

The purpose of this document is to help us be clear what we are doing and why. We will use this document to inform communications including the website and to craft a briefer invitation (draft below).

It's time for our voices to be heard: Active Democracy is changing how our federal MPs work with and for us.

What Active Democracy ACT wants

Active Democracy ACT is part of a growing movement to build effective working relationships with our five federal parliamentarians. In the ACT since 2017 we have 3 Lower House seats (Canberra, Fenner and Bean) These seats are tightly held by the Labor Party. The two Senate seats allocated to ACT always end up 1 Liberal and 1 Labor, which is a very predictable outcome.

Our primary focus is building a movement that can inform and influence the decisions of our safely elected MPs. Relatively few people want to be in a political party, but there is a growing movement across federal electorates in Australia for people to have a voice and engage. Across the ACT, there is enormous capacity for the community to engage and we already have the highest rate of "volunteering" in Australia (ABS 2016 Census).

Active Democracy ACT wants to be a part of the growing movement across federal electorates in Australia, to join others to:

- host conversations between electors in our electorates separate to those held by political parties and powerful interest groups
- design criteria for a suitable person to represent us with integrity and to hold them to account for what they do
- identify the issues that are most important to our electorate, as a local community and as a part of the broader nation
- collaborate with our fellow electors to help design the policies we want our elected representative to advocate for in the Parliament

Why is this so important?

The role of citizens in democracy goes beyond voting for a representative and then passing judgement on their performance a few years later at the ballot box. Democracy is weakened unless we take an active role and work with our elected representatives to ensure that the voices of the people are heard throughout the term of government. In recent times in Australia we have seen what can happen in a democracy when elected representatives lose touch with us. It is time for citizens to take their rightful place in democracy.

The disenchantment and lack of trust in government that permeates Australian society could be overcome by countering the current dynamic that is characterised by powerful political parties, vested interests and deliberately confusing public information which result in community disengagement from politics.

There is power in ordinary people working with our members of parliament to achieve responsive, accountable and transparent public policy and implementation. When community members and their parliamentary representatives actively collaborate to prioritise issues and shape the policy agenda and assess outcomes, decisions that enhance our common good are more likely.

- Connect people who want to change the way the political system operates, so it works better for us all
- Help those people come together to plan what to do to make that change happen
- Work out a job description and key qualities you want in your representative
- Periodically host some Community Summits in each electorate to agree the agenda and priorities for your representative
- Welcome all candidates who want to represent your electorate and interview them against the qualities you think they need to work for the public good and to be open, transparent and accountable back to your community

What next?

Once you get going, report back what you are doing on the Active Democracy website, and see there what other groups across Australia are doing.

The more people participating together, the stronger we can be.

Draft Invitation

Australia's political system is relatively good by international standards. However, many people are unhappy about how our governments and political parties have been functioning over the past decade. Active Democracy ACT thinks that we, the people, can make government even better by working with our MPs in deciding what the government and the political parties are going to do for us. This will complement governments' existing public consultations.

Active Democracy ACT is a group of citizens, inspired to work together to make this happen. We welcome others who want to join us to grow this group and help design our new politics.

We would love you to join us and to talk with other people in the ACT who are trying to make our political system work better for us all. Even if you can't join us now, and you want us to be successful, you can help by letting others know about us.

To get started, please go to the website <insert link> where there is information about what you can do, and how you can get involved to make this happen. The more people participating together, the stronger we can be.