

# TIME TO RECLAIM REAL DEMOCRACY?

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# AIMS

- Share new research results

How is democracy – measured by the involvement of NGOs in public debate and policy making – faring?

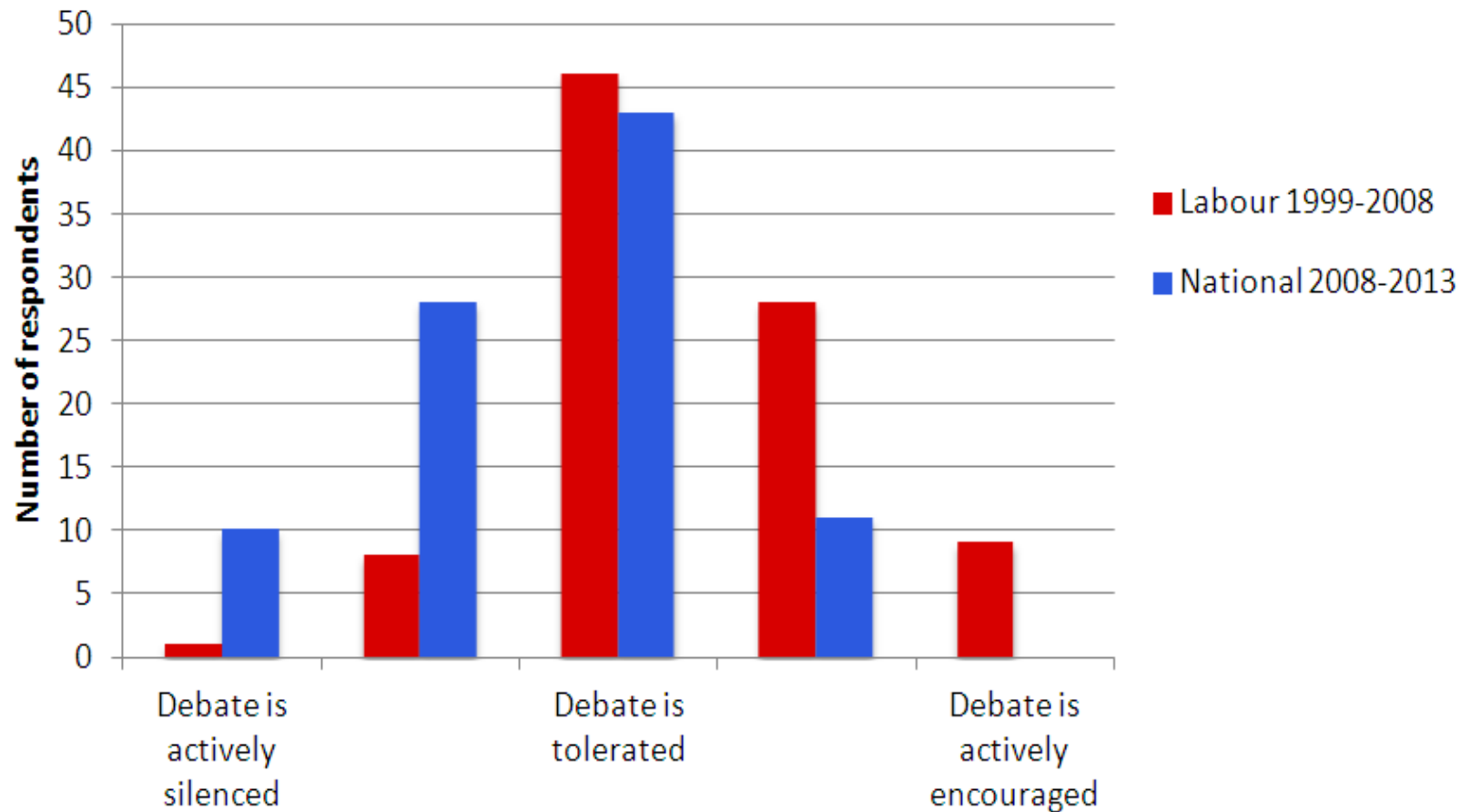
- Two surveys in 2009 and 2013
- Comparing responses from 93 organisations

I am not sure what it is but there is something about the way government has worked with people that has made them less brave than we can know they can be ...We are willing to be challenged but we are not being challenged enough. We are not getting enough people kicking the door down saying you can do this really differently and here's how I am going to contribute, and here's how you can contribute (Bill English 2011).

## Have you been involved in government consultation processes over the last five years?

	2009	2014
Yes	74 (79.6%)	73 (78.5%)
No	15 (16.1%)	20 (21.5%)
NA	4 (4.3%)	

# Community and voluntary sector organisations' views on the attitudes of Labour and National governments to public debate, 1993 to 2013



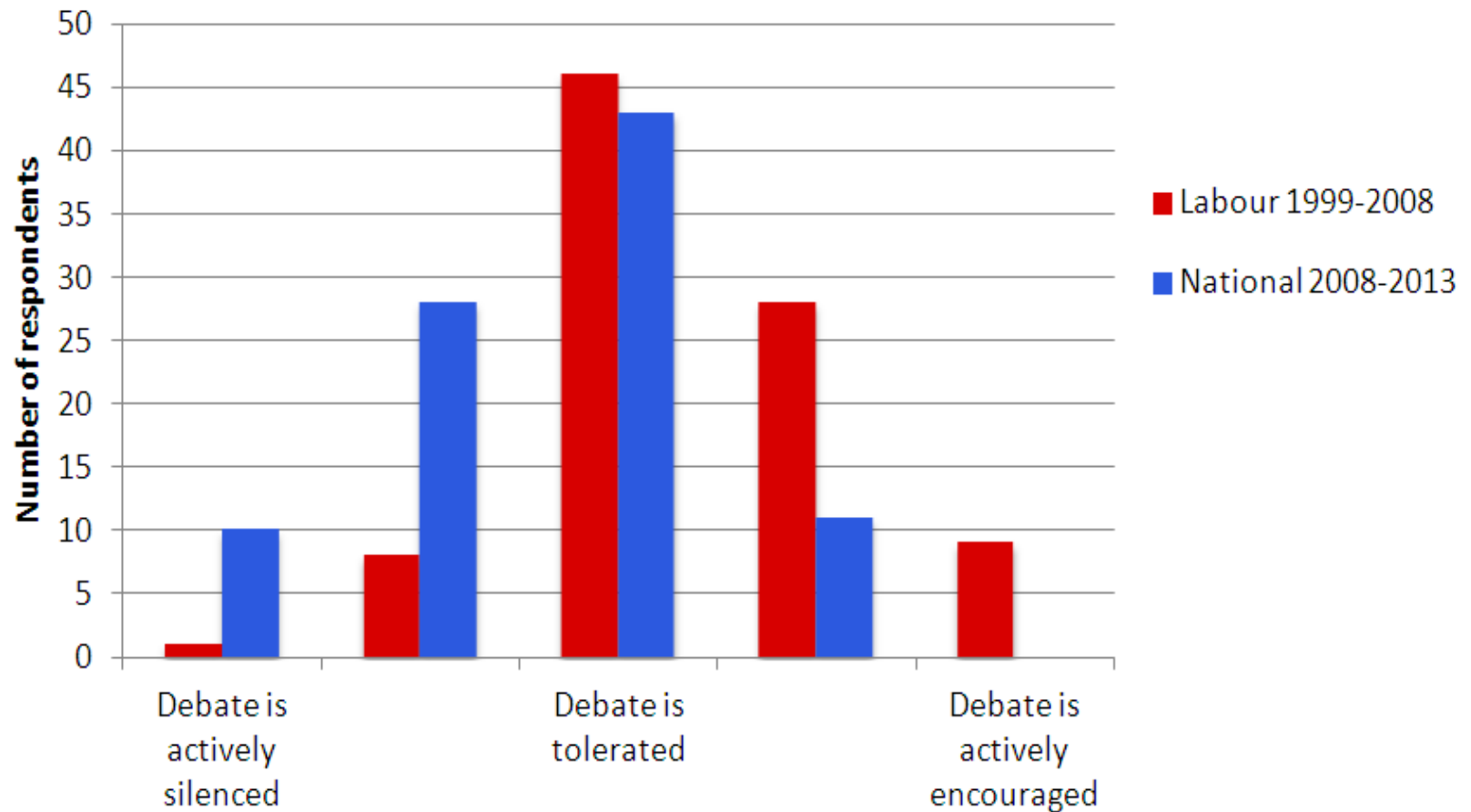
# DEBATE IS 'TOLERATED'

There always seems to be a subtext of 'already made our minds up but we will listen to appear like 'the good guys'.

[there is a] shoulder-shrugging acceptance that people have a right to their opinions, though it will change nothing.

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# Community and voluntary sector organisations' views on the attitudes of Labour and National governments to public debate, 1993 to 2013



# DEBATE IS SILENCED

Critical voices closed down. Officials saying they won't work with you if you don't agree with decisions.

Funding from MOH, MSD, is based on no negotiation - in terms of values + assessment of client outcomes.  
Take it or leave it, our way or no way

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# DEBATE IS SILENCED

## 'Gag clauses' in our contracts

- 12.9% in 2009 and 25.8% in 2014

Dissenting organisations risk having their funding cut

	2009	2014
Strongly disagree	6	1
Disagree	30	25
Agree	39	37
Strongly agree	5	17

# A 'HOLLOWED' OUT DEMOCRACY

Organisations that dissented were valued by the govt. as part of a robust democracy

	2009	2014
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	5	20
<b>Disagree</b>	44	51
<b>Agree</b>	25	14
<b>Strongly agree</b>	1	1

Have been removed from appointments / cttees after media article critical of govt policy (unrelated to cttee). Funding not renewed after criticising. Officials attitude of contempt for NGOs.

# A 'HOLLOWED' OUT DEMOCRACY

NGOs were being pressured to amend their messages and goals to bring them in line with government policy

	2009	2014
Strongly disagree	8	1
Disagree	46	33
Agree	25	42
Strongly agree	5	14

# 'THEY'VE MADE UP THEIR MINDS ALREADY'

How successful do you feel your organisation was in having your key concerns heard by government?

	<b>Labour-led Government 1999-2008</b>	<b>National-led Government 2008-2013</b>
Not successful at all	4.30%	37.60%
Moderately successful	67.70%	52.70%
Highly successful	22.60%	3.20%

# 'THEY'VE MADE UP THEIR MINDS ALREADY'

18 organisations in 2009 and 32 in 2013 said consultation was unproductive

- Little respect shown for NGO expertise (37)
  - Govt. agencies dictate the process too much (35)
  - There is a 'tick box' approach to consultation (28)
  - Consultation comes too late in the process (33)
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# WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

- Intolerable and untenable environment
- Plagued with contradictions which damage the sector

**The Contract State  
and Constrained  
Democracy**  
the community  
and voluntary  
sector under  
threat

'working at the grass-roots or flax-roots level ... become aware of trends and emerging issues earlier than the government. In short it is difficult to argue that such groups are not essential to any modern state' (Salter, 2004, p.9). In New Zealand this role has been acknowledged in law since the mid-19th century (see Tennant, O'Brien and Sanders, 2008; Eichbaum and Shaw, 2006; Mulgan, 2004; Jesson, 1992) and is referred to in a range of recent government documents (see Ministry of Social Development, 2012; Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, 2008; Cabinet Office, 2011). But it is not unchallenged. This article examines how the changing relationship between the

# WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Attitudes to democracy in New Zealand  
encouraged public debate

	2009	2014
Strongly disagree	1	14
Disagree	14	44
Agree	65	39*
Strongly agree	6	2

# Fears, constraints, and contracts

2013

The democratic reality for New Zealand's community and voluntary sector

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