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**Public Participation in  
Local Authority Annual Planning:  
'Spectacles and Acclamation' or  
Prospects for Deliberative Democracy?**

A thesis presented in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy  
Massey University

**Christine Maree Cheyne**

**1997**

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## ERRATA

| PAGE | LINE                   | CORRECTION   |
|------|------------------------|--|
| vi   | 10                     | <i>interchange</i> The parameters of the research <i>and</i> The research question |
| 5    | 1                      | <i>replace</i> <i>accounability</i> with <i>accountability</i>                     |
| 6    | Fn 6                   | <i>replace</i> <i>amendeded</i> with <i>amended</i>                                |
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| 22   | 3rd from bottom        | <i>replace</i> <i>committee</i> with <i>committed</i>                              |
| 29   | 13                     | <i>replace</i> <i>citizenFship</i> with <i>citizenship</i>                         |
| 37   | 15                     | <i>replace</i> <i>decade.</i> with <i>decade and have</i>                          |
| 38   | 21                     | <i>delete</i> sentence beginning <i>The specific weaknesses</i>                    |
| 48   | Fn 31, line 2          | <i>delete</i> <i>that</i>  |
| 49   | 2                      | <i>replace</i> <i>enthusiams</i> with <i>enthusiasm</i>                            |
| 67   | Fn 43                  | <i>insert</i> " after <i>theory.</i>   |
| 69   | Fn 47                  | <i>replace</i> <i>which endorsed</i> with <i>which is endorsed</i>                 |
| 70   | 4                      | <i>replace</i> <i>possibilty</i> with <i>possibility</i>                           |
| 75   | Fn 51, line 3 of quote | <i>replace</i> <i>thought</i> with <i>though</i>                                   |
| 75   | Fn 51, line 7 of quote | <i>replace</i> <i>connet</i> with <i>connect</i>                                   |
| 75   | Fn 51, last line       | <i>replace</i> <i>readly</i> with <i>readily</i>                                   |
| 75   | Fn 51, last line       | <i>replace</i> <i>in to</i> with <i>into</i>                                       |
| 80   | 1                      | <i>replace</i> <i>up a</i> with <i>up of a</i>                                     |
| 88   | 5th from bottom        | <i>replace</i> <i>Rather</i> with <i>Rather than</i>                               |
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| 165  | 20                     | <i>replace</i> <i>Walsh, 1996</i> with <i>Walsh (1996</i>                          |
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| 288 | Fn 175, line 3 | <i>replace measurement with measurement in</i>                       |
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the statutory annual planning process that local authorities are required to undertake as a result of the 1989 reform of local government in New Zealand. It explores the relationship between the annual planning process and the goals of enhanced democracy and accountability that are, along with efficiency, claimed to be promoted by public sector reform. Through a case study of local authority annual planning (involving observation, documentary analysis and interviews) and with accompanying interviews with key actors in the development and implementation of the 1989 local government reform legislation, the implementation of the annual planning provisions and the ideas shaping this approach to democracy are examined. The 1989 reform of local government in New Zealand was ostensibly concerned with introducing new structures and processes to strengthen local government. The annual planning process embodies a particular approach to governance. This thesis explores the nature of that form of governance. In so doing it considers the nature of democracy embodied in the designs of the reformers of local government and critically reviews the features of liberal democratic political processes and policy analysis.

A key finding of the research is that there are important weaknesses and limitations associated with the provisions for public participation in the annual planning process and that such provisions cannot be seen as sufficient for democracy. The thesis demonstrates that the prevailing conditions of public participation reflect a liberal pluralist strategy, in which democracy is linked with the aggregation of individual preferences, and which assumes that the ability to influence political decision-making is dispersed among individuals and interest groups. The opportunities for individuals and interest groups to make submissions on the annual plan and other significant policies of local authorities are based on the liberal assumption that people know their interests and that politics is a vehicle for the representation of those interests.

The thesis concludes that, while the annual planning process has resulted in information being available to citizens, there is considerable scope for the further enhancement of democracy through strengthening the obligations of local authorities to deliberate publicly and to enter into dialogue with citizens. The reform of local government has given considerable emphasis to the goal of efficiency and has treated the requirements of democracy less

comprehensively. Democratic governance, it is argued, involves more than the opportunity for citizens to make submissions to elected representatives. Instead, priority must be given to deliberative mechanisms and associated statutory supports. Attention must be given to alternative institutional arrangements and participatory and deliberative democratic procedures which are more appropriate, and indeed necessary for a more robust form of democratic governance, in a pluralistic society.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AGPS   | Australian Government Publishing Service  |
| ANOR   | Another   |
| CE[O]  | Chief Executive [Officer]   |
| CHE    | Crown Health Enterprise   |
| CIPFA  | Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (UK)                           |
| CMS    | Conservation Management Strategy  |
| CP     | Court Proceedings   |
| GAAP   | Generally Accepted Accounting Principles  |
| GDP    | Gross Domestic Product  |
| IIR    | Institute of International Research   |
| LATE   | Local Authority Trading Enterprise  |
| LGA    | Local Government Association (later, in mid-1996, renamed Local Government New Zealand) |
| LGC    | Local Government Commission   |
| MMP    | Mixed Member Proportional   |
| MP     | Member of Parliament  |
| n.d.   | no date   |
| n.p.   | no page   |
| NPM    | New Public Management   |
| NZ     | New Zealand   |
| NZLR   | New Zealand Law Reports   |
| OCCLG  | Officials' Co-ordinating Committee on Local Government                                  |
| ORS    | Others  |
| OECD   | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development                                  |
| PNCC   | Palmerston North City Council   |
| PPBS   | Planning, Programming and Budgeting Systems   |
| RMLR   | Resource Management Law Reform  |
| RS     | Reprinted Statute   |
| s      | section   |
| SRA[s] | Strategic Result Area[s]  |
| SSC    | State Services Commission   |
| SOE    | State Owned Enterprise  |
| TVA    | Tennessee Valley Authority  |
| UK     | United Kingdom  |
| US     | United States   |