

Awakening Democracy

CAPaD – the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy

NOVEMBER 2020

G'day members and friends

In this [Awakening Democracy](#): Elections, elections and more elections: the CAPaD Committee; the ACT one with now 6 Greens in a coalition with Labor; and the US wavering between plutocracy and autocracy. Looking forward to 2021, a bit about what we plan there. Some new things to read and introducing the Australian Futures Project.

COMING UP

2021 already

Growing from Rob Salter's presentation in May, we are looking at mobilising some electorate action in one of the federal electorates in Canberra. In Fenner the University of Canberra are working with Andrew Leigh and invited constituents to run [a Connecting to Parliament project](#). So we will watch that unfold and look to one of the other electorates. How this might interplay with the ACT's Assembly electorates and our MLAs.

Special General Meeting for constitutional change: 26 November 2020 by Zoom. Members will have received an email explaining the changes that are directed to supporting an application for charity status, and do some minor tidying up.

Elections, elections, elections

CAPaD Committee Election

Actually, the new committee looks pretty similar to last years; the major changes are Beth Slatyer's retiring, Peter Tait moving to Convener and Gilles Rohan joining. [It's all on the website](#).

The 2020 ACT Election up to October 17th

CAPaD welcomes the new ALP-Greens coalition government and looks forward to working with them.

A summary of CAPaD's 2020 [election experience is here](#).

See Peter Tait's [Opinion piece in the City News explaining why we want candidate statements](#).

Our Members and Supporters post election survey

The conclusion is that with only 12 responses it is difficult to draw strong conclusions. The fact that we received some *no* responses, however, suggests we did not have an entirely biased sample. A brief summary:

- While responders used the statements and found them easy to find and read, and they were promoted to friends and family, fewer people asked candidates about them. This may be because there was less contact with candidates.
- The supplementary material on the election page was of mixed usefulness.
- The City News and Canberra Times paid publicity was seen.

A copy of the report [is on our website](#).

Candidate Statements

Comparing statements received by electorate for each of the vote assist sites:

| | Yerrabi | Ginnind. | Kurrajong | Murrumb. | Brindab. | Totals | |
|--------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|--------|------|
| Candidates | 25 | 32 | 28 | 29 | 23 | 137 | 100% |
| CAPaD | 6 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 32 | 23% |
| ElectionsACT | 22 | 30 | 28 | 26 | 17 | 123 | 90% |
| Smartvote | 18 | 21 | 25 | 21 | 20 | 105 | 77% |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| voteeasy | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 13 | 9% |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|

In 2016 44% of candidates gave us a statement.

After an initial good run this time, the presence of the alternative sites later in the campaign period, and the early voting reduced the overall number of statements. The plethora of sites may also have reduced buy in from candidates and voters. CAPaD will work with these other sites and the new government to rationalise this situation to make it easier for voters (and candidates) to vote thoughtfully.

Brief observations on the US Elections and the trashing of democracy

Well the US election has delivered a result but the truly scary thing is Trump's response. While record numbers voted (an expression of citizen activism) and the media have been juggling how they report this to minimise violence and other players are seeking to protect the institutions of democracy, how this prevents Trump trashing the US political system will be something to watch play out.

Even more scary is the fact many right-wing commentators and MPs in Australia supported Trump in not condemning it fast and loud. #ClosingDemcoracy

Then in Australia, the ALP and Coalition agreed to weaken election donation laws by allowing federal branches of their parties to accept donations from property developers banned from donating to state/territory branches. What can we say?

New stuff to read and look at

More criticism of the heavy use of delegated legislation.

The rate of delegated legislation has doubled over the past 30 years and increasingly is it exempt from parliamentary review. Therefore "accountability for executive law-making needs to be strengthened via regulating the reliance on delegations, establishing a National Integrity Commission, and independently enforcing the Statement of Ministerial Standards." (Centre for Public Integrity, 2020) [Full article here](#).

Introducing [The Australian Futures Project](#)

We are dedicated to understanding and improving how Australia makes its future to maximise and share success across current and future generations.

An exploration of democracy, or rather **democracies** ... there are more than one, usually never less than three, at play in any polity. "Is, then, a richly diverse ecology of well- and commonly-used democracies the means by which a polity can best prevent the growth of anti- or non-democratic modes of government, governance and culture?" Yes, [Jean-Paul Gagnon concludes](#), in demodiversity is strength.

A look further into an ecology of representation, some [musings on the CAPaD web](#).

From your committee

Contact us: 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/>

CAPaD - *Awakening Democracy*

The Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy