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Institute for Governance
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What would it take to improve our
public debate in New Zealand?

You are warmly invited to attend a free public lecture featuring panelists Mai Chen (public law expert), "The Nation's" Richard Harman and journalist Bernard Hickey.

Drinks and canapés will be served.

RSVP Please email rsvp@maxim.org.nz or phone Jaimee Abict on (09) 627 3261 by Friday 23 November

WELLINGTON

Date Wednesday, 28 November 2012
Time 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Venue Victoria University of Wellington
Law Buildings, Room GBLT 1

AUCKLAND

Date Thursday, 29 November 2012
Time 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Venue The University of Auckland Business School,
Level 1 Foyer

BACK IN 2008, ONE OF NEW ZEALAND'S PRE-EMINENT SCHOLARS, PROFESSOR JEREMY WALDRON, ISSUED A WARNING:

"I am afraid that a society which has allowed its tradition of formal parliamentary debate to atrophy is also in danger of allowing its traditions of more informal public debate to atrophy ... The debasement of debate—the lack of mutual respect and engagement—that takes place in Parliament will feed, or mirror, a debasement of debate and a repudiation of engagement and mutual respect among citizens and among advocacy groups in society at large. Debate disappears from Parliament, debate disappears from society, debate and engagement eventually disappear altogether. All we have anymore, anywhere, in either forum, is a show of force, the posturing

of preordained positions, and the quick and ruthless exploitation of momentary political advantage."

Was Professor Waldron's prediction true? What is the state of public debate in New Zealand and what factors threaten its health? What would it take for public debate in New Zealand to be characterised by people taking time "to consider each other's views and each other's hopes and fears seriously and address them as though they deserved a hearing as well as an answer"?