

Recap Meet-Up #2 – 22 March 2018



Meet Up Agenda

1. Recap of the Ground rules
2. Purpose of the group
3. Preparing for robust conversations
4. What does good citizen engagement look like?

This was the second meeting of Deliberate ACT. The meeting recapped our ground rules and purpose. This highlighted there are many different needs and interests in the room. This led to a wide ranging conversation about what we wanted the group to do, what we wanted to learn and how we wanted to learn.

This took a large part of the meeting. As a group we did not alight on a defined purpose for the group but instead agreed for the next meeting we would like to road test the group with a meaty topic.

Key Takeaways:

- Reflect on the process of the CTP citizens' jury from different perspectives.
- Have a discussion about deliberation and what good engagement/participation looks like.
- Don't overload the agenda so we can have better deliberative discussions.
- Find people who are interested in co-facilitating.
- To deliberate well – the meeting up front needs to explore a topic – possibly have an expert witness from different perspectives and then we have a discussion.
- Change the layout of the room – develop a plan with facilitators and depends on the topic being discussed.

General Discussion Points:

- What is deliberation?
- Is there an agreed understanding of what deliberation is in a democracy? Can we develop an understanding of what is deliberation in the ACT?
- Topic for a forum – 'deliberative' what is it? What does it look like? How do we experience it?
- We may need to recognize that sometimes we may not know why we are here ...
- Explore deliberative, collaborative and engagement processes that strengthen democracy
- Use knowledge from different people and test that out as a system – does it work in the real world?
- Complement skills, resources and capacities – how we can work together
- How can councils or existing forums complement statistically sound surveys?
- Looking at the balance of engagement and making sure there is a balance within the community
- How do we bring young people into the democracy discussion
- Be mindful of barriers to people participating in Deliberate ACT
- Work together to describe what good deliberative democracy looks like in the ACT
- Look at case studies – citizens' juries – what are the pros and cons?

- What does success look like for this group – increasing community awareness about deliberative democracy and community participation, trying to reach groups that represent the community?
- Can we have some articles that can be sent around to people on what deliberative democracy?
- Capacity building session – 15 minutes sessions – everyone shares their experiences/knowledge – sets up the discussion
- Learning needs: deliberative democracy – what it is – what it could be – what can we bring, what do we need, what do we need to bring

Revisiting the Ground Rules

The meeting began with a discussion of the **Ground Rules** from last meeting.

- Members of the group have different views about the role of Deliberate ACT
- It needs to be a safe space, and we agreed to the Chatham House rule, committing to this should be a condition of membership
- As part of this, we need to be mindful of different views but also of different roles, and how these can create conflict for people
- Do we come as individuals? Or are we wearing organisational hats? Are we representing our organisations? Or only our own views?
- Some felt that it is good to have people from organisations, who can have influence. Our contributions are informed by our positions, without necessarily representing our organisations.
- The Chatham House rule means our views are not formally presented outside as ours or our organisations'. This means we can have free exchange, and not be held accountable for what is said in these sessions. This is important for exploring and sharing.
- We need to take responsibility for ourselves and the different hats we wear, be open, and be aware and respectful of each other.
- We need to review the ground rules periodically

There were some questions about the steering group (Organising Committee). This included a question about whether the committee meetings are minuted. At the moment, they are not.

Re-examine the Purpose

We then had a session on the **Purpose** of the group. This activity was extended because groups seemed to want to continue their conversations and spend more time on this. Each group tried to put words to describe the purpose succinctly:

1. Work together towards describing what good deliberative democracy looks like in the ACT context
 - Range (spectrum)
 - Case studies
 - For whom
 - For what purposes
 Increase community awareness and participation
2. Explore and have deep conversations on participation, deliberation, collaboration and other ways to help democracy work better
3. This group is creating an imprint on reality. We are creating a system which draws on our different knowledge and complementary skills and capacities



Other comments about purpose:

- The 'don'ts' in the current list should move to the ground rules
- We should balance these complementary knowledge, skills and resources e.g. government have resources, community councils have experience and enthusiasm
- Note that Deliberate ACT is not representative of the wider community
- The use of deliberation methods varies with issues. Some in the group are interested in engagement and opportunities for citizens to participate more widely
- Deliberation can be a lens to understand engagement and policy work, and the relationship between government and community
- What would success look like? Increased awareness of deliberative democracy and options for participation would be one measure.
- Is deliberative the best term? E.g what about 'fair'?
- There is intention to build a common purpose, but also existing history and commitments (incl to deliberation)
- The group needs some guidance on "What is Deliberation?" so we have a shared understanding and can come from a common place
- Understand the characteristics of Deliberative Democracy in the ACT
- Some would like speakers, presentations, panels to provide information for our work, also DD articles and resources (homework!)

Facilitator reflection

It is great that the group is so engaged, and group conversations were very lively and productive. There were many different perspectives and experiences, making it a very rich session. However, there are significant challenges for facilitation, because of the diversity of the group, and because of the intention to co-create the agenda. On the one hand, the group is empowered to challenge the structure of the session; on the other, there may be an expectation that the facilitators will ensure the time is spent productively.

I think it is important that we don't expect too much of facilitators, but take responsibility as a group. There is an enormous amount of knowledge and experience in the group. It will take time and many respectful conversations to share this knowledge. The facilitators can help with this, but it requires everyone's commitment.

Also, the fact that we are deliberating on deliberation can, I think, feel a bit disorienting at times, particularly for those new to the field. I think this led to some people just wanting information. It was great that people recognised this need, but I think the group needs to be aware that: a) there is a great deal of knowledge within the group, and b) there is also uncertainty and contestation within the field, particularly about practice.