

The Auckland Public Policy Seminar Series

The Auckland Public Policy Seminar Series is a monthly forum featuring renowned national and international speakers.

The free seminars are organised by the [University of Auckland Master of Public Policy programme](#) in cooperation with [Motu Economic and Public Policy Research](#) and the [New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development](#). Each organisation provides speakers for the series on a rotating basis, and seminars are held at lunchtime in central Auckland.

The seminars are intended to be accessible to people who want to be informed about public policy issues of key importance to the Auckland region.

Big Challenges for a Small Nation: Setting the 2020 Agenda

This series of seminars has been arranged by the University of Auckland's Master of Public Policy degree programme (MPP). The series feature some of the University's, and the country's, most respected commentators. All speakers are drawn from the Auckland region – illustrating the depth of public policy expertise in the area.

The series reflects the University's role as conscience and critic of society and highlights the University's place as a centre for non-partisan, big-thinking, agenda-setting policy meetings.

All of the Public Policy Seminars will be held on Thursdays from 12.30-2.00pm at Old Government House.

The seminars are free and open the public. Paid parking is available at the Owen G Glenn Building (12 Grafton Road).

Programme of events:

13 August: The Future of Electoral Politics in New Zealand

27 August: The Future of Energy

24 September: Opportunities Created by the Super City

15 October: The Future of the Global Economy

29 October: Big Issues in the Future of Schooling in New Zealand

13 August: The Future of Electoral Politics in New Zealand

New Zealand adopted Mixed Member Proportional representation (MMP) for parliamentary elections in 1996. Since then, no single party has been able to win a majority of the seats in Parliament. As a result, governments to this day have comprised of coalitions of two or more parties. This has had significant implications for how public policy is made in New Zealand. Although this change has been in place for well over a decade, politicians both inside and outside of Parliament continue to express dissatisfaction with the MMP electoral system. This seminar considers the current state of play, how MMP has affected policy development, and the future of electoral politics in New Zealand.

Jennifer Curtin (Chair) is a senior lecturer in Political Studies at the University of Auckland, with research interests in public policy and comparative politics. She is a core contributor to the MPP degree.

Raymond Miller (Presenter 1) is an associate professor of Political Studies at the University of Auckland and an expert on electoral politics. He is the author of *Party Politics in New Zealand* and editor of *New Zealand Government and Politics*, both published by Oxford University Press.

Michelle Boag (Presenter 2) is a former President of the New Zealand National Party and a prominent commentator on New Zealand politics.

27 August: The Future of Energy

New Zealand is hugely reliant on the rest of the world for its fuels. Technological advancements such as battery operated cars provide us with the opportunity to be more self-reliant. However, the debate about what sort of alternative approaches to generating electricity has not yet occurred. We need a debate about the appropriate mix of new forms of electricity generation (wind, solar). We also need a debate on whether nuclear energy is an acceptable source of energy for us. While controversial, the pressures of climate change and need for clean energy is forcing other economies to increase reliance on nuclear energy – this is a debate that New Zealand is still to have. New Zealand also has a large reserve of low quality coal, and we rely on future sequestration technology to enable us to fully exploit these sources. We need to consider the future of such technologies, and to explore what can be done to speed the emergence of cost-effective sequestration technologies.

Rhema Vaithianathan (Chair) is a senior lecturer in Economics in the University of Auckland Business School and a core contributor to the MPP degree.

Basil Sharp (Presenter 1) an associate professor and Director of the Energy Centre at The University of Auckland Business School.

Peter Neilson (Presenter 2) is the CEO of the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development and a former Cabinet Minister.

24 September: Opportunities Created by the Super City

The creation of a Super City in Auckland is happening at a time of economic uncertainty and adjustment. In this seminar, we move beyond the Super City controversy. We explore how this new public governance structure opens opportunities for leadership and creativity in the region. Recent international assessments of the factors promoting regional economic development have emphasized the importance of effective government. Further, evidence has emerged in the past decade showing how cities that promote creative activity can serve as magnets for talent, entrepreneurship, and knowledge-based industry. What are the prospects for Auckland over the next decade? Is a renaissance within reach?

Lester Levy (Presenter 1) is an Adjunct Professor of Business at the University of Auckland and Chief executive of Excelsior: New Zealand Leadership Institute. His book, *Leadership and the Whirlpool Effect*, was published by Penguin in 1999.

Ann Poulsen (Presenter 2) is an innovation and creative projects consultant.

Michael Mintrom (Chair) is an associate professor of Political Studies at the University of Auckland and the coordinator of the Master of Public Policy degree. He has published widely on political leadership and the politics of educational change.

15 October: The Future of the Global Economy

The past eighteen months have proved especially turbulent for the global economy. The recession has had different impacts around the world, but many commentators have declared it to be the worst economic downturn since the Depression of the 1930s. As a small, open economy, New Zealand has always been highly sensitive to global economic conditions. In this seminar, we discuss key drivers of the contemporary global economy. We are particularly keen to consider the likely trajectory of the global economy in the coming decade and expected implications that forthcoming changes will have on New Zealand's economic performance and social wellbeing.

Rhema Vaithianathan (Chair) is a senior lecturer in Economics in the University of Auckland Business School and a core contributor to the MPP degree.

Jane Kelsey (Presenter 1) is a Professor of Law at the University of Auckland and the author of several books on globalisation and its impacts on New Zealand. Her latest book on globalisation, *Serving Whose Interests? The Political Economy of Trade in Services Agreements*, was published by Routledge in 2008.

Rod Oram (Presenter 2) is one of New Zealand's foremost business commentators. His book *Reinventing Paradise* was published by Penguin in 2007.

29 October: Big Issues in the Future of Schooling in New Zealand

Quality education is vital for ensuring the future success of individual students and for whole societies. New Zealand's system of schooling is recognised internationally for producing students who, on average, perform well on standardised achievement tests. However, there are some worrying performance discrepancies. For many years, questions have been raised concerning how to develop approaches to schooling that increase overall student performance and also close the gaps between our highest and lowest achieving students. This seminar will consider both the current situation in New Zealand schooling and how future policy settings could promote better outcomes for individual students and for society in general.

John Hattie (Presenter 1) is a professor of Education at the University of Auckland and a world authority on the testing of student achievement. He is the author of many books including *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, published by Routledge in 2008.

Lynda Reid (Presenter 2) is the principal of St. Cuthbert's College, an independent school for girls catering for years 1-13, and well-regarded for the quality of its educational programmes. She serves on a range of advisory boards and is an executive board member of the New Zealand Institute.

Michael Mintrom (Chair) is an associate professor of Political Studies at the University of Auckland and the coordinator of the Master of Public Policy degree. He has published widely on political leadership and the politics of educational change.