

# Awakening Democracy

CAPaD – the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy

MARCH 2024

G'day members, supporters and friends

In this [Awakening Democracy](#): 2024 ACT election activity planning and seeking help, Education for Civics update, ... and much, much more to read and watch.

## How can you help CAPaD in this transformational year?

As set out in the [February Awakening Democracy](#) we have a big year planned.

Next week you will receive an email with more details of how you can translate your support for stronger democracy into help for us. We have added a [2024 ACT Election tab](#) to our website which we will update regularly as planning proceeds.

You can volunteer for as much or as little as you can find time and energy for and or [donate](#).

## COMING UP

### 2024 ACT Election, 19<sup>th</sup> October and 2025 (maybe 2024) Federal Election

The community education campaign planning proceeds. How you might help will come in next week's email.

## HAPPENINGS

### Living Democracy into Being

Conversation to continue later in the year.

If you would like to join, [please contact me](#).



## ACTIVE PROJECTS

**ACTIVE DEMOCRACY AUSTRALIA (ADAus)**  
The collaboration with Change Politics proceeds. More about this later. Meanwhile a steady flow of electorate update requests are coming through, signifying some electorates are finding the site useful.



### Active Democracy Bean

What's happening with Active Democracy Bean? (ADB)

In response to interested yes23 volunteers, ADB will continue to focus on First Nations justice issues in 2024 particularly in the lead up to the ACT election in October.

This will involve:

- initiating conversations in the broader community around existing government mechanisms and initiatives to close the gap and how well these are/are not working
- holding our elected representatives to account for commitments on First Nations justice issues made before the last election and during the last term of government
- continuing to build a community of citizens in Bean who are active in their democracy.

We will do this by:

- hosting monthly gatherings with a guest speaker at the Irish Club

- organising formal meetings with current MLAs to ask questions/relay concerns/discuss their position
- engaging with candidates to discuss their priorities regarding First Nations justice
- engaging with organisers of candidate forums to ensure questions include those First Nations priorities.

Any questions or interest to join us? Contact [activedemocracybean@canberra-alliance.org.au](mailto:activedemocracybean@canberra-alliance.org.au)

Additionally Active Democracy Bean [has a Facebook page](#) on which they will promote what is on and latest information regarding their activity. More about Bean and ADB on their [webpage](#).

**The Active Democracy ACT** [site is here](#).

### Education for civics

A picture is emerging confirming the need for better education for civics in schools and the community. No one seems satisfied with the current situation. I've spoken with several people over the past months and the MP I spoke with, teachers, past students, a current student and parents all agree that it doesn't work.

I have also discovered that people are trialling a wide variety of one off, brief programs in schools across Australia.

Finally, a couple of people observed that while the majority focus is on the Australian political system, who is education young people in the ACT about the ACT system?

With the election coming up, there is opportunity to interest people in this.

**Do you want to help with this project?** [Email us](#).

### THINGS TO READ AND LISTEN TO

**Our standing reminders** about:

- [Democracy Sausage podcast](#) from the ANU Public Policy Institute. Lots of very topical topics, and
- [The Remakers podcast](#). Australia ReMADE's podcast has a fascinating series of discussions and interviews and is well worth a listen. Both **available** from your favourite podcast service.
- **Juice Media** for an [irreverent and spicy look at current politics](#) in Australia and beyond.
- **Crazy Town** From [the Post Carbon Institute \(go to Products/Podcasts\)](#). 2025 season in prep but lots of back episodes to listen to.

**The March of Autocracy, the eleventh issue of Australian Foreign Affairs**, "examines the rise of authoritarian and illiberal leaders, whose growing assertiveness is reshaping the Western-led world order." With some focus on China and our relationship with her. Introducing John Keane's idea of Phantom Democracy which is not the pseudo-democracy of autocratic states, but a different way of doing democracy. See for an overview: [Australia Institute Webinar](#) and for [the original essay collection](#).

### The Real Divide

Robert Reich, expert on economic inequality, says the real societal divide is not between Left and Right but **democracy** and **oligarchy** (perhaps plutocracy), which he covers in *The System: Who Rigged It, How We Fix It*. [11 minute video explainer here](#). See the [Crazy Town Episode on Jack Welch](#) to see how the system rigging happened. Reich's conclusion is that we must organise cooperatively to fight for democracy.

[Purpose](#) has published a report, [Online Challenges for Election Integrity](#), looking at the use of social media in spreading mis- / disinformation and hate speech. They comment on the media's role in amplifying this.

Recommendations include:

"We recommend the development of civil society, election commission, and government programs that reward and engage constructive participation in election monitoring in ways that undermine and crowd out bad faith actors." Another thread to the Education for Civics bow!

## Strengthening Political Representation

Listen to **Carolyn Hendriks** discuss community participation in politics on the Policy Forum Pod of December 8<sup>th</sup> last year. On a podcaster near you. The positives and dangers of community participation. Pertinent to CAPaD's work particularly this year.

## DEMOCRACY AS FUN

David Pope from the Canberra times.

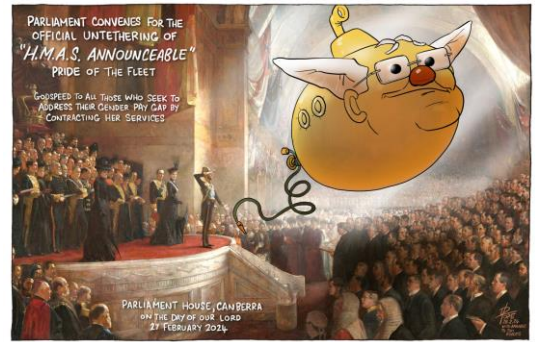
*From your committee*

**Contact us:** [secretary@canberra-alliance.org.au](mailto:secretary@canberra-alliance.org.au)

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