



14 November 2022

Ms Deborah Hart  
Chair, Independent Electoral Review Panel  
PO Box 180  
Wellington 6140

By email: [secretariat@electoralreview.govt.nz](mailto:secretariat@electoralreview.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe Ms Hart

### **IoD Submission on the parliamentary term**

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the review of our electoral system. Our comments are limited to the issue of the parliamentary term.

The parliamentary term is an important issue to our more than 10,000 director members. Back in 2016 we asked our directors about a four year term as part of our Director Sentiment Survey. 84% of our members agreed that extending the parliamentary term from three to four years would improve the governance of NZ. We, therefore, support moving to a four-year parliamentary term.

Best practice governance encourages governors to think longer term to support a sustainable future. This has always been the case, but recent engagement on issues such as climate change, appreciation of a long-term te ao Māori perspective, as well as a need for sustainable land-use and infrastructure has made long term strategic thinking imperative. If we are to be successful as a nation at addressing the big issues that are so important to us, and bring about a better future for our mokopuna, it is important that there is enough time to run sound parliamentary processes to consider different perspectives and a range of views.

We know, however, from the Victoria University of Wellington's Institute for Governance and Policy Studies 2019 research that a three-year general election cycle provides for a relatively short parliamentary time horizon that is likely to incentivise government to focus on those matters that can most readily be tackled within the available timeframe.<sup>1</sup> The report goes on to suggest longer parliamentary terms, along with other initiatives, help ensure governments focus on long-term issues

---

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Governance and Policy Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. (2019). *Foresight, insight and oversight: Enhancing long-term governance through better parliamentary scrutiny*, p183.  
[https://www.victoria.ac.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/1753571/Foresight-insight-and-oversight.pdf](https://www.victoria.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1753571/Foresight-insight-and-oversight.pdf)

and, therefore, support better decision-making.

An additional year to the term may improve the quality of policy making by allowing more time for evidence-based decisions and by relieving pressure of an impending election. Any elected government needs sufficient time to tackle the important issues they have been elected to address, and for the term to be sufficiently long to allow for the development of good policy and law, to have it be challenged and refined as part of a robust parliamentary process, and be put into practice.

Furthermore, best practice governance requires the right competencies to be around the decision-making table and for a level of institutional memory to be developed and retained. It's been reported that a three-year cycle contributes to a substantial turnover rate of MPs leaving and entering the House. This is concerning and a four-year term may go some way to rectifying this.

Overall, IoD sees a longer parliamentary term supporting stronger governance and democracy for Aotearoa New Zealand. Good governance matters now more than ever and we must ensure decision-makers have the right supports in place to help them govern well.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsten Paterson', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Kirsten Paterson**

Chief Executive