

## What change do we want to see?

98% of the land in Scotland is defined as being rural with 93 inhabited islands and 17% of the population. Communities in these places are custodians of our natural environment, providing many of the cleaner, greener solutions needed to combat the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. They are the source of much of our food, water, energy and raw materials. They are innovative, creative and entrepreneurial. They safeguard traditional knowledge and add to the richness of Scotland's culture.

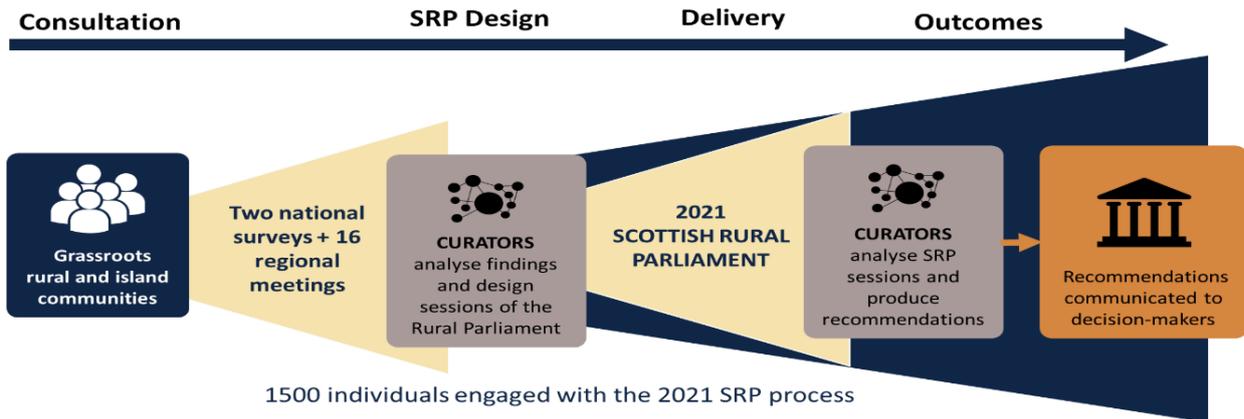
Despite this, the rural and island contribution to our national wellbeing and our economy isn't always reflected in the actions and policies of Scotland's local and national decision makers, leaving rural and island communities deprived of services, support and resourcing.

To change this, Scottish Rural Action is helping to strengthen a 'rural movement' in Scotland which amplifies the voices of rural and island people and ensures their expertise is visible, valued and resourced within local and national policy. We do this through building platforms like the [Scottish Rural Parliament](#) - a democratic assembly, bringing hundreds of people, organisations and decision-makers together to engage in meaningful dialogue and to find solutions to the challenges we face. Directions for policy are captured in a [Manifesto for Rural & Island Scotland](#).

## How is this work rooted in human rights?

Our work is rooted in a human rights framework and in 2018, together with 171 other third sector organisations, Scottish Rural Action signed up to a campaign run by SCVO, marking the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to reaffirm our commitment to placing these rights at the heart of our work. All Articles are of equal importance but **Article 20, the right to peaceful assembly**, is most relevant to the Scottish Rural Parliament and the wider rural movement.

Scotland's Rural Parliament (SRP) last took place in March 2021. A six-month participation process, including national surveys and regional engagement events, shaped the themes for debate. Sixteen curators - expert organisations with their own influencing power - led on designing the fifteen sessions and producing [session recommendations](#) in partnership with over 100 grassroots campaigners, community bodies and second tier organisations. In total, 1,500 people participated in the 2021 SRP consultations and main event.



## What more needs to happen?

Scotland's rural movement and Rural Parliament are part of a global movement. In Europe, we are all linked together by the European Rural Parliament, giving rural and island communities a strong voice which, however, recognises the diversity of people and places.

The challenge we need to rise to is to ensure that the platforms of the rural movement, including the Scottish and European Rural Parliaments are more accessible so that all rural and island residents can exercise their right under the Human Rights Act's Article 11 to peaceful assembly and, in this context, to having their voices and opinions heard and respected. To this end, we work in partnership with many expert organisations and individuals to reach out to communities that experience multiple, intersectional barriers to participation. It is work in progress and if you wish to be part of it, we would love to hear from you!

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