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Genre: Social science;
politics; democracy (JPHV)

Binding: Paperback

Size: 152 x 229mm

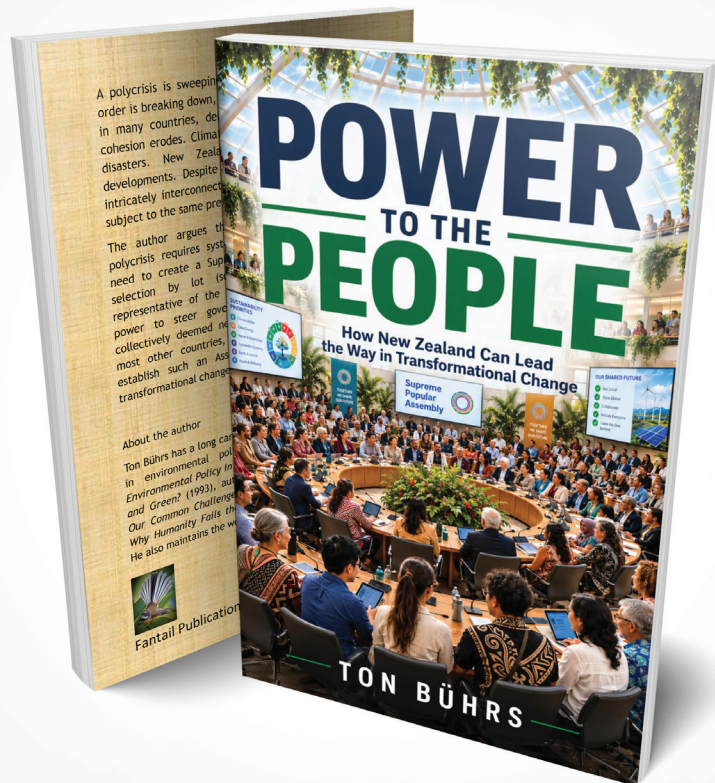
Pages: 186

ISBN: 978-0-473-79698-3

RRP: \$34.99

Publication date: August 2026

KeyWords: Democracy; deliberative democracy; political representation; public participation; popular sovereignty; citizens' assemblies; political institutions and governance; New Zealand politics; polycrisis



POWER TO THE PEOPLE

TON BÜHRS

In this provocative book, the author argues that New Zealand faces a polycrisis of intensifying and converging environmental, socio-economic, and political issues that can only be resolved by transformational change.

Although transformational change faces enormous obstacles, these can be overcome if, as a first step, supreme power is assigned to a permanent Citizens' Assembly that truly reflects the people and enables them to democratically steer the country in a direction that is collectively deemed necessary and desirable.

Compared to many other countries, New Zealand is in a favourable position to establish such an Assembly, take the lead in transformational change, and reclaim its reputation as a socially and politically progressive country.

The book builds on the international wave of ideas and practices aimed at countering the erosion of democracy and public trust in governments of many countries by giving citizens a greater input into political decision-making via citizens' assemblies, panels and other forms of deliberative democracy. An OECD study argues that such citizens' bodies are capable of effectively addressing complex, values-based, and long-term issues, and that their institutionalisation "could be seen as the start of a period of transformation to adapt the architecture of representative democracy" (OECD, *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*, 2020, p.3). This book takes this argument to its logical conclusion.

Ton Bührs has a long career in research and teaching on environmental policy & politics. His previous publications include *Environmental Policy in New Zealand. The Politics of Clean and Green?* (1993), *Environmental Integration. Our Common Challenge* (2009), and *A Planetary Tragedy. Why Humanity Fails the Environmental Challenge* (2022). He also maintains the website Humanityontrial.com.

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