

# Awakening Democracy

CAPaD – the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy

JUNE 2020

Dear members and friends

## **Keeping government democratic in times of pandemic**

Big corporations are looking how to use this time to advance their anti-democratic agenda. In this article, [How big tech plans to profit from the pandemic](#), Naomi Klein offers a cautionary tale that we need to take heed of. Another reason to call for an active parliament.

In parallel in Australia, Scott Morrison has given the National COVID Coordination Commission, which comprises industry, particularly mining and fossil fuel company executives, power to reshape Australia's future coming out of the pandemic. [Zali Steggall](#) among others (the Senate Select committee inquiring into our government's response to Covid-19 for one) is raising concerns about the lack of clear governance for this Commission and the deep lack of transparency about its operations.

Our executive government (Morrison and key Ministers) meanwhile are ruling by delegated legislation that has limited parliamentary oversight, and even, as [reported in May 16<sup>th</sup> Saturday Paper \(\\$\)](#), with exclusions from review built in. This is a serious undermining of our democratic system.

What to do? We encourage all of you to take whatever steps that present themselves to support other's efforts to correct this situation.

In our ACT context, one democratic failure seems to be around planning and development. We would seem to have a neoliberal ALP Greens coalition run by property developers excluding good community input. CAPaD seeks to address this by shifting the balance of power in the Assembly by getting MLAs who are more linked into and responsive to the community elected (see 2020 election material below).

## **Help needed**

We are looking for a person with skills in Microsoft Access to help build a database to help us analyse the 2020 ACT Election Candidate Statement responses. Please [contact the secretary](#) if you can help.

## **Getting better representation for better government**

### **The 2020 ACT Election on October 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Recently we sent a questionnaire asking how we can maximise publicity and effectiveness of the Candidate Statements. The responses we received [are summarised here](#). We have compiled these with other inputs to come up with an action list.

We will be in contact soon about a zoom meetup in late June to explore further how we can work together during the lead up to the election to promote the candidate statements.

We have received further publicity about our candidate statement exercise in [a letter published in the Canberra Times](#) in mid-May and [the City News in late May](#). The key message to share is **electioneering in the time of physical distancing: Candidate Statements can help voters get to know the candidates better**. Ask: similar letters and supportive responses would help raise our profile.

## CAPaD - making change in 2020.

We are planning two or three more Zoom Events over the next few months.

### Sunday 28th June, 2-3.30pm

#### 2020 ACT Election - Choosing the candidate who will deliver government *with* we, the people.

During this year's election campaign, we are inviting candidates to tell us what their qualifications to represent us are, and how they intend to involve us in government.

We have prepared a Candidate Statement, and a Statement of Expectations of MLA and Citizen Expectations to help with this conversation.

On June 28<sup>th</sup> we are workshopping how to publicise the Candidate Statement during this campaign and how to get candidates to submit one.

This is a chance to support CAPaD.

Register [for this workshop here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Sunday July 26<sup>th</sup>**, Lyn Stevens will present **Government *with* the people – building trust in deliberative processes**, CAPaD's reflections on the OECD review of citizen deliberative processes and its relevance for the ACT experience of deliberation. The OECD will soon publish its Report [Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: catching the deliberative wave](#), for which CAPaD was involved in [the international review process](#). More details sent closer to the time.

We have invited the [Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis at Canberra University](#) to present on their [Democracy 2025 project](#) in late August.

### New stuff to read and look at

#### May 31st Zoom Event – Revitalising Democracy: possibilities for electorate level mobilisations to achieve better parliamentary representation

The recording of the Zoom event with Rob Salter is [available on this link](#).

#### [Mathew D 2020 With the People: An Introduction to an Idea](#)

David Mathews suggests a novel proposition—**government *with* the people**. It envisions a form of collaboration that would have government working *with* citizens, not just *for* them. People are creators and producers rather than consumers or clients. This approach is informing CAPaD's work with MLAs and the community.

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

Please stay safe as we all look after each other and focus on what matters in this crazy 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/>

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