

# Awakening Democracy

CAPaD – the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy

DECEMBER 2020

G'day members and friends

In this [Awakening Democracy](#): Festive seasonalities; mobilising electorates, and lots of things to see and read over the break.

## COMING UP

The Festive Season. Our best wishes to you all for this and may you have a safe and relaxing time.

### Special General Meeting for constitutional change

We have successfully voted to change our constitutional objectives which now read:

To promote individual and community wellbeing and the common good in a healthy environment by:

- (1) empowering people in Canberra, and Australia more broadly, to own and plan for our common future by developing and supporting citizen, community and civil society engagement in public decision making,
- (2) stimulating and facilitating opportunities for citizen and community input to government deliberation,
- (3) developing and assisting citizen and community capacity to hold government more directly accountable.

We will now pursue charity status.

## The voices of / for movement

Dissatisfaction with how our party political system is being warped by donations and a host of other factors is generating an increasing frequency of **Voices of / for** <name an electorate> **groups** across NSW, Victoria and South Australia. Electors want more say in who represents them in parliament and how they do the representing.

CAPaD is planning to pilot such a group in an ACT electorate next year. Watch this space. While many of the groups are forming in opposition to coalition candidates, and we can understand why this might be the case, CAPaD believes that a better approach is to start working with the incumbent MP. Selecting a new MP is a fallback option if that does not prove satisfactory.

Here are a few articles showcasing this:

You may have noticed that the media has picked up a couple of stories. [Today](#) and [last Saturday](#) the Guardian ran stories on grassroots challenges.

And the grassroots movement to challenge the sitting member in the seat of Hughes has gained a huge groundswell with media attention in the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) and [The Guardian](#), and Voice of Boothby has a run in [yesterday's Guardian](#).

## Teaching parliamentarians to be better

As a further way to improve representations, the **Australian Futures Project** [runs professional development courses aimed at parliamentarians](#) that allows State and Federal parliamentarians from across the political spectrum “to reconnect with their values and motivation for entering politics to ensure they are reflected in parliament.”

## New stuff to read and look at

### New [sections on our website](#)

We are redeveloping our Ideas and Resources Hub and continually adding content as we do.

## **Dissatisfaction with government and democracy**

**Note of caution:** the language is very important here. Are people dissatisfied with that system of politics that we call democracy or are they really dissatisfied with government or with the failure of government to protect and provide for their needs? Or is dissatisfaction with the behaviour of our parliamentarians? The danger of talking democracy down is that it leads to a quest for alternatives which are more authoritarian. Fundamentally we want good government to be delivering for our wellbeing. We want our MPs to behave with integrity. We want them working with us to achieve this.

Which language we use to frame our discontent leads to a different response.

New **Bennett Institute** [Centre for the Future of Democracy](#) explores "the challenges and opportunities faced by democratic politics over the coming century." Their 2020 [Global Satisfaction with Democracy Report is available here](#).

## **Topical Podcasts on Democracy and Government**

**Democracy Sausage** produced by Mark Kenny at [ANU Policy Forum](#) at the Crawford School and Centre for the Study of Australian Politics, and

**Talking Politics** by David Runciman in partnership with [the London Review of Books](#) (British) on your favourite podcast app.

**Participation on the move in France; citizens assembling. 'It gave me hope in democracy': how French citizens are embracing people power | World news | The Guardian**

*From your committee, with festive seasonalities*

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The Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy