

Rebuilding **the pillars** of our democracy

Free Speech Union: a voice for the next generation



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FOREWORD

Bringing a free speech **culture shift** for our democracy

If I had tried to advance gay rights by cancelling or shouting down those who disagreed with me, I would not have made progress. Real change came through listening, understanding, and speaking freely. **That is how free speech and persuasion work, and that is how democracy survives.**

I am proud to introduce the Free Speech Union's 2025 Annual Report. On tour with the FSU last year, I witnessed firsthand the influence they're having, and I cannot stress enough how vital their work is for New Zealand to remain a truly free country.

Coercive tactics that we're seeing around the world aren't limited to online mobs or attacks on individuals; they're widespread in our institutions, both in subtle and overt ways, punishing individuals and professionals for their thoughts and words, and causing others around them to stay silent.

John Stuart Mill, back in 1859, warned that the greatest threat to freedom of speech, thought, and expression is not from the Government, but from socially enforced conformism. It's still true today. And the Free Speech Union gets this.

They may have defeated laws, and defended the rights of individuals, but they're also shifting the culture.

It's clear to me that the FSU is not sitting idly waiting to react when acts of censorship emerge. They are principled and proactive in their approach to defending free speech, and they lead the conversation, the fight, with clarity and conviction. They're taking the initiative: they're going into institutions, they're getting to the root of the problem, and they're making change from the inside out. And it's working.

I'm honoured to have supported their important work, and I hope you will too.



Jonathan Rauch, American academic, journalist, author, and FSU Tour Speaker

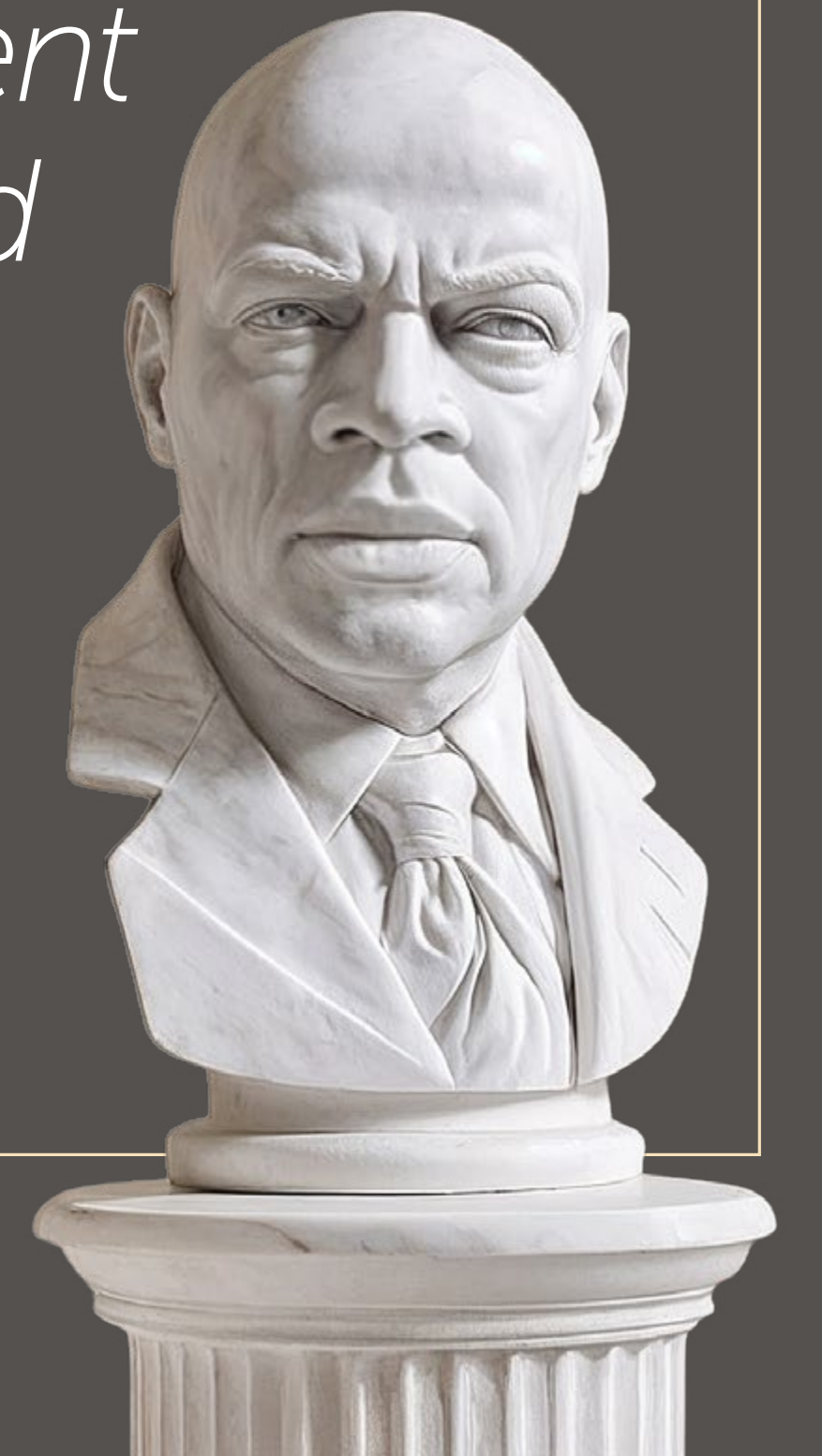
OUR VISION

Free speech is

- A fundamental human right
- A shield against abuses of power
- A social good for social movements
- Our best way to know who the idiots are

“Without freedom of speech and the right to dissent, the civil rights movement would have been a bird without wings.”

John Lewis, Former US Congressman





OUR CHALLENGE

Our free speech culture is increasingly under threat

We're fighting on many fronts

Businesses are constraining employees free expression, even in their private lives.

Media organisations are limiting intellectual diversity.

University cultures mean staff feel less free to be the "critic and conscience of society".

Government legislation is overriding or watering down speech rights

Public venues are denying access for political reasons

Professional bodies are imposing ideological compliance

Police are limiting speech rights and vindicate threats of violence against peaceful protest

OUR CHALLENGE

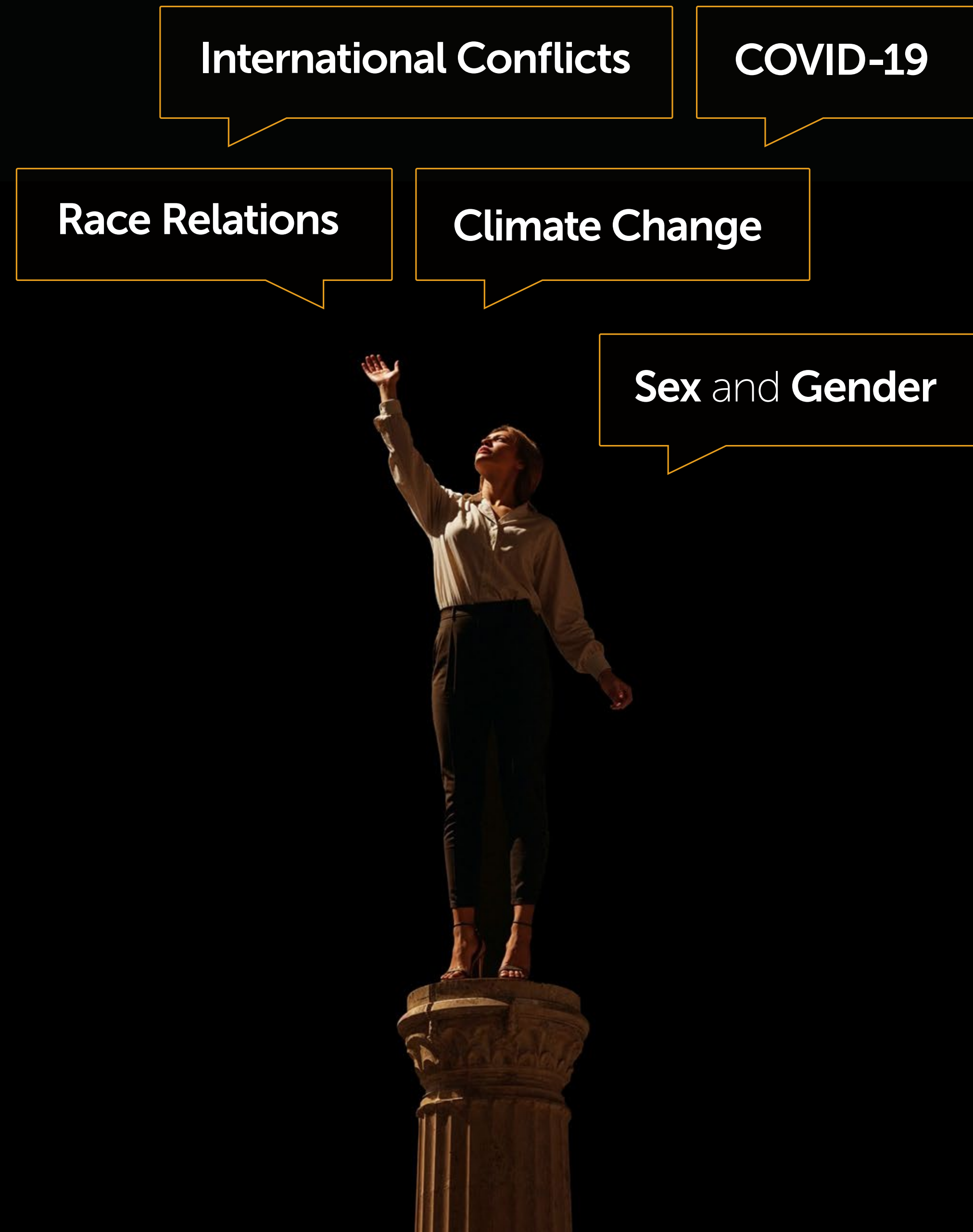
We can't debate **what matters** anymore

Many New Zealanders are unaware of both how vital freedom of speech is, and how dangerous some of the moves are to exclude its protections.

We had to accept that a true defence of free speech cannot begin with fighting government censorship. By the time the state is able to impose censorship, the culture of free speech has already been lost.

We are seeing this today. There is a growing list of topics that are 'the sacred cows' of our public discourse—issues where robust argument is shut down. We can't move forward as a society if we can't discuss these things.

We must first ensure we have a culture that doesn't simply tolerate free speech but celebrates it.



OUR SOLUTION

We're New Zealand's **free speech** champions

And we're needed now, more than ever.

Our mission

We work towards a **flourishing civil society** where **free speech** is restored as a Kiwi value.

We protect and promote **vigorous debate, diversity of ideas,** and **New Zealanders' rights** to freedom of speech, conscience, and intellectual inquiry.



FROM OUR CEO

Defending speech, defining history

I recently joked with a columnist who had poked fun at me in a piece a couple of years ago that my title of 'CEO' was a bit presumptuous. We agreed that, at the time, it was overstating things; however, it was visionary. Our team has grown significantly, and we're reaching more and more individuals and institutions than ever before.

I recently spoke at two conferences in the UK. While home to John Stuart Mill, George Orwell, and other free speech champions, it is now a country where, on average, 30 arrests are made daily for speech-related offences. Likewise, Germany, home of Immanuel Kant, has declared war on 'hate', 'misinformation', and 'radicalism' - war is not an exaggeration of how they are responding.

Some claim we're fearmongering when we warn of similar trends here. But I am convinced we are changing history in New Zealand for the better. Our role is not simply reactionary; it is strategic.

It has become normal to keep our opinions to ourselves, that some views are 'acceptable' while others are not, and for the risk of offence to trump open debate.

We must learn from the stories we see overseas. These warnings aren't theoretical; they fuel our strategy and work.

This year, we exposed unlawful training the NZ Police were conducting for their officers. Legislation that we played a crucial role in drafting is making its

way through Parliament to protect free speech on university campuses. We're conducting thorough reviews of regulatory standards for professionals and establishing councils for each of our industry-specific memberships. We're undertaking a major review of the Harmful Digital Communications Act, which is being used to silence legitimate speech. We're seeing free speech advocates play significant roles in our democracy, like former FSU council member Melissa Derby, who was appointed as the Race Relations Commissioner, and Jim Grenon, who now sits on the board of a major news outlet, NZME.

Freedom doesn't come free. It has cost some their lives, others their livelihoods, and perhaps for the lucky ones, it only costs their time. There are many worthy causes out there, but free speech is what enables them all.



Jonathan Ayling, CEO

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

How we are restoring our free speech culture



OUR OPPORTUNITY

As the **challenge grows**, so do we

On almost any metric, we're gaining serious momentum. This is where an intersection of getting stuck in hard meets a growing demand for what we stand for day in, day out.

55%
Name Recognition

\$1,500,000+
Total raised within the financial year

51%
Increase in giving

=
Polling shows equal favourability from National, Labour and Undecided voters

5,000+
Total number of donors within the financial year

2025 **110,000+**

GRASS-ROOTS SUPPORTERS:

2021 **4,000**

FROM OUR COUNCIL

Defending open dialogue while we still can

My biggest gripe with the would-be-censors is that they appear to think we're incapable of thinking for ourselves. They silence opinions that could 'harm minorities'. Harm?! I'll decide what is and isn't harmful, thank you very much.

I am a proud Pacifica woman, but I'm also an individual. I make decisions for myself, form my own views, and have no interest in being coddled by those who believe they can think for me. To the contrary, I find such condescension thoroughly demeaning.

I am on the Free Speech Union Council because I believe we're at a crucial point

in history. There's pressure to limit our speech, to conform to certain ideologies, and push for 'cultural safety'.

But if we all do our bit, I believe we can return to a culture that welcomes viewpoint diversity, one that stops using 'safety' as a justification for censoring unpopular ideas and instead actively encourages open civil dialogue.

My favourite aspect of the Free Speech Union's work right now is working on our intentional approach to growing positive engagement with free speech principles through approaching organisations, associations, foundations, schools and universities; we're meeting

with regulatory bodies, influencing key institutions, and connecting with supporters when there are opportunities for other free speech advocates to get involved.

As a mum, it fills me with hope when I hear the team's updates after a Speak Up! session at a high school, or a successful day engaging with students at O-Week. I believe the Free Speech Union is not only safeguarding the future for the next generation, but they're also ensuring the next generation understands the importance of this today.

I'm not sure that there's a better mission to support.

To Jonathan and his team, thank you. To every person who has signed a petition, shared our work, and contributed, thank you. Our outlook could be bleak, but thanks to everyone who makes up the Free Speech Union, it's not.



Jillaine Heather, Deputy Chair

“ Truth doesn't hide in echo chambers.
It is discovered through dialogue.

Consequently, **free speech isn't just a right:** It is our most powerful error-correction mechanism and an indispensable part of a truth-seeking endeavor. **”**

Dr. Peter Boghossian



INSTITUTIONS

Professional memberships

Our evolution

Reclaiming our free speech culture

Our institutions have become captured and strangled. So we need to be about more than damage control. If we're truly going to see a shift in our culture, we can't simply be an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. We're getting to the root of the problem by taking the fight back to the institutions and reclaiming a culture that values and respects free speech.

This means requiring institutional neutrality from our universities, influencing regulatory bodies, consulting on government proposals, running free

speech training sessions in local councils, meeting regularly with our professional membership councils, setting up a council of university students, publicising stories of censorship within institutions and professions, and much more.

Read on to see all of our campaigns from the past year – our team is venturing into many contexts so that we don't simply defend speech rights when they're breached, but we prevent this from happening in the first place.



PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

We're not just taking on institutions. We're building them.

Protecting your voice, defending your freedom. We're in your corner.

We want to see Kiwis able to freely express themselves without fear of retribution. Over time, it's become clear that certain professions are far more hostile to free speech than others. With our general membership and seven profession-specific options launched over the past year, Kiwis never have to face the fight for free speech alone.

With councils for each of our professional memberships, we're

covering more ground than ever before by being across ever-evolving competency standards, policies, and regulations for these professions, as well as engaging with relevant government ministers. This means our support and advice for members has become more tailored and specialised.

Our memberships also enable us to seek feedback from specific members on submissions relevant to them, ensuring our recommendations are relevant and shaped by those directly affected. We also host events specifically for members to connect with like-minded Kiwis, so they know they're not alone in this fight.



Growing a powerful network

Having launched the initiative with academic and legal professional memberships last year, it was such a success that we've since added writers, media, public servants, teachers, religious leaders and health professionals. Each professional membership has as Council—dedicated leaders willing to

take a stand for free speech in their respective fields. Often, when assisting someone in a specific profession, they ask, "Am I the only one? Are there others who care about this like me?" Every time, there are. We look forward to seeing the growing impact of this eco-system.

Highlight: Academic Symposiums

As the Education and Training Amendment Bill had its first reading, we hosted three events across the country with senior academics to unpack what 'institutional neutrality' really is. If we want academics and students to be able to take a stand once again on issues that matter to them, universities need to stop tying their hands by taking positions on cultural, political, and social issues as institutions.



Academics



Writers & Artists



Media



Legal Professionals



Public Servants



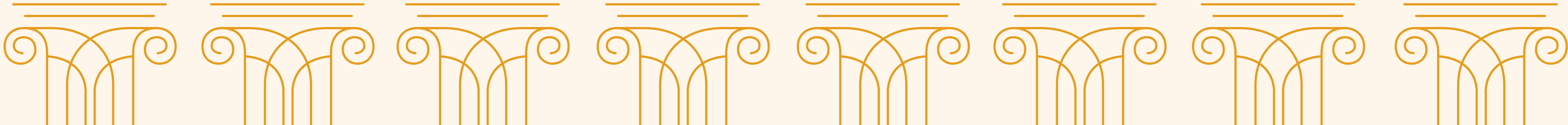
Teachers



Religious Leaders



Health Professionals



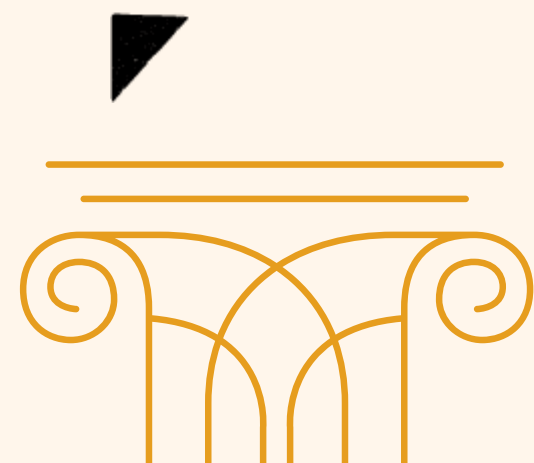
OUR EVOLUTION

From **strength to strength** for our freedom

We're growing the institutions of tomorrow

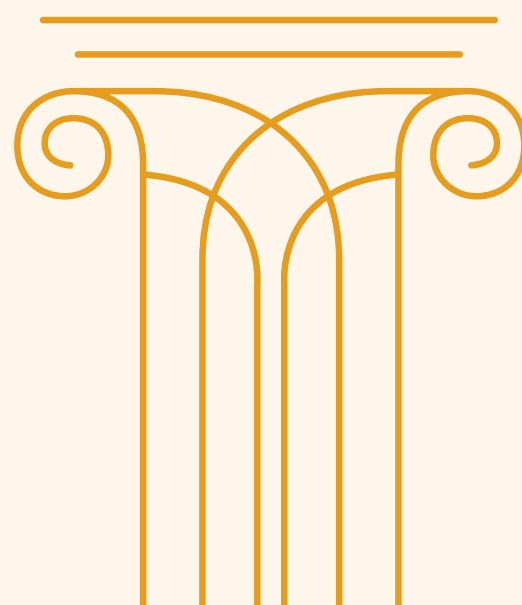
We're scrappy yet scaling. From humble beginnings with one staff member, to growing into a Union, to today—a respected and effective organisation at the heart of a growing international, institutional free speech eco-system.

2018

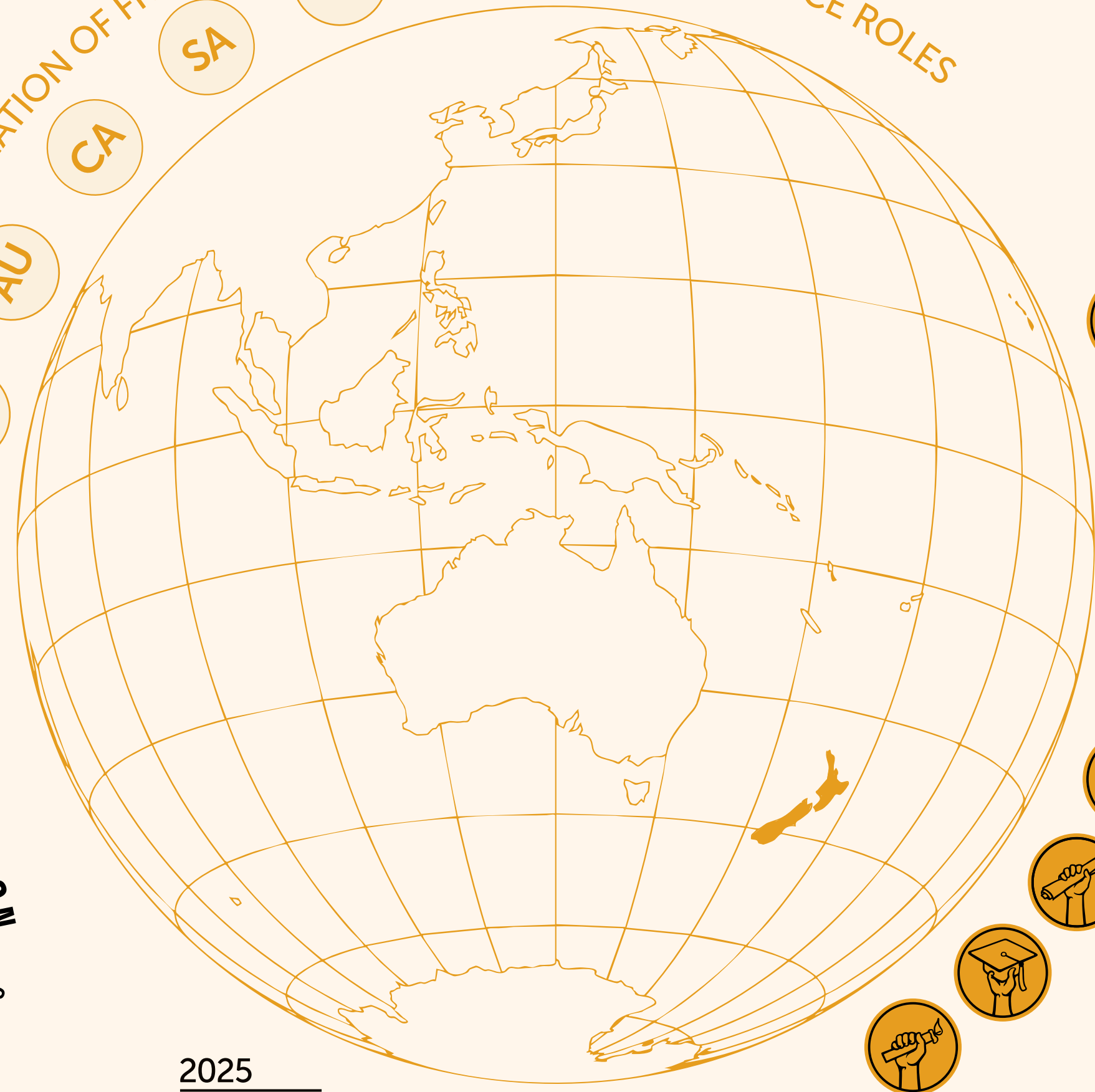


**FREE
SPEECH
COALITION**

2021



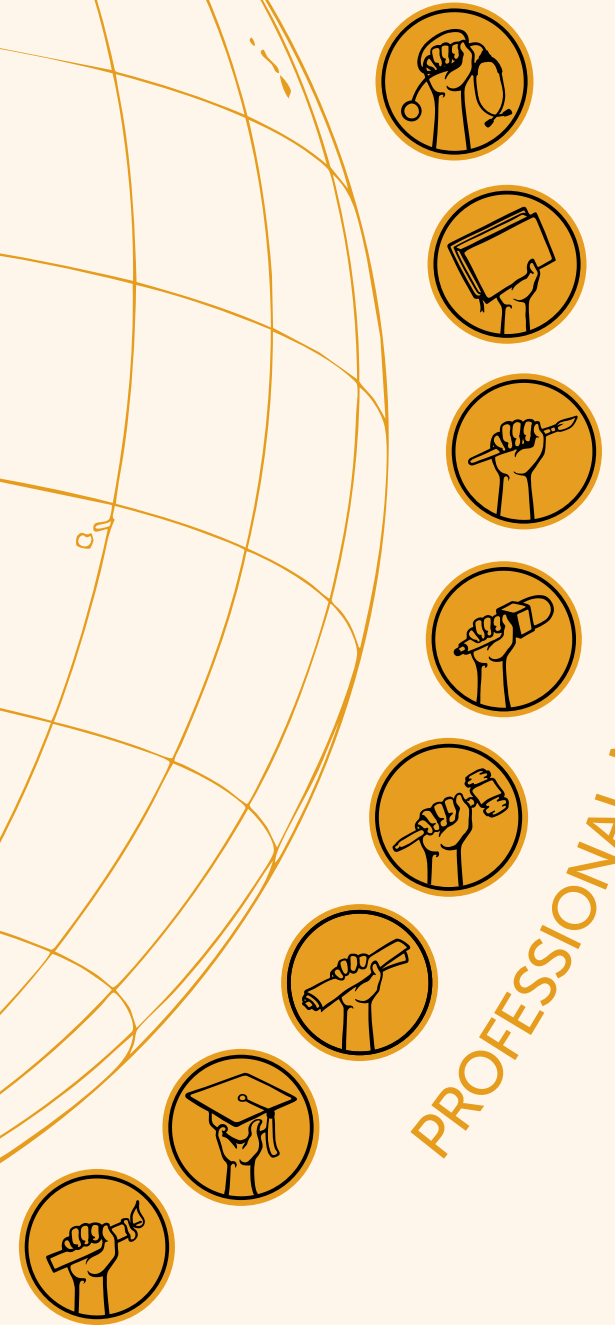
2025



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE SPEECH UNIONS

US AU CA SA UK

GOVERNANCE ROLES



PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

CASES

Cases

Personal advocacy

Letters

Who else will **defend your voice?**

Our cases aren't just important for the individuals whose speech rights we defend. They're important for all Kiwis' speech rights. When one person is silenced, it sends a message to everyone else: toe the line, or else.

But we're not afraid of the would-be-censors and have a passionate, experienced legal team committed to defending Kiwis speech rights before the courts. No one should be punished for holding or voicing an opinion. We are all better off when voices are free.



CASES

Paul Burns

Last year we introduced you to Paul – a pro-life advocate arrested simply for engaging in public debate. We managed his case and provided legal representation and we're proud that charges of 'disorderly conduct' were dropped, and rightly so. It's a huge win. But as with many of our cases, the punishment was in the process. The stress, the legal battle, the weight of being treated like a criminal – all for talking about something that matters deeply to him.

So, this victory matters not just for Paul, but all Kiwis who simply want to hold an opinion. When someone is arrested for engaging in public debate, something is seriously wrong.

Lucy Rogers

Last year we reported Lucy's story of being unlawfully arrested when she was peacefully protesting at the side of the road during a pro-Palestinian protest in Queen Street. We are currently preparing for trial and determining what evidence can and cannot be considered by the judge. We expect to go to trial this year but await a date.

This year, the Independent Police Conduct Authority affirmed our take on Lucy's case in their comprehensive report on protest rights in NZ, and vindicated Lucy, stating the interference with her protest rights was "unjustified".

Janet Dickson

Janet is a real estate agent who lost her license because she refused to do compulsory training that didn't align with her beliefs. The High Court dismissed Janet Dickson's claim that the Real Estate Agents Authority acted unlawfully by mandating a Te Kāhano course as part of the continuing professional development requirements, so we filed an application, seeking permission to intervene in Dickson's appeal.

Your right to free speech protects four things: what you can say, what you can choose not to say, what you choose to hear, and what you can choose not to hear. Too many professional bodies are letting ideological issues get in the way of key functions of professions.

Hutt City Council and Jo Miller

Sometimes, we give the would-be-censors the benefit of the doubt. But in this case, we had no reason for that, and simply taking the Council to court over its censorship of newspaper inserts wasn't enough.

Our legal team said we had to get to the root of the problem; we're suing the Chief Executive in her capacity as Chief Executive. She endorsed and confirmed the censorial decision, and she needed a wake up call. She absolutely knew what she was doing, and we gave her every opportunity to settle the matter outside of court. Our leaders must be held accountable. They don't get to call the shots on what local ratepayers do and don't read.

CASES

Portia Mao

When we use examples of overseas censorship to defend free speech in New Zealand, opponents claim we're fearmongering. But Portia Mao's story proves we can't afford to be complacent. The Kiwi-Chinese journalist recently helped create a Stuff documentary exposing CCP interference in NZ. After criticising an official online, she was accused of causing "serious emotional distress" under the HDCA, and was subsequently barred from criticising the complainant and required to remove her online commentary and apologise.

We were gob smacked by this case and supported her legal challenge, while urging the Ministry of Justice to review

the HDCA. Thankfully, it was good news for Portia, with the judge ruling in her favour, and warning against weaponising legal tools to silence criticism. When a brave journalist is gagged for putting their neck on the line in our country, alarm bells should ring.



Portia Mao

IINZ and MFAT

The Israel Institute of NZ (IINZ) directors Perry Trotter, Ashley Church, and Dr. David Cumin faced legal action under the Harmful Digital Communications Act (HDCA) after publicly calling out Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT)'s practice of sending more than \$1million annually to a heavily-compromised United Nations agency (UNRWA) operating in Hamas-controlled Gaza.

Rather than address the concerns, MFAT officials claimed "emotional distress" from the organisation's posts. Regardless of your opinion on this matter, free speech is essential for holding government officials accountable in a democracy. New Zealand law should not be silencing that.

Chris Milne

Chris Milne, a previous administrator of Hutt City Council – The Truth Exposed Facebook page, was silenced under the Harmful Digital Communications Act (HDCA) after Lower Hutt Mayor Campbell Barry claimed to suffer "serious emotional distress" over posts made. The posts raised concerns about Barry's conduct as mayor.

The case was before the court under a suppression order meaning it wasn't even public that the case existed, and we were concerned that the order wasn't going to be lifted until after the local body elections. We supported Chris in challenging this weaponisation of the HDCA, which was used to block legitimate political commentary, until the suppression order was lifted. When a mayor can use the law to hide from public scrutiny, it's a serious threat to democracy.

PERSONAL ADVOCACY

Not all our cases require representation before the court. Sometimes guidance, support in a meeting or mediation, or pastoral care when individuals find themselves in difficult situations can make all the difference.

Prof. Elizabeth Rata

A renowned academic, Prof. Elizabeth Rata is a sociologist of education and a professor at the University of Auckland. We represented her when her faculty underwent a restructure examining the faculty members' expertise in Mātauranga Māori. There is significant public debate as to whether Mātauranga Māori constitutes science – a debate sparked by Prof. Rata and six other academics several years ago.

We reminded the Dean of the Faculty that academic freedom matters, not just for professors, but for every student who deserves to hear more than one side. Prof. Rata's role was not disestablished, and the Faculty Staffing Review even provided opportunity for faculty to challenge the Mātauranga Māori criteria.

Gareth*

Our laws are very specific about the sort of speech that is illegal. So, when Gareth, a hard-working family man, had Police appear on his doorstep with questions about a few tweets he made on an anonymous account, he was right to get in touch with us. Police showed up a second time a few weeks later, forcing themselves into the home (which upset his young triplets!), and suspended his gun license.

We advocated for Gareth before the Firearms Licencing Authority, saw his gun license reinstated, and provided pastoral care after the traumatic experiences he faced. You should not be treated like a criminal for blowing off steam on social media.

*Name changed for privacy.

Oliver Jull

While we were up against unlawful training Police were conducting for their officers, Oliver's story cropped up, reminding us that we're not just about issues at a national level, we're here to defend the speech rights of the little guy too, literally. Oliver is a student at New Plymouth Boys' High School and was unjustly disqualified from a speech competition on the grounds that his speech titled 'The Demise of the West' would "upset" some listeners.

We contacted the school, met with them, and reminded them that it's actually healthy for students to hear different opinions. Oliver joined us for our event with Prof. Biggar in Wellington and even opened the event by giving his speech from the "podium of truth" itself! Jonathan and Hannah will attend a mediation to support Oliver before the Human Rights Commission in August.



Oliver Jull

Tania Wright

A former Napier City Councillor, Tania Wright shared her personal views at one of our town hall events, sharing her experience of considering Māori wards as a councillor. No mention of her employer was made, yet Creative Arts Napier received a complaint and moved to investigate. We stepped in to remind the Board that speech on public issues is protected. Employees don't leave their rights at the door. Tania spoke in a personal capacity on a matter of public interest, and Creative Arts Napier had no business getting involved.

PERSONAL ADVOCACY

Jenny Hobson

Jenny, a nurse, was investigated by the NZ Health over a handful of her Facebook posts claiming that she thought Dragqueen Storytime at a local library was wrong. Hannah, our In-house Counsel attended a meeting with Jenny and her employer to ensure Jenny's speech rights were respected. NZ Health told Jenny they wouldn't take the investigation further, but they gave her a letter of expectation to make sure it doesn't happen again... But the investigation shouldn't have even happened in the first place! We told NZ Health as much.

Jennifer Scott

Jennifer Scott was arrested after yelling "where is Palestine" repeatedly at a pro-Palestine march in Dunedin while filming from her car. Police charged her with disorderly behaviour likely to incite violence and labelled it a potential 'hate crime', asking the court to apply a hate-motivation sentencing provision and to impose a bail condition that she not engage in 'hate speech'. Our legal assessment found no evidence to support the disorderly charge or 'hate crime' claim. Our legal team is providing representation for Jennifer and will appear in court in June. We cannot risk criminalising the expression of political opinions in public spaces.

Christine Massof

Last year we told you about Christine Massoff, an IRD employee who was threatened with disciplinary action at work after she made a comment about the installation of period products in

the men's bathrooms at work. Our team defended Christine before the Employment Relations Authority. We await an outcome – these processes take time, but the fight is worth it.



Rex Landy (supporter), Christine Massof, Jill Ovens (Women's Rights Party), Tim Blake (lawyer representing Christine)

PERSONAL ADVOCACY

Anonymous School Teacher

A primary school teacher got in touch after receiving an alert from the Teaching Council. Over what? A Facebook comment, of course. She disagreed that the Teaching Council had submitted on behalf of all teachers in opposition to the Treaty Principles Bill and expressed this in a comment on a New Zealand First video. A member of the public reported her to the Teaching Council on the basis that the teacher allegedly violated the Code of Conduct, specifically manaakitanga: creating a welcoming, caring, and creative learning environment. We contacted the Teaching Council making it clear there's nothing to investigate.

Catherine Simpson

Catherine, a nurse, enjoys sharing her personal views on X. A complaint was laid with the Nursing Council over posts she made, including criticism of the COVID-19 vaccine, inaccurate claims about abortion laws, unflattering remarks about Rawiri Waititi, and reference to conspiracy theories. If found 'guilty', Catherine could face thousands in fines, not counting legal costs. This isn't about patient safety. It's about activists targeting professionals for their opinions, and spineless institutions giving in. We're standing up for Catherine, and for the right of nurses to express themselves without fear of professional punishment.

Robert Laroche

Robert is a nurse with over 45 years of experience, and a background in psychiatric and mental health. He had a complaint made against him by a junior doctor over content Robert reposted on Facebook over the past four years that was critical of the COVID-19 vaccine. The Nursing Council referred his case to the Professional Conduct Committee which will determine whether the complaint will go to the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal, which would decide penalties if the alleged misconduct is proven. Why, after more than 45 years of being a Registered Nurse, is Robert being raked over the coals for a few posts?

Further Advocacy

In addition to our formal cases, we deal with a high volume of enquiries from our members, supporters, and the public. We provide advice on how supporters can resolve speech-related disputes when they contact us, and when necessary, we refer them to the appropriate agencies. We've also attended mediations and meetings to advocate for individuals' speech rights and ensure they're supported.

LETTERS 2024

We don't underestimate the power of good ol' fashioned letter. We write to politicians, city councillors, professional bodies, school principals... Anyone who needs a reminder that it's not worth messing with Kiwis' speech rights.

August 2024

To Police Commissioner, Andrew Coster:
Police roll out new 'hate crime' and 'hate speech' training

To Board and Leadership Team of New Plymouth Boys High School:
New Plymouth Boys High School bans student speech

To the Co-Director of Postal Workers Union:
Concerning claims that Posties can determine what is 'misinformation', refusing to deliver such material

To the Chair of Creative Arts Napier:
Creative Arts Napier

September 2024

To the AUT Vice Chancellor:
Leaked AUT Law Faculty Staff Survey results, and subsequent response

To the Dental Council:
Proposed changes to Dental Council competencies and standards

To the Chief Executive Broadcasting Standards Authority:
Broadcasting Standards Authority scrapes together "research" to back call for online censorship

To the Minister for Mental Health, Matt Doocey:
Puberty blockers evidence brief withheld from the public

To the Minister of Justice, Paul Goldsmith:
Broadcasting Standards Authority scrapes together "research" to back call for greater censorship

To the Principal of Macleans College:
Macleans College bars Christian students from hosting Q&A discussion session

October 2024

Massey University Staff Survey another alarm bell for academic freedom in New Zealand

To the Justice Committee Chair:
Submissions for Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) (Customary Marine Title) Amendment Bill

Concerning accounts of NZ Medical Council silencing dissenting voices must be investigated To the Associate Minister of Health, Matt Doocey:
National Ethics Advisory Committee's Ethical Standards cause for concern

To the Nurse Manager:
Health NZ punishes nurse for personal opinions on private Facebook group

To the MP for New Plymouth:
New Plymouth Boys High School bans speech competition entry



fsu.nz/news

LETTERS 2024

November 2024

To the Chief Executive, Rotorua Lakes District Council: *Rotorua Lakes Council uses copyright conditions to silence elected Councillor*

To General Manager of Policy & Local Government, Department of Internal Affairs: *Review of Local Government Codes of Conduct, and other reform*

To Commissioner of Police: *Introduction of the Free Speech Union to the new Police Commissioner*

To the Minister of Justice, Paul Goldsmith: *Fair Digital News Bargaining Bill*

To the Associate Minister of Health, Matt Doocey: *Alarming policy from Association of Psychotherapists Aotearoa New Zealand on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*

To the Minister of Immigration, Erica Stanford: *Immigration New Zealand follows Australia's appalling example*

To the Chief Executive of Waikato District Council: *Waikato District Council blocks staff from accessing – just one – advocacy website*

December 2024

To the Chief Legal Officer of Hutt City Council: *Free Speech Union to file High Court claim against Hutt City Council and CEO*

To the Vice Chancellor of Massey University: *Massey University takes political stance on Treaty Principles Bill*

To the Chief Executive Te Kaunihera Tapuhi o Aotearoa Nursing Council of New Zealand: *Concerns about contestable claims in the registered nurse standards of competence*

To the Nurse Manager: *Health NZ pushes staff self-censorship*

To the Minister of Police, Mark Mitchell: *Proposed changes to Policing (Cost Recovery) Regulations likely threat to free speech*

To the Leader of ACT, David Seymour: *Letter to ACT: Proposed changes to Policing Act ripe for abuse*

To the Leader of New Zealand First, Winston Peters: *Letter to NZ First: Proposed changes to Policing Act ripe for abuse*

LETTERS 2025

January 2025

To the Minister for Universities, Shane Reti: *Academic freedom: the sine qua non of open debate and progress in universities*

To the Minister for Public Service, Judith Collins: *Importance of open dialogue and dissent in effective public service*

February 2025

To the Minister of Justice, Paul Goldsmith: *Harmful Digital Communications Act must be reviewed*

To the Minister of Health, Simeon Brown: *Healthcare Professional Regulators Imposing Contested Ideological Positions*

March 2025

To the Minister of Justice, Paul Goldsmith: *Independent Police Conduct Authority find Police fail to uphold free speech rights*

To the Police Commissioner: *Police respond to Independent Police Authority Report contradicting itself and fail to amend Police training*

To the Events Co-ordinator of B:HIVE: *Breach of contract by B: Hive - intent to pursue proceedings*

To the Minister of Health, Simeon Brown: *Restoring free speech in the healthcare profession*

To the General Manager of Public, Consumer & Government Affairs at ANZ Bank: *Your bank's position on 'de-banking'*

To the National Director, National Public Health Service: *Clarifying accusations of public health overreach*

To the Chief Executive of Far North District Council: *Far North District Council's Approach to Social Media Content Moderation: Request for Transparency*

To the Investigations Advisor of the Teaching Council: *Response to Complaint regarding Teacher's Facebook Comments*

LETTERS 2025

April 2025

To the Chief Executive of NZX:
Removal of Public Commentary on NZME share acquisition

To the Chief Ombudsman:
Reinvigorating government transparency and accountability

To the Assistant Police Commissioner:
Protecting free expression in Police training – follow-up on Te Raranga

To the Vice Chancellors of NZ universities:
Academic freedom legislation a welcome opportunity for collaboration

May 2025

To Environment Canterbury Regional Councilors: *Free Speech Union commends Environment Canterbury Council for rejecting “gag order”*

To the Secretary for Internal Affairs:
Diversity of Voices Central to Department of Internal Affairs’ role

To the Minister for Women: *Ministry for Women Training Modules*

To the Minister for Building and Construction: *Registered Architects Board propose a cultural monopoly*

To the Architecture & Design Film Festival organising team: *Film about Israeli Architect banned from Architect & Design Film Festival*

To the Chief Risk Officer of Kiwibank:
Kiwibank threatens to debank customer based on survey feedback

To the Minister of Justice: *Follow-up on Harmful Digital Communications Act and free speech concerns*

To the Minister of Police: *Police continue to ignore IPCA*

To the Labour Party Spokesperson for Education: *Comments in the house betray ignorance of academics’ experiences*

To the Chief Human Rights Commissioner:
Proposal for collaboration on freedom of expression initiatives

To the Chief Executive of Registered Architects Board: *Move to reframe Architecture profession threatens to shut out alternative perspectives*

To the Public Service Commissioner: *An invitation to dialogue: Political neutrality in the public service*

To the Chief Executive of Tonkin + Taylor:
Tonkin + Taylor looks to punish employee for lawful expression

June 2025

To the Minister of Justice: *Questions on the Crimes (Stalking and Harassment) Bill*
To the Police Commissioner: *Police respond to Independent Police Authority Report contradicting itself and fail to amend Police training*

” *When I immigrated to New Zealand in 1999, I believed I had come to a country where I could live in peace and enjoy true freedom and democracy. I never imagined I would one day find myself in a courtroom, defending my right to free speech.*

Thankfully, I have not faced this dark chapter alone. *I am profoundly grateful to the Free Speech Union for their unwavering support... I truly don't know how I would have managed without them.*

This court ruling marks only the first round in a broader struggle between two competing forces. Even in a democratic country like New Zealand, freedom of expression and democratic values have to be actively defended. The fight continues—but so does our resolve. ”

Portia Mao, journalist. Backed by FSU.



CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns
Submissions & petitions

Every voice counts

No one can fight this battle alone. But with over 100,000 Kiwis backing us, we've proven the value of people power. Our campaigns are what ensure thousands of Kiwis are part of this fight. Whether it's signing a public letter, writing a submission, emailing a Minister, or donating to a fight, it's our supporters that make our campaigns so effective.

CAMPAIGNS

Police Conduct Unlawful Training

A supporter who is a police officer brought to our attention training the NZ Police were conducting for their officers to “recognise, report, and respond” to “hate speech” and “hate crime”. This is despite the fact the Law Commissioner explicitly instructed the Law Commission to stop all work on expanding NZ’s hate speech laws. The material labeled statements like “There are only two genders” or “Kiwi, not lwi” as examples of “hate”.

But as we’ve said over and over, “hate” is entirely subjective. Why were the Police inventing their own rules? After pressure from the FSU, Police agreed to review the training, committing to focus on actual threats to physical safety, not opinions, and deleting any record of ‘non-criminal hate incidents’. We believe this is one of our biggest wins yet – our democracy cannot afford for our Police to be making up laws and literally policing speech.

Law Commission Review of Human Rights Act Protections

We led a campaign opposing the Law Commission’s discussion paper that considers extending the Human Rights Act to cover people who identify as transgender, non-binary or have innate variations of sex characteristics as it risked criminalising speech. The considered changes could compel certain speech, chill public debate on the topic of gender identity, and undermine the right to express views dissenting from the status quo. The proposed changes could especially impact the speech of individuals in particular professions such as teachers, employers, and the media.

Along with the our own comprehensive submission, thousands of supporters submitted urging the Minister of Justice to reject all advice to include any amendments to the Human Rights Act that would undermine Kiwis’ right to believe according to their conscience and to express those beliefs.

‘Hate Crime’ Laws Considered

The law should punish actions, not thoughts. Despite canning unworkable and unpopular ‘hate speech’ laws at the beginning of their term, Minister of Justice Paul Goldsmith has instructed the Law Commission to prepare advice on creating ‘hate crime’ laws in New Zealand. But there is no logical reason to support ‘hate crime’ laws but reject ‘hate speech’ laws; they bring subjectivity into the law in the same way.

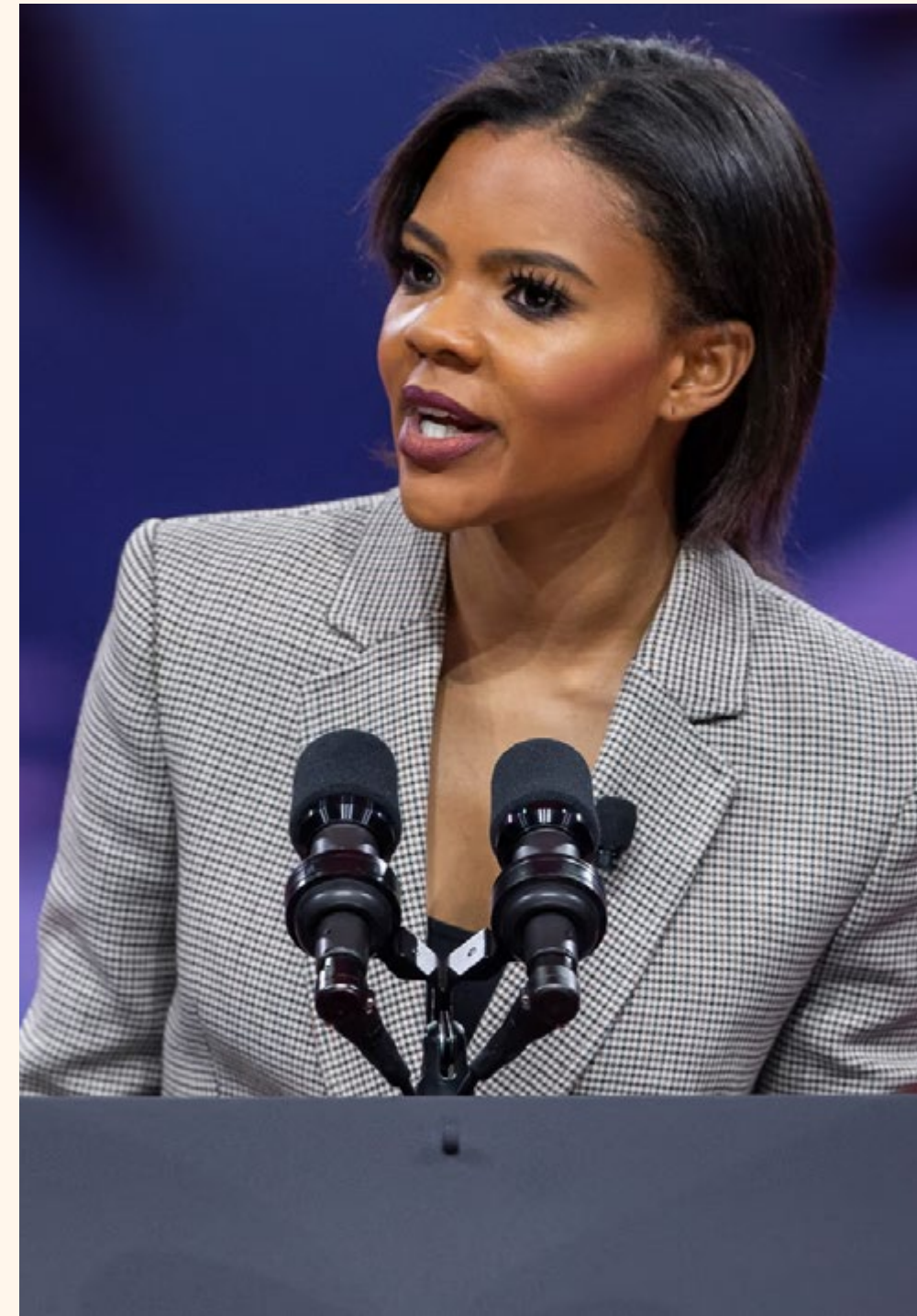
We met with the Law Commission and led the campaign, with thousands of supporters joining us, opposing these considerations that would allow harsher sentencing based on a person’s perceived beliefs or motivations. Vague terms like “hate” are easily politicised and could be used to silence dissent. In our submission, we called on the Government to reject these laws and uphold the principle of equal justice. Criminal law should not be used to enforce ideological conformity.

CAMPAIGNS

Candace Owens denied entry into NZ

When conservative commentator Candace Owens was initially denied entry into New Zealand due to her views, we stepped in immediately, with our whole team working late into the night to push back on this outrageous decision. This was not simply about Owens' speech rights, it was also about Kiwis' right to hear or not; no government official should make that choice for us.

We advocated publicly and directly with officials to ensure free speech was respected and that this decision did not set a dangerous precedent for future travellers. Thanks to pressure we put on the Associate Minister of Immigration, and the appeal our legal team submitted, Candace Owens was granted a visa. The story received widespread national and international media coverage, placing the Free Speech Union at the center of a major global conversation about open debate and the limits of state power.



Candace Owens

Competency, not cultural safety

Too often, professionals are targeted for their personal views, with regulators using licensing and training requirements to enforce ideological conformity. We'll continue to support individuals, but we must also get to the root of the problem. That's why we've launched broader campaigns to challenge politicised mandates from regulatory bodies in sectors like real estate, healthcare and architecture.

We've contacted professionals in these industries, met with Ministers, written to regulators, and released the Real Estate Agents (Political Neutrality) Amendment Bill 2024, which we drafted to ensure that real estate professionals are not mandated to undergo training unrelated to their core competencies. Our message is clear: regulatory authorities must stay in their lane. Professional standards should ensure competence, not control belief.

Internet NZ make undemocratic moves

When InternetNZ proposed changes to its constitution, we raised the alarm over new ideological requirements that threatened free speech on the internet – the modern-day public square. Among the most concerning was a mandate that internet users must be "safe" and free from "harm". Terms so vague risk enabling censorship and stifling legitimate expression.

We publicly challenged this language and its potential misuse; such changes undermine open debate and democratic principles. Our campaign led to a surge of Kiwis joining InternetNZ's membership to push back.

CAMPAIGNS

Review of Harmful Digital Communications Act

After becoming aware of multiple cases where the Harmful Digital Communications Act has silenced legitimate speech, we're undertaking a thorough review of the Act. We'll analyse all of the cases where it's been applied in the ten years of its existence, prepare a discussion paper, include international commentary from comparable jurisdictions, and possibly recommended legislative changes.

We've met with the Minister of Justice and expressed our concerns and provided him with details of cases such as Portia Mao, Chris Milne, and the Israel Institute of New Zealand (see under 'cases').



Jonathan meeting Minister of Justice Paul Goldsmith about HDCA, 2025 May

Governance roles

Along with our campaigns, we're encouraging and assisting our supporters and members to become active participants in our democracy and the processes that underpin it in different ways. It's time change came from the inside out, and with tens of thousands of Kiwis around the country who care about free speech too, we're working to connect the right people with the right roles and opportunities to defend free speech in important contexts.

COVID-19 Inquiry

Our submission tool on the Royal Commission's Covid-19 Inquiry enabled over 4,000 supporters to call for the Inquiry to examine how free speech was undermined during the pandemic. Feedback included concerns of silenced debate, soft power, and affected public trust.

In our own submission, we also urged the Commission to investigate whether academic freedom was respected, whether critics of the Government's response faced unfair consequences and whether their legal protection was sufficient, and how this all affected social cohesion.

SUBMISSIONS & PETITIONS

Alongside our campaigns, we regularly make written submissions on government proposals to ensure speech rights are upheld in Parliament and throughout legislative decisions. Public consultation periods are vital democratic tools, and we make sure to leverage every opportunity to defend your speech rights.

Media Reform Proposals

Our submission in opposition to the Media Reform Proposals rejected the expansion of regulation over the media, warning that such an expansion could undermine free speech by increasing state control over content creation. If trust in media is to increase, it's less regulation we need, not more.

We also opposed an expanded role for the regulator, emphasising self-regulation through independent bodies, and called for the reduction or elimination of mandatory levies that could subtly influence editorial independence. We recommended that any remaining levy should be transparent, minimal, and not used to influence media content or expand state control.

Regulatory Systems Amendment Bill

The Free Speech Union opposes the Regulatory Systems (Occupational Regulation) Amendment Bill, warning it risks enabling regulatory bodies to act in politically biased ways and censor professionals for views unrelated to their work. By broadening what counts as unsatisfactory conduct, the Bill could suppress legitimate dissent and chill free expression.

Instead, we recommend incorporating safeguards from our proposed Political Neutrality Amendment Bill to protect professionals' rights to hold and express differing views without fear of retribution. Political neutrality and open debate must be upheld in regulated professions.

Crimes Legislation (Stalking and Harassment) Amendment Bill

While the Crimes Legislation (Stalking and Harassment) Amendment Bill has good intentions, we've cautioned against aspects that risk silencing legitimate speech. The Bill mirrors problems seen in 'hate speech' laws; they bring subjective interpretation into the law. We've urged the Justice Select Committee to ensure the law targets genuine harm without capturing legitimate, even if unpopular or inconvenient, speech by narrowing their definitions and providing better defences that would let the courts protect free speech as well as victims of stalking and harassment.

SUBMISSIONS & PETITIONS

Academic Freedom Submission to Education and Training Amendment Bill

We've welcomed the Education and Training Amendment Bill (No 2), legislation we contributed to extensively. Our Inter-University Council on Academic Freedom submitted in support of the Bill, welcoming the introduction of duties on universities to protect and promote academic freedom, commending that the Bill would prevent universities from denying speakers based on unpopular opinions, and the introduction of annual reporting requirements. To ensure the Bill has the full effect of enhancing academic freedom in New Zealand, we've recommended that a clear definition of 'institutional neutrality' is provided to avoid misunderstanding, and that annual reports be made publicly available.

Additionally, throughout the year, we have also submitted feedback on policies related to free speech and academic freedom to the University of Auckland, Victoria University of Wellington, Massey University, and the University Advisory Group.



Academic freedom event

Health Workforce Regulation Consultation

We supported the Government's aim to modernise health workforce regulation, but emphasised the importance of protecting free speech within the healthcare profession. Our submission warned against mandatory cultural competency requirements that may compel belief or suppress dissent. We advocated for cultural competence to be encouraged, not enforced, and for regulatory boards to include voices committed to free speech and viewpoint diversity. Public consultation must be genuine, open to all perspectives, and not used to impose ideological conformity or silence unpopular views. Above all, we urged a clear focus on clinical safety and competence as the foundation of regulation. Freedom of belief, open debate, and intellectual diversity are not secondary concerns – they are essential to a safe and effective healthcare system.



Jonathan, Dr Roderick Mulgan, and Dr Manoja Kalupuhana meeting with Simeon Brown

CONTENT

Social media

Media

Tours & events

Other initiatives

Spreading the word

It's not just political and legislative shifts we're working towards. For New Zealand to truly value and protect free speech, hearts and minds need to be influenced and convinced. A carefully crafted message is vital for getting people on board with your cause.

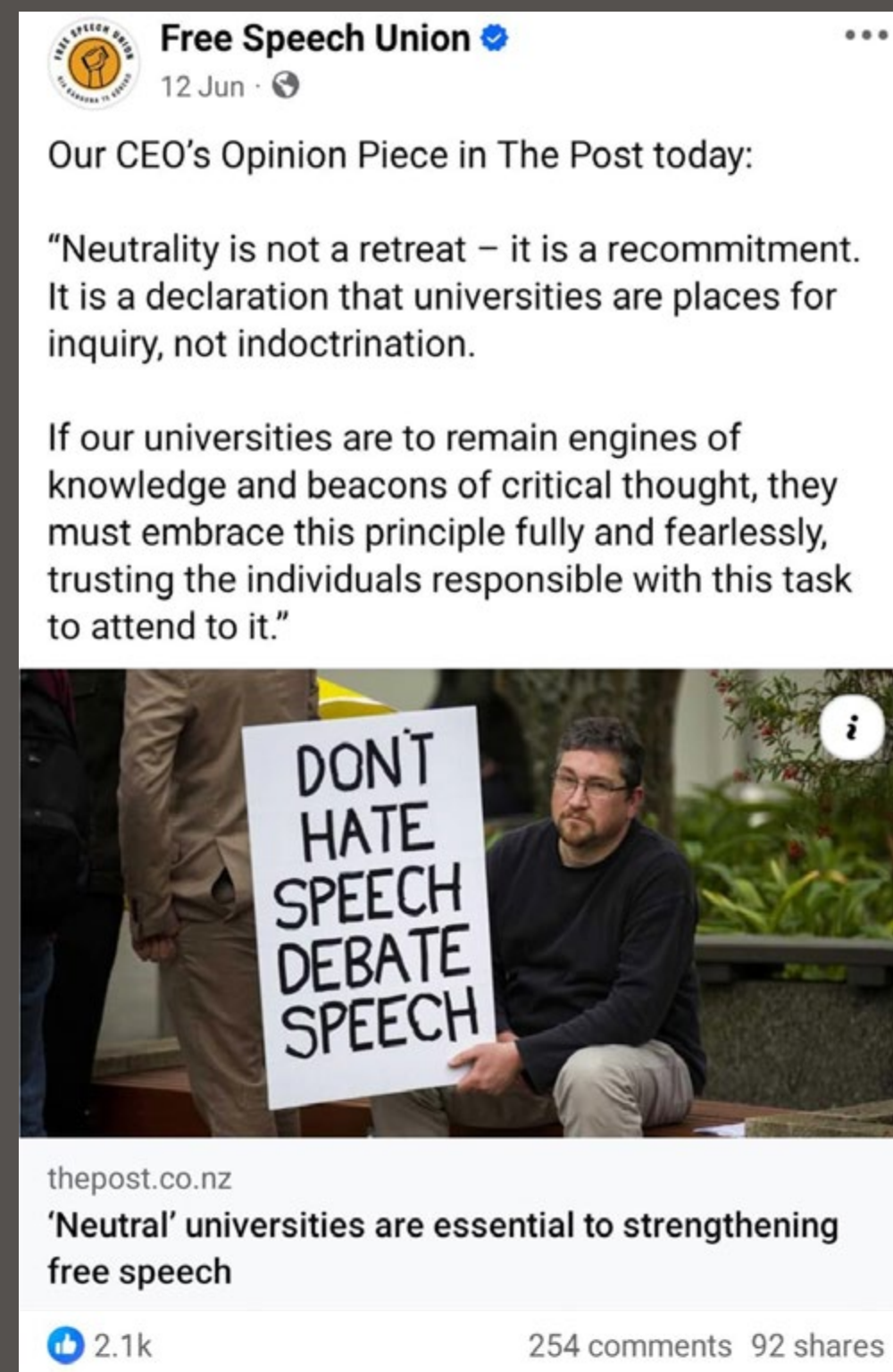
Our content team's role is to ensure the right people receive the right message so Kiwis know when their speech rights are under threat and what they can do.



SOCIAL MEDIA

A growing social media presence

With social media acting like the modern-day 'public square', our content team works hard to ensure relevant social channels are kept up to date with all our work to ensure supporters can hear from us in real time.



Facebook

41,000 followers
(up from 35,000 in 2024)

3,200,000 accounts reached

645,000 content interactions

18,700,000 views since October 2024!



Instagram

136,000 accounts reached

10,400 content interactions

770 followers
(491 new followers)



TikTok

Over 12,000 followers

Over 11,200 likes



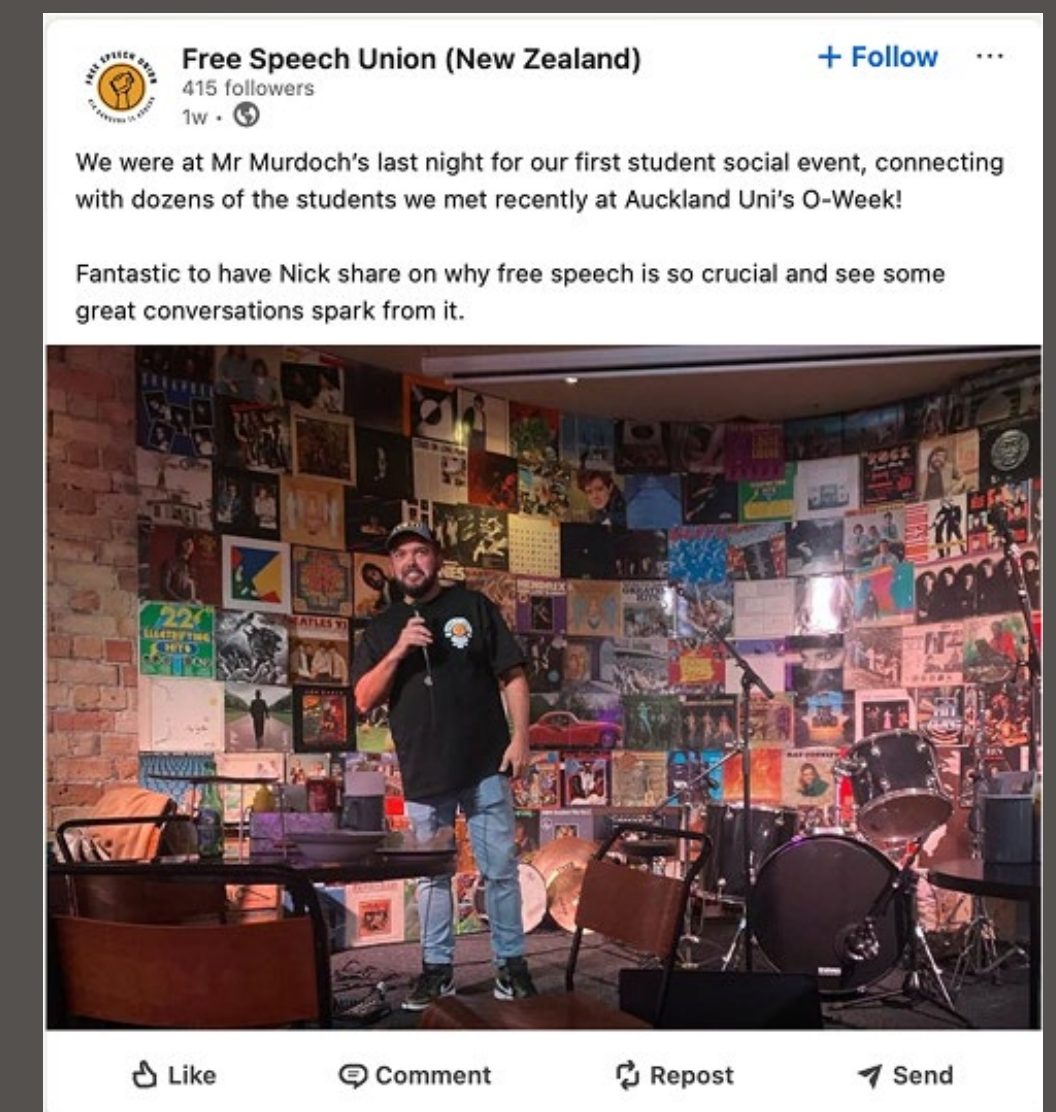
X (Twitter)

10,400+ followers

4,600,000 impressions

350,000 engagements

170,000 likes and replies



MEDIA

We're the go-to for the media

300+ media mentions total

140+ References in news articles

120+ Radio and podcast appearances

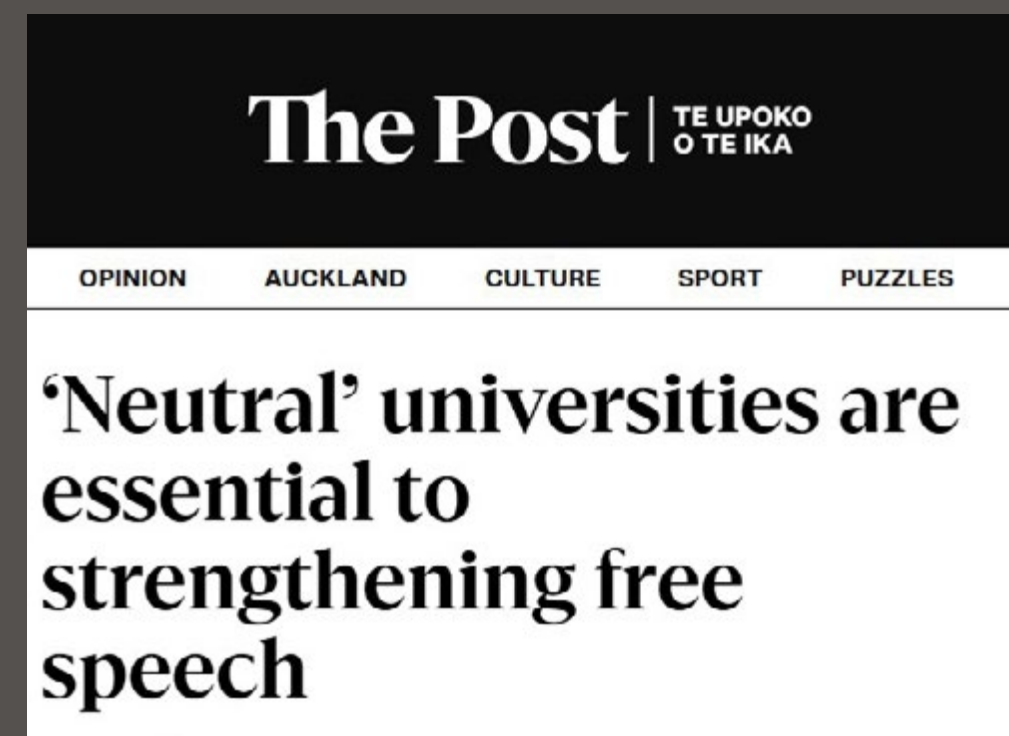
40+ References in blog posts

14 Appearances on TV



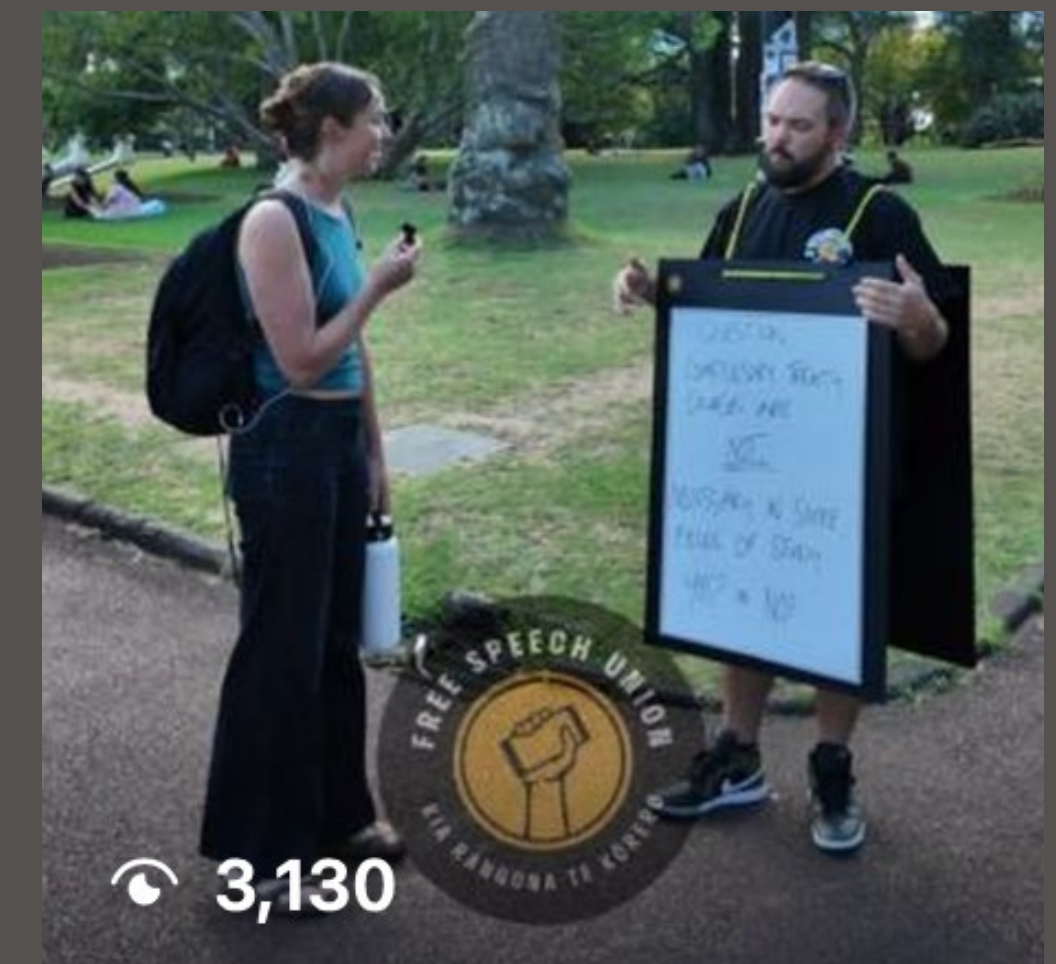
Media

The Free Speech Union has created a name for itself, and often the media cannot avoid referencing us when it comes to speech-related stories of public interest. We have a steady presence in the media averaging 30 references per month.



Video

We've created more video content in the past year than ever before to engage the next generation with free speech issues, with one video even reaching 58,000 views on TikTok. We've headed to the streets to interview everyday Kiwis about their thoughts on free speech, sometimes with someone from the team sporting a sandwich (whoever draws the short straw on the day!). We've also interviewed our supporters at events and students at university.



TOURS & EVENTS

Prof. Nigel Biggar

As one of the board members for the Free Speech Union UK, we were delighted to bring Oxford University Professor Nigel Biggar to New Zealand in November. He was intricately involved in the drafting and progression of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act in the UK to protect free speech and academic freedom at English universities, so his conversations were timely as parliament seeks to project academic freedom in New Zealand. His messages on colonialism and generational guilt, cancel culture, and academic freedom helped spark meaningful debate throughout the tour. One stand-out event was held at Parliament with David Seymour where high school student Oliver Jull opened with his speech, 'The Decline of Western Civilisation' that he was banned from giving at his school.



Prof. Biggar with Dr Mulgan and David Seymour for event at Parliament, 2024

Dr. Peter Boghossian

A former philosophy professor at Portland State University, Dr Boghossian is known for championing critical thinking and open dialogue, and that is exactly what he brought to New Zealand. Advocating for more dialogue, not less, Dr Boghossian encouraged Kiwis to engage with differing opinions in order to find common ground and cross divides.

Events with Dr Boghossian had a different twist, getting audience members on the stage to reason and debate their views. He even ran a session of 'street epistemology' in Auckland CBD, with members of the public engaging with his questions.

Dr. James Lindsay

It wouldn't be a Free Speech Union tour without a cancellation or two, or three... Dr Lindsay was creating a stir before he even entered the country. But we didn't let it slow us down. Dr Lindsay spoke to packed-out venues across the country about how ideas like equity and inclusion are often weaponised to silence dissent.

Dr Lindsay exposed the hypocrisy of silencing views you disagree with – sooner or later, the same tactics can be used to silence you. He's a big believer in everyone speaking freely because to find truth, you need debate, not gatekeepers.



Dr Lindsay interviewed by Duncan Garner, 2025

TOURS & EVENTS

2024 AGM

A highlight of our year, our AGM had over 300 attendees with passionate supporters, Government Ministers, and media in the room. A keynote speech was given by our guest Prof. Nigel Biggar and panel discussions took place on academia, media, law, and politics. We even had the opportunity to gift the Minister of Justice our popular 'gang patch' t-shirt! We celebrated the many wins of the year and looked ahead to 2025, which is proving to be even bigger!



AGM opening panel, Nov 2024

Town Halls

Our town hall-styled meetings continued to be popular as we concluded this series at the end of 2024, totaling 18 events from north to south! Hundreds of Kiwis came along and left better equipped to defend free speech at work, university, and in their communities.



Taradale Town Hall, 2024

Along with our own events, we're often asked to speak around the country and internationally at conferences and events, which our team fits into their busy schedules.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Documentary, coming soon!

There are many ways our supporters can engage with us, but we want to give them an inside perspective of what life at the Free Speech Union is like. We have grand plans for our second-ever documentary that is being edited right now with footage from our tour with Dr. Lindsay, and interview with council members, staff, and some of those whose speech rights we have defended.



Stephen Franks interview

International Association of Free Speech Unions

We are pleased to be founding members of the International Association of Free Speech Unions (IAFSU), launched in July last year in Sydney. Dr. Mulgan and Jonathan Ayling attended the launch, meeting with representatives of sister organisations from the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, and Canada. The enemies of free speech hunt in packs; the champions of free speech need to band together too. IAFSU support the work of established FSUs and enable others to be founded.

Liberty Blush

It's hard not to get excited about wine for a good cause. For the second summer in a row, our very own Free Speech Union wine, Liberty Blush, was a great success with every last carton flying out the door.



Jonathan Ayling on vineyard

A huge thanks to Jonathan and Grace once again for generously providing wine at cost from their own Wairarapa vineyard. With the label containing free speech quips, it was the perfect Christmas gift for free speech champions and sceptics alike!

Liberty Blush was so popular that we hope to expand the options in another offering. Watch this space!

COACHING

Speak Up!
Next generation

Equipping Kiwis for their contexts

Our wins won't matter if we don't prevent censorship before it starts. To function as a healthy democracy, New Zealand needs active citizens who understand the basic principles behind their rights.

Our coaching workstream equips Kiwis with skills to defend free speech in their local contexts and have conversations that shape our nation.



SPEAK UP!

Speak Up!

Our next generation face an uncertain future.

A healthy democracy needs active citizens who understand the basic principles behind their rights, and have the skills to engage well in conversations that will shape our nation.

Our Speak Up! programme empowers emerging citizens

Nick Hanne, who manages our 'coaching' workstream, is the brains

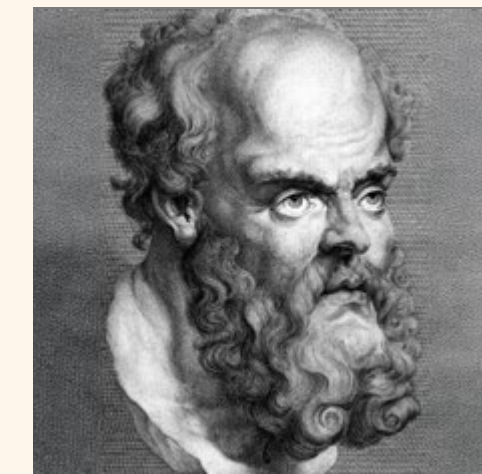
behind Speak Up!, the programme we take into schools to engage high school students with critical thinking skills and free speech.

Speak Up! sessions are designed to help students with thinking for themselves, creativity, developing empathy, making rational decisions, and engaging with ideas they disagree with.

Nick weaves in history and prompts discussion of the challenges to free thought and speech from government and civil society. Over the past year, Nick has run many sessions with glowing feedback, with one teacher comparing it to a 'fine dining' experience!

The building blocks of active citizenship.

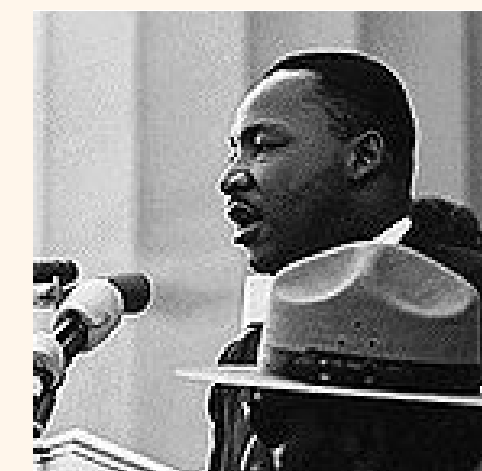
Rather than looking at any particular controversial political or social issues, Speak Up! focuses instead on the fundamental ways in which a positive culture of free speech nurtures critical thinking and independent inquiry. We take inspiration from luminaries like:



Socrates



Saint Paul



Martin Luther King Jr.



Kate Sheppard

// An invigorating session on the preciousness of free speech. It's more than a right, it is also about seeking and receiving ideas, fundamental to learning and empathy. **Nick urged students to advocate for others, take responsibility for their words, and test their views through good-faith debate and active listening. //**

Rob Thomas, Head of Social Sciences,
Elim Christian College, Auckland

NEXT GENERATION

University of Auckland O-Week

For the first time ever, we had a stall at the University of Auckland O-Week. Why just one university? Because every other one in the country turned us down. Our team had two full-on and highly successful days engaging with over 1,000 students interested in our work.

We even had a first-year student come and find us especially after enjoying a Speak Up! session at his school the year before. We've continued our contact with New Zealand universities and are proud to report three have agreed to have us at mid-year O-Weeks!

Student Events: Free Speech & Free Pizza

Free pizza, free drinks, and free speech! What's not to love? As a result of an incredibly successful Free Speech Union stall at the University of Auckland's O-Week, we've held two events especially for students in Auckland.

Nick and Arian from our team spoke about why free speech is worth the fight, followed by great conversations and interviews with students for our social media. We discussed that resilience to cope with ideas we don't like matters, and tolerance of ideas is a price we pay for our own freedom to speak and think.

NZ Schools Debating Championships 2025

What better way to promote free speech to the next generation than through some lively debate? We were proud sponsors for the second year in a row for the New Zealand Schools Debating Championships, with Nick travelling to Wellington to speak at the event held in Parliament. Teams of students battled it out, and at the end of the day, free speech was the winner.

FSU Book Club

We held our first-ever book club in Autumn, with Nick hosting fortnightly sessions with passionate supporters. We read and discussed Fahrenheit 451 by Raymond Bradbury, a 20th century classic which explores issues of censorship and thought control which sparked lively discussion! We'll be back with more book clubs – watch this space!



FSU team at Auckland O Week, 2025

“ *Moral courage is quite as rare on campus as it is everywhere else, and fear is no less prevalent.*

The public censoring of one causes the self-censorship of many. ”

Professor Nigel Biggar, academic and FSU Tour Speaker



VALUES

The FSU way

Credible

To be successful we don't need everyone to like us, but we do aim to be respected.

We follow through, and have a reputation for doing what we say.

Moderate

We are balanced, thoughtful, and nuanced.

We are educative and conciliatory when we can, and combative only when we need to be.

Principled

We believe in free speech for the sake of liberal democratic values, not political expediency.

We are not a gun for hire, we stand for free speech wherever such issues may arise.

OUR PEOPLE

We are active, proactive,
and greater than the sum
of our parts

Nathan Seiuli —●
Head of Content

With a background working with youth in community outreach, Nathan is an ideal fit for connecting with Kiwis and convincing them that free speech is worth defending. Nathan oversees our content workstream and executes our tours and events.

● **Nadia Braddon-Parsons**
Communications and Marketing

With a Bachelor of Communication, Nadia has a passion for using words constructively and meaningfully to defend Kiwis' rights. She coordinates our communication to our supporters, the public and media.

Arian Tashakkori —●
Operations

If you've contacted us, you've probably received a message from Arian already. With a conjoint bachelor's degree in Commerce and Global Studies, Arian brings a knowledgeable perspective to the team and juggles our correspondence and processes.

● **Jonathan Ayling**
Chief Executive

Jonathan has worked in Wellington for 10 years across roles as a Beehive staffer, senior political advisor, and in the NGO sector. In addition to leading the work at the Free Speech Union, he and his wife own a vineyard in the Wairarapa (which is almost as stressful as politics).

Hannah Clow —●
Senior Legal Counsel

With varied experience in civil litigation, employment, commercial, and private client matters, Hannah champions our legal cases. She also does an excellent job researching and preparing many of our letters, submissions, and reports.

● **Nick Hanne**
Education Partnerships

If free speech is to be cherished and maintained, we need the next generation to know about it. As an experienced high school teacher who is a passionate advocate of civil liberties, Nick is the perfect fit to develop and present our Speak Up! program in schools.

Stephanie Martin —●
Stakeholder Relationships

Passionate about people, Steph looks after our professional memberships as our Stakeholder Relationship Manager. She works with, and advocates for, our councils and members, to ensure that Kiwis' speech rights are being upheld in all contexts.

OUR COUNCIL

Our governing Council is made up of a group of New Zealanders from across the political spectrum and with diverse professional careers who believe that free speech is a value worth defending.



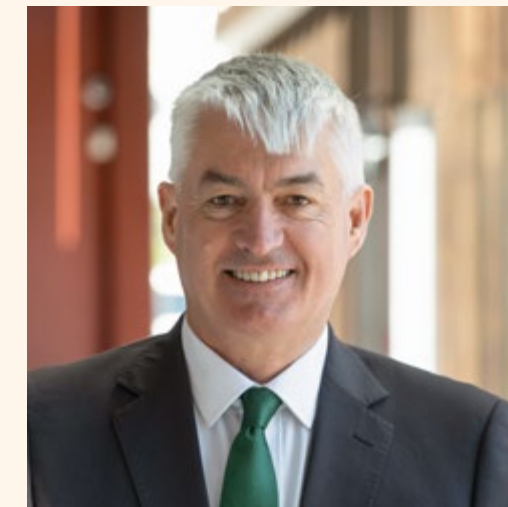
Stephen Franks
Chair
Lawyer

Stephen was a nationally recognised lawyer with Chapman Tripp, specialising in company and securities law until he went for two terms as a Member of Parliament for the ACT Party. Since then, his law practice, Franks Ogilvie, has been more focused on public law. He has advised major organisations, served on and chaired a range of boards and industry panels, and remains active in law reform and governance.



Jillaine Heather
Deputy Chair
Lawyer

Jillaine's professional background spans commercial technology law, capital markets headhunting, and HR. After 20 years abroad in London, Melbourne, New York, Mexico, and Kuwait, she returned to NZ passionate about enriching communities through robust dialogue and exploring the shared responsibilities at the heart of free speech.



Roderick Mulgan
FSU International
Director
Barrister & GP

Roderick is a practicing criminal barrister and aged-care doctor with rare, combined expertise in law and medicine. He regularly takes criminal cases as well as running a medical practice that contracts with aged-care facilities in Auckland. He is also a published author.



Jordan Williams
Lawyer

Jordan was a co-founder and former chair of the Free Speech Union. He has a background in finance, is a constitutional and commercial lawyer, digital marketer, and is active in a number of non-profits and advocacy groups, including as Executive Director of the Taxpayers' Union.



Assoc. Prof. Geoff Plimmer
Academic

Geoff is a management academic at Victoria University of Wellington. His interest is healthy workplaces. He studies positive, developmental behaviours in workplaces, as well as abuses of power, such as workplace bullying, poor leadership, and the use of organisational processes to silence people.

OUR COUNCIL



Thomas Newman
Lawyer

Thomas is a courtroom lawyer based in Auckland with an anti-authoritarian streak. He calls it the “chip on my shoulder”! He cares deeply about the rights and freedoms of all New Zealanders and is interested in how the legal system can be used to promote and defend them.



Dr. David Cumin
Academic

David was an early member of the Free Speech Coalition, which became the Union. He’s a member of the Jewish Community and co-directs the Israel Institute of New Zealand. His day job is with the University of Auckland as a Senior Lecturer in the department of Anaesthesiology.

Special Recognition

We also note the valuable contributions of former-Judge, Dr David Harvey, Lucy Cammock-Elliot, and the Chairs of the Free Speech Union Professional Memberships.



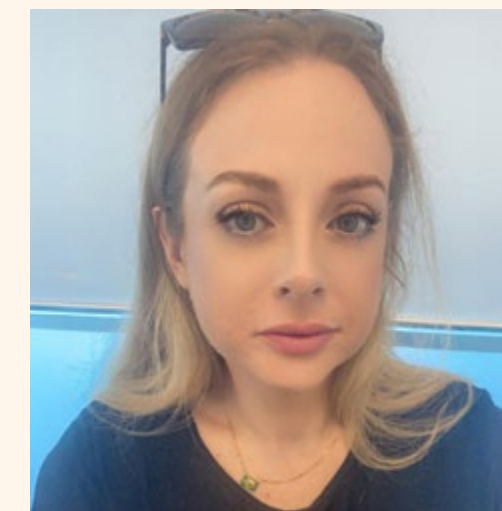
Dane Giraud
Screenwriter

Dane is a screenwriter, author, and early member of the Free Speech Union Council. With a background in the arts and comedy, Dane brings a unique perspective to free speech advocacy, particularly in navigating cultural and creative expression as well as the vital role free speech plays in protecting minority rights.



Robin Van Ausdall
Public Servant

With over 30 years of local and international experience as a senior leader and entrepreneur, Robin is passionate about creating thriving workplaces. She has worked across politics, business, government, and not-for-profits, specialising in organisational effectiveness, strategic innovation, and leadership.



Ani O'Brien
Writer & Political Commentator

Ani has a background in marketing and communications with experience in the private sector, public service, and NGOs. She was formerly the Head of Digital for the Leader of the Opposition and now works predominantly in political marketing and campaigning. She is political commentator and a well-known advocate for women’s rights.



Douglas Brown
Barrister

Douglas is a criminal and mental health barrister with about 20 years of experience. He studied civil liberties for his LL.M at the University of Canterbury. His interest in the intersection of liberty and the justification of State action makes his day job and his work for the FSU highly complementary.

TESTIMONIALS

Don't just take our word for it

“...since your focus is to keep speech free, and since you have consistently applied this across the board (even with parties with whom you disagree),
you are a safe pair of hands. Thank you for your integrity! **”**

Waikato-based supporter

“Your work is wonderful and I would say
some of the most important taking place in NZ at this time. **”**

Porirua-based donor

“Keep up the good work - you all are superheroes!! Thanks ever so much for doing this work!”

Waikato-based supporter

“Through your work
I'm beginning to feel proud of being a New Zealander again. **”**

Wairarapa-based donor

“Donating to the FSU is worth every cent! Thanks for all you do for NZ.”

Porirua-based donor

“We owe you so much for all your great work. Many thanks to you and your team.”

Nelson-based donor

SUPPORT US

A vibrant free speech culture isn't free.

We still need your help

We've had many wins so far, but there is still a lot of work to do before we can hang up our hats and call it a day. Until then, we need your support to keep functioning as one of the world's most successful free speech advocacy organisations.



fsu.nz/donate

Bank Account:
Free Speech Union (NZ) Incorporated
ANZ 06-0323-0706649-00

Please use your mobile phone number or email address as reference.

Ways you can support us, now, and for generations to come



“ *In the end, we will remember not
the words of our enemies, **but the
silence of our friends.** **”***

Martin Luther King, Jr.



Join us. Be part of
restoring the foundation
of our democracy