

Symposium on Trusted Long Term Decision Making

Recommendations Report

Our Challenge

What changes can we agree upon to deliver effective long-term decision-making which earns public trust?

22 November 2017

1. (In Two Parts)

1A. Rebooting Australian democracy.

Problem: 1A	Trust and confidence in our political decision making process is eroded and needs to be restored.
Title:	Rebooting Australian democracy.
Our Intent:	<p>Establishment of an non-partisan independent body which will define the change required to rebuild trust in Democracy. We call this body the Commission to Rebuild Trust in Democracy (CRTD).</p> <p>We propose a two tier advisory body made up of a group of citizens and a separate group of wise elders (Eg. Michael Jeffrey).</p> <p>This body will jointly consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequacy of political representation (Eg. 4 year terms, diversity representative)• Working of the parliament (Eg. proper reporting of committees, accountable executive)• Quality of advice to Government (Eg. White paper & Green paper, stakeholder engagement and evidence based policy development)• Transparency (Eg. Anti-corruption measures) <p>We will use a form of citizen assembly to test our ideas and proposals to ensure it reflects community needs and aspirations.</p> <p>The collective power/success of this commission and its work will be judged by its ability to garner support across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broader community• The building allies• Run-away social media campaign, we're calling #RebuildPoliticalTrust (this will include pre-election comprehensive survey of all MPs and candidates about commissions recommendations)
Our rationale:	100 years ago Australia was the most innovative western democracy. We lost our way and we need to re-energise our democracy.

1B: A citizens assembly for advancing Australia’s Constitution.

Problem:	Trust and confidence in our political decision making process is eroded and needs to be restored. The Australian Constitution has stopped being a living document for the Australian people.
Title:	A citizens assembly for advancing Australia’s Constitution.
Our Intent:	To engage the Australian community in their foundation document for governing the nation.
Our rationale:	<p>A citizens assembly being the best way to engender trust in the overall process of constitutional awareness and potential reform.</p> <p>It seeks to take advantage of current public awareness of Constitutional issues that are dramatically impacting our ability to govern effectively.</p>

2. Achieving objective, evidence-based policy making.

Problem:	In a complex world, policy analysis and development is too short-term, partisan, insular and reactionary, and often lacks a public mandate for implementation.
Title:	Achieving objective, evidence-based policy making.
Our Intent:	<p>To improve policy making to be more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative ● Strategic ● Fact-based ● Multi-disciplinary and ● Ethical <p>resulting in appropriate, effective and efficient outcomes.</p>
Our rationale:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We propose a whole-of-government strategic plan, to be reviewed after each election, that sets out the government’s overriding objectives, strategies, action plans and targets. The plan should be developed through consultative and collaborative processes. 2. We propose a Green/White Paper decision making process that is evidence-based and consultative for all major contentious issues (other than in emergency situations). 3. We propose the restoration of proper Cabinet decision-making processes for all other (less contentious) policy issues. 4. We propose strengthening public service analytical capacity and consultative skills, and reaffirming the independence of the public service. 5. We propose strengthening public consultation processes, by including a broad

	<p>range of thinkers and policy experts in policy making.</p> <p>6. We note that independent oversight and performance assessment is a critical element of delivering against these objectives.</p>
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3.(In 3 Parts)

3A: Trialling standing citizen’s chamber

Problem:	Eroding public trust in and engagement with political decision making
Title:	Trialling standing citizen’s chamber
Our Intent:	<p>To build public trust by inserting the considered voice of the people into Australian politics and policy making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You would have a deliberative process to increase citizen participation and capture the diversity of voices (after hearing from sector professionals and other stakeholders)
Our rationale:	Experiment to provide an effective circuit breaker to the adversarial system and complement the existing system.

3B: Embedding deliberative democracy through citizens’ juries and similar processes

Problem:	Eroding public trust in and engagement with political decision making
Title:	Embedding deliberative democracy through citizens’ juries and similar processes
Our Intent:	<p>Issues based citizens’ juries for issues of high cost or values conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You would have a deliberative process to increase citizen participation and capture the diversity of voices (after hearing from sector professionals and other stakeholders)
Our rationale:	To provide a platform to capture the considered voices of citizens on issues that affect them.

3C: Having a citizen’s convention on how we might do democracy better

Problem:	Eroding public trust in and engagement with political decision making
Title:	Having a citizen’s convention on how we might do democracy better
Our Intent:	To build public trust by inserting the considered voice of the people into Australian politics and policy making. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You would have a deliberative process to increase citizen participation and capture the diversity of voices (after hearing from sector professionals and other stakeholders)
Our rationale:	To provide a platform to capture the considered voices of citizens on issues that affect them.

4. Enforcing independence and integrity of Federal parliament

Problem:	Risk of corruption and inappropriate behaviour by politicians, political parties and staff.
Title:	Enforcing independence and integrity of Federal parliament
Our Intent:	Establish a Federal ICAC to oversee and enforce the integrity of the Federal Parliament. This includes; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigating and prosecuting Corrupt conduct. 2. Monitoring the proper disclosure of Conflicts of interest and enforcing non-disclosure. 3. A mandatory code of conduct for parliamentarians and their staff focussing on transparency, independence and integrity. This could include post-parliamentary employment restrictions (revolving door), publishing ministerial diaries. etc.
Our rationale:	To counter the public perception that the political system is constructed for the benefit of politicians, these measures would guard against corrupt or improper conduct of public officials and senior ministerial staff.

5. Campaign funding governance and transparency.

Problem:	External and unseen influence on policy-making process via election campaign funding.
Title:	Campaign funding governance and transparency.
Our Intent:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rolling monthly declaration of campaign funding during elections and during the course of a government ● Lower the threshold for donations which trigger disclosure requirement ● Real-time disclosure during elections? (24-48 hours?) ● Cap expenditure for individual electorate campaigns at a reasonable sum ... to be determined. As per ACT but more generous. ● Cap individual donations - at \$?? ● Limit and disclose election campaign spending by non-party organisations - as per Canada, UK, NZ. ● Ban foreign donations - 114 out of 180 countries ban foreign donations ● Remove ability to profit from public campaign funding; spend what you get, or don't get reimbursed by government for money unspent - full campaign transparency
Our rationale:	<p>We need campaign funding reform because the policy making process should be more transparent. External influences need to be visible. The aim is to build greater trust in the political process.</p> <p>Self-interest of politicians/parties has precluded this so far.</p> <p>Downsides: protecting the identity of the donors/guarding against retribution Unions and corporates give organisers over to campaign - so make sure in-kind contributions are also</p> <p>Potential problem: the SuperPAC problem in USA</p> <p>It has been done to death - politicians repeatedly resist</p> <p>Social media has made campaign communication cheaper (it's easier to communicate with large groups of people)</p> <p>Risk of overly-restricting funding is that it drives campaigns further underground</p> <p>Independent citizen group to assess these ideas? Give it legitimacy.</p> <p>Norway has highest public funding at 74%, no country has total public funding of elections.</p>

6. Ensuring administrative and procedural legislation from public and statutory bodies is dealt with by the parliament as efficiently as possible.

<p>Problem:</p>	<p>Important legislation from public agencies and statutory authorities is not being dealt with in a timely manner. This is causing a backlog of legislation in the parliament.</p> <p>This legislation deals with administrative and functional matters. There is little space in the parliamentary sitting schedule to deal with these efficiently.</p> <p>This in turn undermines certainty of decision-making by those affected and hinders the ability of these bodies to operate to their fullest extent.</p> <p>For example, there are 140 announced but not enacted tax measures on which there is already a strong consensus, some dating back to 2009.</p>
<p>Title:</p>	<p>Ensuring administrative and procedural legislation from public and statutory bodies is dealt with by the parliament as efficiently as possible.</p>
<p>Our Intent:</p>	<p>Improving the efficiency of decision making by parliament by reducing the backlog on important, announced yet unenacted administrative and procedural legislation, on which there is already strong support within the parliament and/or the community.</p> <p>Passing of such legislation must still progress through the relevant oversight processes, such as standing committees.</p> <p>Relevant bodies to which this applies include ATO, ASIC, APRA, RBA, Infrastructure Australia etc.</p> <p>This excludes vested interests outside of government.</p>
<p>Our rationale:</p>	<p>The efficiency of the parliament can be improved by having specific sitting days to deal with this particular legislation. A similar process occurs in the UK Parliament, where such bills are presented in a bundle to the parliament to vote on. For instance in Australia, a bundle of administrative/procedural legislation from ASIC could be dealt with in one sitting rather than delayed by political game-playing.</p> <p>This ensures that important administrative or procedural legislation is enacted and not unnecessarily delayed, whilst ensuring the Parliament can focus on 'big picture' issues as well as more controversial, contestable matters..</p> <p>This also gives certainty to the community that announced legislation will be tabled and passed, as well as certainty to relevant public and statutory bodies in carrying out their remit.</p>

7. An educated and engaged populace and government.

<p>Problem:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective decision making begins with the people. 2. There is a lack of understanding, at all levels of the population, of our political process, the institutions of government and the importance of civic engagement. 3. There's also a lack of education in a range of decision making skills. The pervasive adversarial system in our culture makes people believe this is the only way to make decisions.
<p>Title:</p>	<p>An educated and engaged populace and government.</p>
<p>Our Intention:</p>	<p>To get more Australians to understand how the political/governmental process works and empower them to be engaged, responsible citizens and feel their vote counts.</p> <p>For children - built around the current national civics curriculum. To build on the existing national civics curriculum and advocate for universal take up by states.</p> <p>Young adults and first-time voters: web site, app, other resources. Clearing house for information and party positions, complemented by independent data and analysis. An electoral "one stop shop".</p> <p>It covers history and background to Australian democracy. Understanding democracy Doing democracy.</p> <p>Resources like "10 best decisions".</p> <p>Immigrants and those from different backgrounds. Explicit comparisons with other systems so people can relate from their own culture - without misunderstanding.</p> <p>Create a 'toolbox' of resources for individuals, teachers</p> <p>E.g. West Australian Constitution Centre: full-time focused teachers working with kids to understand how government works. They develop 'laws' through debate. Set these up in every city and regional centre. Another e.g. CEFA. There's a program to bring kids to Canberra. Ensure all communities are involved (remote, Indigenous There is a national civics curriculum. Up to states to take it up.</p> <p>IDEA: Great game of Democracy (cf Minecraft) Look into "Game of States" (TED)</p> <p>Other ideas: a single high-level site you could go to to learn about parties and platforms.</p>

	"My vote counts" or "How do I make my vote count?"
Our rationale:	A more informed populace will also feel more empowered. They're more likely to hold individual politicians to account leading to better outcomes and more ownership.
Other ideas to develop	<p>Politicians: as soon as they're elected, need to be educated to understand the constitution, their place in it and the nature of their constituency.</p> <p>Interesting to note that politicians don't have any duty statement, KPIs, continuing professional development requirements. Perhaps encourage this.</p>

8. Accountability and Transparency - Parliamentary Impact and Performance Review Office (PIPRO)

Problem:	Public perception of a lack of accountability about government delivering outcomes and impact.
Title:	Parliamentary Impact and Performance Review Office (PIPRO)
Our Intent:	<p>To make it easier for citizens to see and understand how well government is performing and how well it is delivering on outcomes and impact for the public good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an independent parliamentary performance and impact review office • Key Principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open data ○ Community engagement from outset ○ Focus on impact not just inputs • The work of which would inform an annual PM address on the state of the commonwealth • Immediately followed by a parliamentary and citizen response • Ideally timing to be first week of parliament • Initially can pilot outside of parliament to test and build support (if required)
Our rationale:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates an added avenue for democratic and policy debate outside of the budget process • Provides a tool to allow citizens to directly hold parliament/government to account which will help rebuild trust. • Need to strengthen current system not substitute • Uses existing data but provides a layer of independence. • There are accountability and reporting measures in place just not publicly communicated and not accessible in terms of language, is piecemeal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Process will compel government to communicate to the public more fully and clearly on its performance annually● Will assist in educating the public on government process● Enables better informed community engagement. E.g civil society researchers, businesses etc.
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