

# Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy

CAPaD : Restoring democracy and respectful dialogue

## CAPaD Policy and Role regarding the 2016 Federal and ACT Government Elections.

### Policy Context

*'A fundamental premise of democracy is that governments are accountable to their citizens and that government policies serve and protect the common interest. Around the world, there is growing concern that the forms of representative democracy that we are experiencing have become incapable of defending the broad public interest with which governments have been entrusted.'* (R Douglas op ed draft)

Accordingly CAPaD's objectives are:

- To empower Canberrans to engage in owning and planning for our common future and the common good.
- To develop and support citizen, community and civil society engagement in public decision-making.
- To facilitate opportunities for citizen input to government deliberations.
- To develop citizens' capacity to hold governments and policy makers more directly accountable.

CAPaD is still at an early stage in determining its long-term and mid-term strategic goals and in the development of its organisational capability. This of necessity means we have to be pragmatic about what can be achieved in the current electoral year with the Federal Election and ACT elections being held on 2 July 2016 and 15 Oct 2016 respectively.

Nonetheless there remains the opportunity for CAPaD and its membership to contribute its voice to the electoral debate and develop its profile and capability through this process. The following sets to achieve this whilst maintaining the integrity of our strategic planning processes and engagement of the membership through DemFest In June.

### What we can do as individuals concerned about democracy?

For each individual:

1. Ensure that you vote
2. Vote using your own reflections about what is best for our collective future — think of a thriving future for children and grandchildren. Avoid being influenced by the media and how to vote handouts.

With your friends:

3. Have conversations with your neighbours and friends about what is important to you and listen to their ideas
4. Consider hosting a Kitchen Table Conversation — for guidelines use the kit at <http://www.see-change.org.au/voicesofthepeople/>
5. Send CAPaD the record of these conversations and we will promote them collectively and anonymously on the CAPaD website

### What can we do collectively as part of CAPaD?

6. Ask our local candidates, if elected, if they will support the development of deliberative democracy in the ACT where non-government organisations or business will work with the Government and the community to consider different policy issues through vehicles such as citizens' juries/assemblies, participatory budgeting projects,

collaborative economy projects, 'Civic Tech' trials (see <http://yoursay.sa.gov.au/reforming-democracy>)

7. Find candidates who will support participative processes for local citizens to be engaged in decision-making.
8. Find candidates who can be trusted to have their authentic voice ahead of the voice of parties and vested interests and be prepared to keep open records and reporting annually on their own contribution to key social, environmental and economic outcomes agreed by the community.
9. Publicise information about candidates based on public voting and attitudinal records from sources such as <https://theyvoteforyou.org.au/> and <https://www.openaustraliafoundation.org.au/>

#### *For the Federal Government Election*

- Review each party's policies through the lens of '*servicing and protecting the common interest*' and identify issues where the common interest is at stake.
- Develop 2 or 3 media releases/op-eds relating to the '*common interest*' in the identified policy areas, publicise and perhaps seek party responses on these issues.
- Use DemFest as the publicity vehicle for at least one of these issues in the context of the communication strategy for DemFest.
- Follow up on the 'The Open Government Partnership' issue seeking bipartisan commitment again in the context of DemFest.

#### *For the ACT Government Election*

- Identify areas of policy at the ACT Government level which can benefit from the use of participatory processes either through priority setting or contentious decision-making.
- Develop 2 or 3 media releases/op-eds outlining how participatory processes can benefit the identified policy areas and seek party responses on these issues.
- Use DemFest as the publicity vehicle for one of these issues in the context of the communication strategy for DemFest.
- Do some homework on the funding and influences lying behind the established political parties in the context of campaign promises in the local election. Undertake publicity depending on outcome.