

# ***Awakening Democracy***

CAPaD – the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy

MARCH APRIL 2020

Dear members and friends

## **Awakening democracy in times of pandemic**

The coronavirus outbreak is causing massive disruption to our lives, including the way our democracy works. “Big” government is back, Parliament has been sidelined, and communities are doing what we always do – supporting each other in times of crisis.

There is so much going on, we don’t feel ready to pull the threads together for this newsletter – we will do that next time. But we do urge you to sign [this petition from Peter Tait](#), telling MPs we expect them to work in a “virtual parliament” during this crisis. We’d like to send soon as the pressure is on.

Last *Awakening Democracy* we mentioned Zali Steggall’s [Climate Change \(National Framework for Adaptation and Action\) Bill 2020](#). We invited you to contact ACT MPs and Senators to ask them how they will vote on it, and to justify why - to show that we citizens expect MPs to be transparent with us. With the current pandemic crisis, Zali has withdrawn the bill and will resubmit when parliament settles down. This gives us all time to think creatively of other ways to show MPs what level of explanation we expect from MPs when they vote.

## **CAPaD - making change in 2020**

Just as reminder: the plan for 2020 is [on our website](#). Please get involved in one of our [action groups](#) and help get a democracy where our elected representatives work for us to protect and improve the public good!

**The 2020 ACT Election is on October 17<sup>th</sup>.** CAPaD will again be asking candidates for statements and sharing these with voters. The MLA Action Group is running this process. It is also working up a “statement of expectations” setting for how MLAs should do their jobs. Expect a questionnaire asking how we can maximise publicity for this process shortly – we would love your ideas.

Peter Tait’s letter in CT, [Very Good Point](#) (scroll down the letters), is our first effort. IF you are intending to stand in the election, let us know and we’ll send you a copy.

## **New stuff to read and look at**

A (possibly funny, as in “if you don’t laugh ...”) look at Australian Politics <https://www.thejuicemedia.com/honest-government-ad-the-fires/>

Cunningham F. London & New York: Routledge [Contemporary Political Philosophy](#); 2002. A good summary of the major strands of democratic theory for those who might be interested.

## **Citizens juries and public trust**

Emily Jenke (Democracy Co), Iain Walker (New Democracy Foundation) and Jenni Paradowski (former citizen juror) on ABC Life Matters discuss: [Can citizen juries improve democracy and restore public trust?](#)

Democracy Co has used citizen assemblies to help reform everything from dog and cat management laws to compulsory third-party motor vehicle insurance.

The New Democracy Foundation has been working with Byron Shire Council in Northern NSW on how to build trust between residents and decision makers, and are about to help another local government council implement a permanent model for including a rotating pool of citizens in their decision making process.

**What else is new (in Australian and the World)**

<https://wellbeingeconomy.org/watch-two-new-talks-by-katherine-trebeck>

Please stay safe as we all look after each other and focus on what matters in this terrible time.

*From your committee*

**Contact us:** [secretary@canberra-alliance.org.au](mailto:secretary@canberra-alliance.org.au)

**Keep up to date:** <https://canberra-alliance.org.au/>

**Share ideas:** [Twitter](#) @CAPADACT

**Find us on Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1487360858250888/>

© 2020 Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy (CAPaD). All rights reserved.

**CAPaD** - *Awakening Democracy*

The Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy