Attachment 05

About GovZero

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Background

GovZero Aotearoa is an open collaboration initiative that aims to deliver citizen benefits in New Zealand (Aotearoa is Maori for New Zealand). The goal is to co-create digital foundations that transform NZ.

Currently, GovZero has three main projects:

1. **OPFutures** — Exploring different 50-year optimistic and pessimistic futures for NZ and making them publicly accessible via a public commons

2. **Service Aotearoa** — Creating a demo version of what Service Aotearoa could look like

3. **Rules as code (RaC)** — Setting up a repository of legislation and regulation as code (using OpenFisca) with use cases

The RaC and OPFutures projects will also be part of the Service Aotearoa demo.

Salsa's contribution

The GovZero Aotearoa project represents a key alignment with Salsa's advocacy for open governments and open source tools (in this case, OpenFisca). After finding out about the project, Salsa made an initial donation, but also committed to contributing Salsarians to the GovZero team. In February, Salsa Digital pledged three team members 8 hours each per week for 2022. The team members are:

- Mark Calvert — full-stack developer

- Emil Jeyaratnam — open data and data visualisation expert

- Phillipa Martin — project manager and content expert

The rules as code project

We're focused on codifying New Zealand's Social Security Act 2018, as well as other key citizen services, such as applying for a passport, applying for citizenship and applying for a temporary visa.

The goal is to make these services more accessible to all, and to make it easy for NZ citizens to find out if they're eligible for social security benefits.

Salsa's contribution represents the following benefits and outcomes:

- Provide fairer digital services to citizens

  - By starting with high-value legislation such as the Social Security Act, the open source repository can be used to create a legal eligibility checker so people can easily see what benefits they're eligible to receive, creating an immediate benefit to citizens.

- Create greater transparency of government legislation and decisions

    - Legislation as code allows government systems to clearly explain how and why decisions were made; and conversely, RaC allows citizens to appeal incorrect decisions, ensuring access to justice for all.

This is a new and exciting initiative to be a part of. Salsa hopes to leverage our new skills and knowledge to develop innovative ways in which governments manage legislation and implement policy.