of!

Finally, following the discussion held at the AGM in 2024, I have started some discussions about building closer relations with political studies organisations in our region. I am currently engaging with the Taiwan Political Studies Association (TPSA) about the possibility of a reciprocal arrangement with our conferences and hope to have something concrete to present to the AGM at Otago in November. The TPSA President has indicated that he would be delighted to welcome NZPSA members to their [conference on November 29-30 this year](#), so please consider that if you have the time and resources to do so and let me know if you submit an abstract. I look forward to discussing increased collaboration with other Associations in the Asia-Pacific region in the coming months.

As always, thanks for staying connected to NZPSA | TKTOA and please do [get in touch](#) if you have any suggestions or questions.

Ngā mihi,

Jeremy

## NZPSA | TKTTToA 2025 Biennial Conference Te Hui ā-Tau

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### Conference Theme: Political Hope

The University of Otago | Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2025

In an era characterised by a multiplicity of crises – for example, ecological crisis, right wing populism and widening inequalities – it is easy to lose hope. Indeed, the most hopeful people at the current moment might be either delusional – they have fundamentally misunderstood something – or dangerous – what is augured by the preeminent forces of the contemporary world do not bode well for our collective future. Yet hope – the sense that things can be better and that improvements are possible – has always been a necessary ingredient and driving force within social movements, whether this resulted in radical reform or revolutionary change.

Indeed, without some amount of hope, what possible reason might people have to involve themselves in politics?

While the NZPSA conference of 2025 welcomes submissions from all fields of Political Studies, we would especially like to encourage papers, panels, and round tables that speak broadly to the theme of “Political Hope”, including the following themes and topics:

- The role of hope in democratic and populist thought.
- The relationship between hope, agency, and resistance.
- The possible connections between religious forms of hope and politics.
- Political hope in Indigenous traditions and the Global South.
- Hope – and hopelessness – in historical and contemporary social movements, with a special focus on environmental movements.
- Utopianism, realism, and the limits of political hope.

**Submissions close: June 1<sup>st</sup>** (note: This is a preliminary deadline to assess numbers and use these to evaluate expected costs. With this in mind, we encourage those who would like to attend to send proposals as early as possible)

**Notification of draft panel compositions: August 1<sup>st</sup>**

More information (including how to register for the conference) will be coming your way soon!

## Undergraduate and Postgraduate Essay Prizes Ngā Whakawhiwhinga Tuhinga a ngā Tauria Tohu Paetahi, Tohu Paerua

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At this year's conference, the NZPSA/TKTToA will award five prizes for the best Undergraduate and Postgraduate essays.

We would like to note that in the past some of these prizes have unfortunately gone unawarded due to a lack of nominations. Please do submit on behalf of yourself or your students - winning a prize might just give someone the motivation to engage in further academic pursuits!

The available prizes are:

- Undergraduate - best essay on Māori Politics submitted in a course at any Aotearoa New Zealand University (\$500).
- Undergraduate - best essay submitted in a course on Aotearoa New Zealand politics in a New Zealand University (\$500).
- Postgraduate Conference Prize for the best paper in the field of Aotearoa New Zealand domestic politics (\$500).
- Postgraduate Conference Prize for the best paper in the field of Environmental Politics and Policy (\$500).
- Postgraduate Conference Prize for the best paper in any other field of political studies (\$500).

Finally, the as-yet unawarded 'Publication Prize' for best peer-reviewed article or book chapter (published within the last two years) is also open to all members of the Association.

The publication in question must be authored/co-authored or edited/co-edited by at least one member of the NZPSA who can demonstrate a long-standing connection to Aotearoa New Zealand (the strength of which the judges have the discretion to determine).

Please nominate yourself or others for this award if there is a recent publication that you like or are proud of!

**Nominations for all prizes must be submitted by 5pm 1<sup>st</sup> of November.**

For more information about the prizes and the nomination process (including who to contact), [head here](#).

## Call for Papers: Women and Politics: Looking back, looking forward

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A reminder that paper submissions for Women Talking Politics 2025 are open!

This call for papers builds on the excellent work of the previous editions of Women Talking Politics, particularly the 2018 edition that looked to the historical parliament of the recent election for women's political leadership.

Celebrating 2024 as the 50th Anniversary of the NZPSA, our themes for this edition in 2025 encourage both looking back at the past 50 years, and looking forward to an inclusive and diverse Aotearoa. We are particularly interested in papers on what being cis women, trans women, and non-binary persons researching politics, participating in politics, and constructing politics has meant and will mean.

**Closing Date: 30th June 2025**

For more information regarding submission requirements and process, [click here](#).

## News from the Networks He kawepūrongo nā Ngā Hononga

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**Members of the Civics, Citizenship and Political Literacy group presented at SocCon 2025 - a conference for social studies teachers in Aotearoa.**

Bronwyn Hayward delivered a keynote on "Defending Democracy: Social science education, climate change and social cohesion" and Lara Greaves and Helena Cook ran a joint session on "Political studies and civics education: Insights from research with a focus on rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people."

Attendees noted that this was a great opportunity to connect with kaiako across the country and learn more about their challenges of teaching civics and citizenship. They send a huge thank you to CCPL working group member Maria Perreau who was part of the organising committee, and recommend that members keep an eye out for future opportunities!

### Network Group Panels at the NZPSA | TKTTToA Conference

In other network news, with the conference approaching we are asking all members interested in building/joining Network Group plenary panels to reach out!

Please contact Network Convenors at the following email addresses if you'd like to be involved in any conference panels:

- Ako/Learning and Teaching - [claire.timperley@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:claire.timperley@vuw.ac.nz)
- Aotearoa New Zealand Politics - [janine.hayward@otago.ac.nz](mailto:janine.hayward@otago.ac.nz)
- Civics, Citizenship and Political Literacy - [helena.cook@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:helena.cook@canterbury.ac.nz)
- Environmental Politics and Policy - [priya.kurian@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:priya.kurian@waikato.ac.nz)
- Gender and Politics - [shirin@shirinbrown.co.nz](mailto:shirin@shirinbrown.co.nz)
- International Relations - [matthew.castle@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:matthew.castle@vuw.ac.nz)
- Political Communications - [olli.hellmann@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:olli.hellmann@waikato.ac.nz)
- Political Theory - [s.winter@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:s.winter@auckland.ac.nz)

Alternatively, start a conversation on the [Member Forums](#) or the [Network Forums](#) of the NZPSA website!

## Statement on Marsden Fund Announcement

The New Zealand Political Studies Association | Te Kāhui Tātai Tōrangapū o Aotearoa (NZPSA | TKTTToA) condemns and opposes the decision announced by the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, the Honourable Judith Collins KC, to discontinue support for research in the social sciences and humanities through the Royal Society's Marsden Fund.

The NZPSA | TKTTToA membership is primarily composed of researchers and academics located in the humanities and social sciences. Over the 50 years of the Association, our members have engaged in research topics across a wide spectrum of issues related to Aotearoa New Zealand's local, national, and international politics.

Marsden-funded projects with a local and national focus undertaken by our members have included work on voting, citizenship, youth engagement, public opinion, the functions of parliament and the public service, and the inclusion of diverse communities in our society. The Marsden fund has also supported cutting edge, world-leading research on Māori politics, participation and governance. Research on New Zealand's local and national politics is crucial to the health of our democracy and political system and is conducted predominantly within New Zealand.

In the field of international politics, NZPSA | TKTOA members have received Marsden funding to support vital work on New Zealand's foreign and trade policy, terrorism and security, war and peace, the information environment and technology, and climate change and sustainability.

The decision to marginalise social sciences and humanities on economic grounds fundamentally misunderstands the purposes for which scientific research, whether social or physical, is conducted. The value of research in politics and other social sciences is far beyond just immediate and direct economic impact; at its best, it contributes to the development of our society and gives us insights that empower citizens and enhance our democracy.

It also misunderstands the nature of economics and the economy. Economic growth, which is the stated aim of the Minister's decision, is a function of people's behavioural decisions: understanding the various social, cultural and political contexts in which those choices are taken is at the heart of the very disciplines which stand to suffer from this announcement.

Furthermore, this decision overlooks the intrinsic transdisciplinary nature of science, how the social sciences and humanities work together and alongside the likes of physics, chemistry, maths, engineering, and biomedical sciences to produce better research, knowledge, and science. These are not, never have been, and should not be, disciplines in complete isolation from each other.

In an era in which instability and misinformation is rife across many areas of domestic and global politics, maintaining a well-funded and robust political research agenda in this country is of vital importance to our security and prosperity. The Marsden Fund has always been distinguished by its even-handed operation across all disciplines in a manner that is non-partisan and based solely on research excellence. Its non-politicised foundation allowed researchers in the social sciences to work without being restricted by the short-term political or economic interests of New Zealand governments, foreign governments or corporations.

Understanding and addressing the fundamental challenges facing us as a nation and society will prove much more difficult without rigorous, well-funded research in the social sciences and humanities. This change to the fund will prevent us from asking the big questions central to the health of our democracy at a particularly turbulent and uncertain moment in human history. For these reasons the NZPSA|TKTOA membership calls on the Minister to reverse this decision and restore access to the Marsden Fund to all those participating in social science and humanities research.