

# Genuine Engagement Tool (GET)

**Name of Participatory Process:** Canberra Forum

**Location of the Engagement Process / Event (deliberative process):** Canberra Federal Electorate, ACT

**Date:** November 2022 to July 2023

**Evaluating body / group:** CAPaD

Here is a link to the 11 [OECD Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making](#) that form the framework for this assessment. From 2020 report [Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions](#).

For a brief evaluation, you may want to just use the first column (Principles); however, a richer analysis comes from working through the entire document.

Please feel free to adapt the GET to your purpose, making not applicable the criteria not relevant to your deliberative process.

Please use, adapt and [feedback to us](#) what you think and how it worked.

Quick visual assessment (traffic light) model involves highlighting evidence in into 3 colour categories:

Green =	clear evidence that the criteria has been met
Orange =	more evidence needed to establish if the criteria has been met
Red =	no evidence available or the evidence indicates the criteria has not been met
Blank =	criteria not applicable

OECD good practice principle	Criteria	Evidence
<b>Principle 1: Purpose</b> The objective should be outlined as a clear task and is linked to a defined public problem. It is phrased neutrally as a question in plain language.	1A What is the objective for participants to deliberate on and who formulated it?	Participants identified the objective through a series of face-to-face and online sessions including a polling exercise to reach a consensus.  The remit, or objective, was “ <i>What should the Federal Government do to improve access to affordable home purchase and private rental?</i> ” ref <a href="#">Final Report</a>



	1B Is the objective outlined as a clear task?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>MP Alicia Payne publicly stated the following:          “The Forum will meet for a total of 20 hours over 6 months (including a break for the Christmas period). I'm committed to acting on the advice of the forum including by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Making representations to the Federal Parliament about the Forum's work;</li> <li>2. Advocating for our community through the Federal Labor Party Caucus;</li> <li>3. Publishing the Forum's advice right here on my website - in full and unchanged; and</li> <li>4. Writing to relevant Minister/s to advise them of the views of my electorate on specific recommendation</li> </ol> <p><a href="https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/">https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/</a></p>
	1C Is the objective linked to a defined public problem?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Affordable housing is a central issue across Australia and in Canberra.</p>
	1D Is the objective phrased neutrally?	<p>Yes</p> <p>“What should the Federal Government do to improve access to affordable home purchase and private rental?”          “Affordable” is a term with neutrality and ambiguity that avoids asking a question like “should home and rent prices go up, down or stay the same?” or “how do new homes provide for low income people?” For more listen to Radio National <a href="#">Big Ideas</a>.          “Private rental” is a term that avoids other forms of rental. This may not be neutral.</p>
	1E Is the objective posed as a question in plain language?	<p>Yes</p> <p>“What should the Federal Government do to improve access to affordable home purchase and private rental?”</p>
<p><b>Principle 2: Accountability</b>          There should be influence on public decisions. The commissioning public authority should publicly commit to</p>	2A Who is the commissioning authority?	<p>The MP for the federal electorate of Canberra, Alicia Payne,  <a href="https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian?MPID=144732">https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian?MPID=144732</a> and <a href="https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/">https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/</a></p>



<p>responding to or acting on participants' recommendations in a timely manner. It should monitor the implementation of all accepted recommendations with regular public progress reports.</p>	<p>2B Has the commissioning authority publicly committed to responding to, or acting upon, participants' recommendations?</p>	<p>Yes, MP Alicia made the following commitment publicly, and on her website. "I'm committed to acting on the advice of the forum including by: 1. Making representations to the Federal Parliament about the Forum's work; 2. Advocating for our community through the Federal Labor Party Caucus; 3. Publishing the Forum's advice right here on my website - in full and unchanged; and 4. Writing to relevant Minister/s to advise them of the views of my electorate on specific recommendations." MP Alicia Payne speaks in the Parliament about The Canberra Forum (citizens assembly) she sponsored as an experiment. See video 4:00 - 4:44 <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_OouZbhDy4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_OouZbhDy4</a></p>
	<p>2C Has the commissioning authority committed to responding within a specified time frame?</p>	<p>No specified time frame was committed to, and the final report was published on MP Alicia's website on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.  <a href="https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/the-report/">https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/the-report/</a></p>
	<p>2D Will the commissioning authority be monitoring the implementation of accepted recommendations with regular progress reports?</p>	<p>Not applicable (given that this is not a policy making exercise but a representative democracy exercise where the MP was very clear about her ability to influence - as in her commitment statement above). A mechanism for monitoring what action is taken wasn't part of the original idea and no mechanism has been set up during the process.</p>
<p><b>Principle 3: Transparency</b> The deliberative process should be announced publicly before it begins. The process design and all materials – including agendas, briefing documents, evidence submissions, audio and video recordings of those presenting evidence, the participants' report, their recommendations (the wording of which participants should</p>	<p>3A Was the deliberative process announced publicly before it began?</p>	<p>Yes, on MP Alicia's website and in the news media <a href="https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/">https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/</a> 7 July 2022 <a href="https://aliciapayne.com.au/news/articles-and-opinion-pieces/announcing-the-canberra-forum/">https://aliciapayne.com.au/news/articles-and-opinion-pieces/announcing-the-canberra-forum/</a> <a href="https://canberraweekly.com.au/alicia-payne-announcing-the-canberra-forum/">https://canberraweekly.com.au/alicia-payne-announcing-the-canberra-forum/</a> 6 Feb 2023 <a href="https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/8072971/inaugural-canberra-forum-trials-grassroots-democracy/">https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/8072971/inaugural-canberra-forum-trials-grassroots-democracy/</a></p>

<p>have a final say over), and the random selection methodology – should be available to the public in a timely manner.</p> <p>The funding source should be disclosed. The commissioning public authority’s response to the recommendations and the evaluation after the process should be publicised and have a public communication strategy.</p>	<p>3B Has the process design been available to the public, and if so, since when?</p>	<p>Process design was first shared with public on 7 July 2022. To participants at the initial briefing and through them to their networks. The design was a prototype from <a href="#">DemocracyCo</a> to be first tested in the electorate of Canberra.</p> <p>After the final report is released publicly, it will be available to the general public and other MPs.</p> <p>A <a href="#">3min video</a> of participants’ experience and reflections tells some of their story of being involved in the Canberra Forum.</p>
	<p>3C Have all materials been made available to the public in a timely manner:</p> <p>a. agendas &amp; briefing documents?</p> <p>b. evidence submissions, audio and video recordings of those presenting evidence</p> <p>c. evidence of the random selection methodology?</p> <p>d. Participants Report including their recommendations?</p>	<p>Not to the public, only participants. Not intended for this trial - but could in the future.</p> <p>Yes, available in the final Report. <a href="https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/the-report/">https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/the-report/</a></p> <p>Yes, on website on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.</p>
	<p>3D Did Participants have the final say in the wording of their report?</p>	<p>Yes. The report writing team formulated and agreed the final words supported by tools and processes from DemocracyCo. The final document was provided to all participants and all signed off.</p>
	<p>3E Was the funding source disclosed before the process began?</p>	<p>Yes. Alicia paid for survey postcard mailout to all Canberra electorate households and the costs of venue and catering. DemocracyCo provided all their work and travel pro bono (at no charge) with the aim of doing more of these with other electorates and MPs and possibly getting Australian Research Council funding.</p>



	<p>3F Will the commissioning authority's response to the recommendations be publicised as part of a public communications strategy?</p>	<p>Yes The report is published on MP Alicia's website. <a href="https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/the-report/">https://www.aliciapayne.com.au/about/the-canberra-forum/the-report/</a> There is no response to the recommendations possible given the nature of the commitment made and the broader political process in this case. A video documentary was made; it is unsure to CAPaD how that is to be used in a communications strategy to the electorate and more widely. Although a communications strategy apart from publishing the report on website was not part of Alicia's commitment, CAPaD is interested in the electorate being educated to the benefits of using this process.</p> <p>NOTE: CAPaD thinks a communications strategy to educate the public and MPs about this type of electorate forum is important.</p>
	<p>3G Will the evaluation(s), after the process, be publicised as part of a communications strategy?</p>	<p>Not applicable, however a substantial evaluation with Monash University and Deakin University will be done. That will be released and will also be used for the Australian Research Council grant resubmission.</p> <p>A <a href="#">3min video</a> of participants' experience and reflections tells some of their story of being involved in the Canberra Forum.</p>
<p><b>Principle 4: Inclusiveness</b> Inclusion should be achieved by considering how to involve underrepresented groups. Participation should also be encouraged and supported through remuneration, expenses, and/or providing or paying for childcare and eldercare.</p>	<p>4A What consideration was made of how to include under-represented groups?</p>	<p>During the original sortition process attempts were made to align participant profile to the latest census profile for the electorate. In terms of specific minorities, no.</p>
	<p>4B Was participation encouraged and supported through remuneration of expenses and/or provision or paying for childcare and eldercare?</p>	<p>N/A because it was outside the capacity of MP Alicia's parliamentary budget to pay and her budget guidelines to use.</p> <p>Note: CAPaD believes that exercises such as the Forum should be permitted within the guidelines for MP electorate expenses.</p>
<p><b>Principle 5: Representativeness</b> The participants should be a microcosm of the general public. This is achieved through random sampling from which a representative selection is made, based on stratification by</p>	<p>5A Was a process of random sampling and demographic stratification used to attain a participant body that was a microcosm of the general public?</p>	<p>Yes; see process outlined in the Final Report.</p>

<p>demographics (to ensure the group broadly matches the demographic profile of the community against census or other similar data), and sometimes by attitudinal criteria (depending on the context). Everyone should have an equal opportunity to be selected as participants. In some instances, it may be desirable to over-sample certain demographics during the random sampling stage of recruitment to help achieve representativeness.</p>	5B Did everyone have equal opportunity to be selected as a participant?	Everyone on the electoral roll. Selection by Sortition Foundation using reliable process described in Final Report.
	5C Were any demographic group over-sampled during the random sampling stage of recruitment to help achieve representativeness?	No. More higher education under sampled to achieve more equal recruitment.
<p><b>Principle 6: Information</b> Participants should have access to a wide range of accurate, relevant, and accessible evidence and expertise. They should have the opportunity to hear from and question speakers that present to them, including experts and advocates chosen by the citizens themselves.</p>	6A Did Participants have access to a wide range of accurate, relevant and accessible evidence and expertise?	Yes. See Final Report.
	6B Did Participants have an opportunity to hear from experts and advocates of their own choosing?	Yes. Observed and in Final Report.
<p><b>Principle 7: Group Deliberation</b> Participants should be able to find common ground to underpin their collective recommendations to the public authority. This entails careful and active listening, weighing and considering multiple perspectives, every participant having an opportunity to speak, a mix of formats that alternate between small group and plenary discussions and activities, and skilled facilitation.</p>	7A Did the deliberation entail careful and active listening?	Yes; this was observed.
	7B Did the deliberation entail weighing up and consideration of multiple perspectives?	Yes; this was observed.
	7C Did the deliberation entail opportunity for everyone to speak?	Yes; this was observed.
	7D Did the deliberation entail a mix of formats alternating between small group and plenary discussions and activities?	Yes; this was observed.
	7E Was the deliberation facilitated skillfully?	Yes; this was observed.

<p><b>Principle 8: Time</b> Deliberation requires adequate time for participants to learn, weigh the evidence, and develop informed recommendations, due to the complexity of most policy problems. To achieve informed citizen recommendations, participants should meet for at least four full days in person, unless a shorter time frame can be justified. It is recommended to allow time for individual learning and reflection in between meetings.</p>	8A Was there adequate time for Participants to learn, weigh the evidence and develop informed recommendations?	Time spent reaching the remit reduced time able to be spent in deliberating the topic; although some extra time was allocated to do this. In participant feedback data to DemocracyCo they were comfortable they had enough time.
	8B Did Participants meet for at least four full days?	Not full days; half days x 4 with some 2 hour zoom sessions.
	8C Did Participants meet in person?	Yes; one introductory session and then 3 other sessions.
	8D Was time allowed for individual learning and reflection in between meetings?	Yes; Base Camp app was set up to allow group reflection to complement the individual reflection people were doing; the comments in Base Camp demonstrated that reflection, research and learning was occurring.
<p><b>Principle 9: Integrity</b> The process should be run by an arms 'length co-ordinating team different from the commissioning public authority. The final call regarding process decisions should be with the arm's length co-ordinators rather than the commissioning authorities. Depending on the context, there should be oversight by an advisory or monitoring board with representatives of different viewpoints.</p>	9A Was the process run by an arm's length co-ordinating team different from the commissioning body?	Yes; due to the experimental nature of the process, the commissioning MP was an observer and able to make comments. However, she was careful in how she avoided influencing the process. MP Alicia stated to DemocracyCo and the group that she wanted to be in the room for all deliberations so she could listen - which was a key part of the process.
	9B Was the final call regarding process decisions rest with co-ordinators rather than the commissioning authority?	Yes. DemocracyCo are experienced and skilled facilitators and able to maintain objective neutrality.
	9C Was there oversight (of the process) by an advisory or monitoring board with representatives of different viewpoints?	No, N/A. This was outside the nature of the process. However, external observers, including CAPaD members with experience of deliberative processes were able to attend and watch proceedings. The presence of an advisor or monitor with the authority within the process to comment on proceedings and make suggestions may have been helpful.
<p><b>Principle 10: Privacy</b> There should be respect for participants 'privacy to protect them from undesired media attention and harassment, as well as to preserve participants 'independence, ensuring they are not bribed or lobbied by interest groups or activists. Small group discussions should be private.</p>	10A Were Participants protected from undesired media attention and harassment?	N/A as this was a process unlikely to generate such attention. CAPaD is aware that DemocracyCo has systems and processes for managing such situations because of their experience with the nuclear waste citizens assembly conducted earlier in South Australia.
	10B Was Participants 'independence preserved by ensuring they could not be bribed or lobbied by interest groups or activists?	N/A



<p>The identity of participants may be publicised when the process has ended, at the participants 'consent. All personal data of participants should be treated in compliance with international good practices, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).</p>	<p>10C Was Participants 'consent sought before making their identities public after the process had concluded?</p>	<p>Yes; consent forms for the recording of the sessions and interviews of participants were taken at the beginning.</p>
	<p>10D Was all personal data of Participants treated in compliance with international good practices?</p>	<p>Yes - DemocracyCo store and protect data in line with The Privacy Act - reflected in the privacy policy on their website <a href="https://www.democracyco.com.au/privacy/">https://www.democracyco.com.au/privacy/</a>. Participants are informed of this during recruitment.</p>
<p><b>Principle 11: Evaluation</b> There should be an anonymous evaluation by the participants to assess the process based on objective criteria (e.g. on quantity and diversity of information provided, amount of time devoted to learning, independence of facilitation). An internal evaluation by the co-ordination team should be conducted against the good practice principles in this report to assess what has been achieved and how to improve future practice. An independent evaluation is recommended for some deliberative processes, particularly those that last a significant time. The deliberative process should also be evaluated on final outcomes and impact of implemented recommendations.</p>	<p>11A Was an anonymous evaluation completed by Participants to assess the Deliberative Process, based on objective criteria (eg on the quantity and diversity of information provided, amount of time devoted to learning, independence of facilitation)?</p>	<p>Yes. DemocracyCo completed an evaluation by participants. They plan to use this in an evaluation report when done by Monash University. This will be shared with us when completed.</p>
	<p>11B Is an internal evaluation being conducted by the co-ordination team against the OECD good practice Principles, to assess what has been achieved and how to improve future practice?</p>	<p>Internal evaluation yes, but not against the OECD Principles. DemocracyCo prefer not to use the OECD principles as they are designed for Juries / Assemblies and not other deliberative methods, which this one is.</p>
	<p>11C Is an independent evaluation being conducted?</p>	<p>Yes, this reflective evaluation by CAPaD. DemocracyCo is also applying for an Australian Research Council grant to work with Monash / Deakin.</p>



	11D Will the deliberative process be evaluated on final outcomes and the impact of implemented recommendations?	N/A; The Monash / Deakin evaluation will do this if the DemocracyCo ARC application is able to proceed.
<p><b>Principle 12: Impact</b> The project should demonstrate a positive impact in the community and educate the community about the value of the process and citizen deliberation</p>	12A Are actions planned to educate the community about the value of the process and citizen deliberation?	<p>Yes. CAPaD plans to work with DemocracyCo and Alicia Payne to publicise the Forum and promote other MPs taking it on. CAPaD also plans to work with DemocracyCo to make a 'kit' that other MPs and electorates can use to do a similar process.</p>