

## Youth Citizens Jury

Interest in encouraging more people to get involved in the decision-making in our communities has been growing. This has been increasing for a number of reasons: more voices and viewpoints provide more information for decision-making, this involvement can help empower citizens and recent changes to legislation have encouraged more consultation. Increasing opportunities for the community to have their say has also grown because of concerns about increasing public disengagement and a perception of distance between politicians and their constituents.

To help combat these concerns and improve decision-making, a variety of different community consultation methods have emerged. One of these methods is Citizens' Juries. Citizens' Juries offer a unique alternative to more traditional community consultation methods, such as public meetings or polling, because of their in-depth and deliberative or discussion-based nature. Citizens' Juries also allow the decision-makers to gain important insights into the views of their community, and opens up the political process to new voices.

A recent initiative has been to use the Citizens' Jury model specifically for young people. Youth Citizens' Juries take the idea of informed, in-depth community discussion a step further by involving young people - a group of the community who are often disengaged and excluded from decision-making processes. Young people represent an important part of society, both in regards to the alternative perspectives they can offer and their significance for the future of the community. Including them in the political decision-making process through mechanisms such as Youth Citizens' Juries can help in fostering confidence and increasing understanding of relevant issues, which will encourage participation now and into the future.

This workshop will be the national launch of the Growing Active Citizen's Youth Citizens' Jury resource which will explain what Youth Citizens' Juries are all about and will show you, step-by-step, how to create and run your own! This package includes a resource booklet, with a number of case studies in a number of contexts and a DVD resource.

**Presenters will include:** Victoria Owen, Senior Policy Analyst from Local Government NZ, Shailer Hart, Acting Community Development Manager from Christchurch City Council; and Helena Catt, Electoral Commission from Electoral Commission.