

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

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## **Newsletter | Spring 2026**

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## Message from the President He karere nā Te Tumuaki

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Kia ora koutou,

I hope the election season is going well for everyone and that you are getting some downtime. It has been great to see our members featuring in various media, including our ex-administrator Dr Will Dreyer's [recent piece](#) on select committees over on the Victoria University website.

I have a couple of notices. First, we have been working together as a prizes committee to develop a new package of awards for members, as well as travel grants to allow our students to attend the biannual conferences. Keep an eye out for details in the coming months. We will probably run a consultation before putting the proposal to a vote at the AGM in January.

Please also remember that we still have the NZPSA New Zealand Politics and Māori Politics undergraduate essay prizes and the NZPSA academic publication prize. More details are later in this newsletter.

The other matter I want to raise is the state of research funding in New Zealand. I have been talking with members about the potential directions for research funding, and a few key events have occurred since the Humanities and Social Sciences panels were cut from the Marsden Fund, and the Marsden Fund was disestablished.

First, as part of the Transition Research Fund, MBIE has released information about what will be funded under four pillars, which it calls the [Pillar Investment Plans](#). From what I can see, there are very few funding opportunities for social science, let alone for political studies and international relations work. One of the big differences between what was available through Marsden and the EHB panel and the Pillar Investment Plans is that colleagues of ours who are researching more quantitative, economics-facing work, for example on trade, are probably now less likely to be able to receive funding.

I haven't looked at the plans in detail, but I suspect that for some areas where we could previously have received funding through MBIE Smart Ideas, the Endeavour Fund or the Marsden EHB panel, we no longer have that opportunity as a discipline. These plans are set to be reviewed in 2027, which leaves room for feedback and for a future minister to modify them.

Second, the current government has announced a new bill, the [Research, Science, Innovation, and Technology Bill](#), which will replace the Health Research Council Act and other related legislation. The bill has been introduced but has not yet had its first reading. This means there is still time for associations like ours, and the research community generally, to give feedback on its shape.

From an initial read, there appears to be a lack of independence within Research Funding New Zealand, meaning a minister or ministerial advisors could ultimately make the funding decisions. There is also a lack of recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and mātauranga Māori.

I am working with a few different groups to consider what we might recommend or submit on this bill, in any future Select Committee process, and through other ways of influencing an incoming government. As noted in previous messages, the NZPSA has joined the Save Science Coalition. I will keep you updated on any opportunities to make submissions, provide feedback or otherwise influence the system.

In the meantime, the main thing members can do, when you have the ear of a politician, is to make the case for why we need social science funding. You do not need to look far to find excellent examples of social science research within our disciplines.

Another potential point of hope is the Ignition Fund, which is more blue-skies, basic science funding of the kind Marsden used to support. It is mentioned in some of the Science Investment Plan material, but there is no concrete plan to put it in place at this point. I would also add that New Zealand is not committed to Horizon Europe long term, which creates another potential issue.

One final point: the Royal Society has started to release reports and work advocating for research, including social science research. You can find their first report, *Threats to Research Funding in New Zealand*, [here](#). The NZPSA is an organisational member of the Royal Society, and again I will pass on any updates and any opportunities for our members to feed into research policy in New Zealand.

Unfortunately, this has not been a particularly positive update. Do let me know if you would like to get involved in advocacy in this space, as I have made a few links with other organisations.

Ngā mihi,  
Lara Greaves

PS: For disclosure, I have injured my hand, so I used Microsoft dictation software to dictate this and Claude AI to edit it.

## 2026 NZPSA Annual General Meeting

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The NZPSA executive have decided that, due to a conference not taking place this year, the AGM will be held next year.

The meeting will be held remotely on **23rd Jan 2027**. We need to make sure that we hit a quorum of attendees, so please attend if possible! A formal invitation will be sent out to members by the 23rd December.

## 2026 Social Science Conference Reminder

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A reminder that the inaugural Conference for the Social Sciences is approaching.

- **Website:** <https://www.socialsciencesconference.nz/>
- **Pre-conference Student Day:** 1 December 2026
- **Conference:** 2–4 December 2026

The theme of the conference is *He kai kei aku ringa*: there is food in my hands - a Māori whakataukī that speaks to resilience and hope. The whakataukī asks us to think about what we carry with us, what we share, and what nourishes us collectively.

As scholars and researchers focused on upholding the academy's designated role as the critic and conscience of society, the conference organisers encourage scholars in the social sciences and related areas to come together to present and debate their work, and to demonstrate the continuing strength of evidence-based and theoretically informed critical thinking. The conference welcomes scholars from sociology, anthropology, Māori Studies, Indigenous studies, criminology, politics, public policy, gender studies, media, communications, geography, global studies, history, philosophy, psychology, social work, education, health, and more.

## 2026 Post-Election Conference Reminder

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New Zealand's November elections will be followed by the Victoria University of Wellington post-election conference - the 14th in a series begun in 1987.

The one-day conference will be held at Parliament on **Thursday, 10 December**, bringing together political party leaders, journalists, independent commentators and academics to examine 'what happened and why' - looking at the 2026 campaign and its consequences for New Zealanders.

Attendance is by registration and numbers are limited, with refreshments provided in The Grand Hall, Parliament Buildings.

To register, please visit <https://pay.wgtn.ac.nz/EventsandConferences/menu>

## British High Commission - Kōtare Network

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The British High Commission has launched a new initiative for emerging leaders in Aotearoa: the **Kōtare Network** – a young professionals' network focused on leadership, global engagement, and connection between New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Kōtare will be hosting events and opportunities for students and young professionals (aged 18-35) interested in diplomacy, international relations, public service, global careers, and big-picture international issues. The network aims to bring together curious, globally minded young people who want to deepen their understanding of international affairs and build connections across the UK and Aotearoa NZ.

Anyone interested in the network can sign up via this short Expression of Interest form: <https://forms.office.com/e/TYAwPEHyKZ> or email: [kotarenetworknz@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:kotarenetworknz@fcdo.gov.uk) expressing your interest.

## News from the Networks

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### Environmental Politics & Policy Network

The Environmental Politics and Policy Network (EPPN) organised an all-day workshop on 'Climate Change Politics and Policy in Aotearoa New Zealand' at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington on 23 July 2026. With 22 attendees and 10 presenters, the workshop brought together researchers exploring different dimensions of climate change policy and politics in Aotearoa, spanning local government responses, climate change mitigation and adaptation at the national level, diplomatic implications of climate policy, and the role of social movements and climate change activism.

Papers presented at the workshop are part of a planned special issue of *Political Science*, to be edited by Karen Hytten, Sam Crawley and Priya Kurian. The workshop offered a timely opportunity to facilitate feedback on papers, and the day was marked by lively, thoughtful discussion. The NZPSA provided a grant that supported the catering for the workshop (feedback on the event included comments that 'the food was fantastic!'), and *Political Science* supported for travel for paper presenters.

### Aotearoa New Zealand Politics Network

The Aotearoa Politics Network will be holding a post-election research meeting on Friday, 11 December 2026, at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington (Room 205, Rutherford House). This in-person gathering will bring together researchers and postgraduate students to discuss election findings, test research proposals, and build collaborative networks.

To participate or register your interest, please contact Prof. Janine Hayward at [janine.hayward@otago.ac.nz](mailto:janine.hayward@otago.ac.nz).

## Undergraduate and Publication Prizes

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The **Undergraduate Essay Prize in Māori Politics** (\$500), **Undergraduate Essay Prize for Aotearoa New Zealand Politics** (\$500), and the **NZPSA Publication Prize** are still up for offer this year despite there being no conference.

We would like to note that in the past some of these prizes have unfortunately gone unawarded due to a lack of nominations, so please do submit on behalf of yourself, your colleagues, or your students.

The deadline for submissions is the 2<sup>nd</sup> November. For more information about the prizes and the nomination process, visit: <https://nzpsa.co.nz/membership-and-benefits/prizes/>

## PhD Corner

In the PhD corner, we are celebrating the recipients of the NZPSAs international conference awards. Congratulations to Jialu Chen, who has received the award to attend the Australian Political Studies Association (APSA) conference, and to Philip Jones, who received the Taiwanese Political Studies Association (TPSA) conference award!



**Jialu Chen** is a PhD candidate in European Studies at the National Centre for Research on Europe, University of Canterbury. Originally from Xiamen, China, she completed her undergraduate studies at Xiamen University. She later moved to Germany to pursue an Erasmus Mundus Master's degree in Euroculture at the University of Göttingen and spent an exchange semester in Spain.

Her doctoral research explores EU artificial intelligence governance, focusing on the EU AI Act, related policies, and their implications for European regulatory power. She is particularly interested in how the EU's regulatory influence extends beyond its borders through the "Brussels Effect"-- using access to the EU market can incentivise global companies to align with EU standards. Her research explores the relationship between digital governance, regulatory power, and the EU's influence in global affairs.



**Philip Jones** is a PhD candidate at the University of Canterbury, supervised by Jeremy Moses & Geoff Ford. His TPSA conference research, *Digital Power Asymmetry: How Big Tech Corrodes and Co-opts Small State Sovereignty*, examines how asymmetries in digital power between multinational technology firms and small states constrain the exercise of sovereignty.

Drawing on a qualitative case study of New Zealand, Philip's findings reveal that while the state clearly identifies the risks associated with platform dependency and vendor lock-in, its ability to act is constrained by reliance on the same corporations. His paper introduces the concepts of the "digital sovereignty gap" and "competent digital-dependency" to explain this dynamic.