

Collective Statements from CAPaD Conversation One 12/05/24

These statements are not consensus agreements between the 20+ participants but just an attempt at an accurate record of what each participant said and had written down by the recorder. All words come from text written on butchers paper with no editing, only grouping themes together.

Participants were invited to explore 3 questions

1. What is a representative?
2. What qualities are we seeking in our MLAs?
3. How can we know our MLAs are working for the community?

1. What is a representative?

Represents the needs/concerns of constituents

- Someone who places electorate as central to their ideas
- Represents the voters, not themselves, their ideology, their party or other vested interests
- Someone democratically elected by citizens to represent and strongly defend their interests
- Someone who understands the people and their issues well and can speak for these people in their interests, not in the interests of the MLA themselves
- Someone who represents the electorate in good faith and ensures this is demonstrated clearly to citizens
- Someone closely connected to the local community so they have an in-depth understanding of issues affecting them
- Someone who truly represents the constituents in the assembly, provides consensus views at various fora

Someone who acts in good faith, in accordance with due consideration and good judgement, free from undue influence such as financial vested interest

- Different roles – advocate, trustee and delegate to parliament for community, and knows when to take which role
- Someone who is actively supporting accountability processes rather than being beholden to them
- Forms, implements, advocates and administers government policy and considers how it tracks through time
- Paid to understand community wants and how this interacts with their policy platform

A voice and ear of the group or community

- Encourages community responses to planned actions and legislation
- Someone who works to meet community needs through collaboration and negotiation
- Someone in close communication with fellow citizens (actually talks to and listens to them)
- Someone who 'speaks and acts on my behalf'

- They represent majority views but acknowledge differing views to the majority
- A point of contact for members of community, providing a platform to hear and understand their concerns
- Promotes and canvasses new ideas

2. What qualities are we seeking in our MLAs?

Genuine interest in community and people

- Puts the community before themselves or party agenda
- Someone who works for us
- Understanding and respect for the community and their opinion
- Influence and negotiation skills
- Good communicator
- Good listening skills, friendly and engaging
- Accepts differing points of view
- Able to listen and distill the essence of what constituents ' concerns are, then convey and support that to Assembly colleagues
- Someone who listens to community opinions and tries to further attainment of their needs by advocating for them in an independent way without being too influenced by party policies

Courage

- Strong values
- Recognises that conflict is inevitable but can also be productive
- Open to changing faulty systems
- Resistant to pressure from external influences (e.g. corporate interests)
- Willing to alter positions if it is in community's interest
- Not factionally aligned
- Doesn't accept bribes from influencers
- Hard working
- Sincerity – willing and able to commit time needed

Facilitator of community participation

- Consultative, good at meeting people
- Provides feedback to constituents on how government and parliament are addressing key community issues
- Able to explain diverse positions on contentious issues and what constitutes the public good
- Reports back and explains when acting as a delegate and when a trustee, reports back on debates and discussions on policy and legislation
- Sensitivity towards vulnerable community members / Represents disadvantaged groups

Intelligent, clear-thinking

- Open to questions/scrutiny by experts
- Good judgement
- Knows how to prioritise issues

- Understands the concepts of evidence and follows the facts, not opinions
- evidence-based decision making but still upholding values
- Genuine knowledge of portfolios
- Flexible yet focused on what is needed
- Balanced – reflecting the many diverse needs of the electorate

A rare beast honest, transparent, independent, available, intellectually competent

- Integrity, honesty, transparency, accountable (e.g. is open about who is lobbying them and decision making processes)
- Moral compass, evident goodwill and demonstrating the effort to communicate this regardless of party policy
- Declares funding sources and spending avenues (transparency)

Experienced in leadership

- Capable policy administrator
- Collaborative and effective in policy development and implementation

3. How can we know our MLAs are working for the community?

They create and publish a highly visible scorecard on their progress and what they said they would achieve

- They check their priority deliverables against what the community wants
- Measuring number of deliberative and input-seeking forums
- Interactive media, infographics and community dashboards that demonstrate their effectiveness
- Their work is visible through political gadgets/ tech options/ hansard reports on voting and spending and these outputs are publicised freely
- Through measuring things like speeches (quantity, content, thematic qualitative analysis of how speech relates to community input and ideas received through deliberative forums)
- Feedback from parliament (e.g. speeches, committee reports and community events)
- Demonstrating progress or achievement in multiple policy domains

The representative communicates regularly and clearly via easily accessible means

- Good assembly voting records – their voting should be aligned with community needs and requests
- The representative can provide reasons, clear information, data for their assembly voting results
- By following up on assembly debates
- Regular reports back to community through public meetings, letters, emails, social media, newsletters, handouts
- Regularly holds community meetings/town halls to maintain awareness of community issues, report on progress, flag upcoming parliamentary votes and allow for ongoing input
- When the MLA has done the work to listen to community views, represented them in the assembly and has reported back on the outcome

They are prepared to be challenged and to review their positions, openly and convincingly

- Has the backbone to stand up to unreasonable pressure from interest groups that are not aligned with public good
- They address issues holistically, looking at root cause and effect
- Adherence (or not) to expert opinion and evidence (e.g. cost benefit analyses)
- Follow through on commitments while taking into account new information
- Prioritising issues according to urgency and need
- They divulge any conflicts of interest they may have or other impediments to honesty
- They have limits to personal wealth gathering and don't immediately attain jobs related to portfolios after leaving their political roles
- Through unbiased media reports on their work

Genuine consultation and degree of quality engagement with community

- Responsiveness to community needs, correspondence from community members
- The MLA explains where they have taken a different view to community
- They support civil society in a variety of ways, ensuring the general community can obtain verbal information/advice to enable them the representative to account
- Being inclusive

They hold deliberative forums and participatory community events

- Advocate for holding citizen assemblies on issues that are contentious
- Reports and media on community events and deliberative forums
- They involve the community through seeking volunteers, surveys and feedback

By sensing the changes in the community, good quality of life

- Harmony in the community – lack of serious disagreement between community with policies
- Good community feedback, visible positive results in community
- When community members personally experience good outcomes
- Strong community services

The budget is balanced

- By talking to other MLAs
- Policy turnaround if original policies weren't popular
- The issues that community has raised are brought to light in assembly or to other appropriate bodies

Raw data from participant's writing

What is a representative?

- *Represents the voters, not themselves, their ideology, their party or other vested interests*
- *Someone who acts in good faith, in accordance with due consideration and good judgement, free from undue influence such as financial vested interest*
- *Someone democratically elected by citizens to represent and strongly defend their interests*
- *Someone who understands the people and their issues well and can speak for these people in their interests, not in the interests of the MLA themselves*
- *Someone who represents the electorate in good faith and ensures this is demonstrated clearly to citizens*
- *Different roles – advocate, trustee and delegate to parliament for community, and knows when to take which role*
- *Forms, implements, advocates and administers government policy and considers how it tracks through time*
- *Someone closely connected to the local community so they have an in-depth understanding of issues affecting them*
- *Someone who works to meet community needs through collaboration and negotiation*
- *Someone who truly represents the constituents in the assembly, provides consensus views at various fora*
- *Encourages community responses to planned actions and legislation*
- *They represent majority views but acknowledge differing views to the majority*
- *Promotes and canvasses new ideas*
- *Someone who places electorate as central to their ideas*
- *Someone who 'speaks and acts on my behalf'*
- *Someone in close communication with fellow citizens (actually talks to and listens to them)*
- *a 'voice and ear of the group or community'*
- *A point of contact for members of community, providing a platform to hear and understand their concerns*
- *Someone who is actively supporting accountability processes rather than being beholden to them*
- *Paid to understand community wants and how this interacts with their policy platform*
- *Represents the needs/concerns of constituents*

What qualities are we seeking in our MLAs?

- *Understanding and respect for the community and their opinion*
- *'A rare beast' – honest, transparent, independent, available, intellectually competent*
- *Integrity, honesty, transparency, accountable (e.g. is open about who is lobbying them and decision making processes)*
- *Good communicator*
- *Courage*
- *Influence and negotiation skills*
- *Genuine interest in community and people*
- *Open to changing faulty systems*
- *Hard working*
- *Puts the community before themselves or party agenda*
- *Sincerity – willing and able to commit time needed*
- *Sensitivity towards vulnerable community members / Represents disadvantaged groups*
- *Resistant to pressure from external influences (e.g. corporate interests)*
- *Willing to alter positions if it is in community's interest*

- *Not factionally aligned*
- *Doesn't accept bribes from influencers*
- *Declares funding sources and spending avenues (transparency)*
- *Someone who works for us*
- *Facilitator of community participation*
- *Moral compass, evident goodwill and demonstrating the effort to communicate this regardless of party policy*
- *Intelligent, clear-thinking*
- *Experienced in leadership*
- *Genuine knowledge of portfolios*
- *Understands the concepts of evidence and follows the facts, not opinions*
- *Open to questions/scrutiny by experts*
- *evidence-based decision making but still upholding values*
- *Consultative, good at meeting people*
- *Provides feedback to constituents on how government and parliament are addressing key community issues*
- *Able to explain diverse positions on contentious issues and what constitutes the public good*
- *Flexible yet focused on what is needed*
- *Capable policy administrator*
- *Good judgement*
- *Good listening skills, friendly and engaging*
- *Able to listen and distill the essence of what constituents' concerns are, then convey and support that to Assembly colleagues*
- *Someone who listens to community opinions and tries to further attainment of their needs by advocating for them in an independent way without being too influenced by party policies*
- *Balanced – reflecting the many diverse needs of the electorate*
- *Strong values*
- *Accepts differing points of view*
- *Recognises that conflict is inevitable but can also be productive*
- *Collaborative and effective in policy development and implementation*
- *Knows how to prioritise issues*
- *Reports back and explains when acting as a delegate and when a trustee, reports back on debates and discussions on policy and legislation*

How can we know our MLAs are working for the community?

- *Genuine consultation and degree of quality engagement with community*
- *Responsiveness to community needs, correspondence from community members*
- *Regular reports back to community through public meetings, letters, emails, social media, newsletters, handouts*
- *Regularly holds community meetings/town halls to maintain awareness of community issues, report on progress, flag upcoming parliamentary votes and allow for ongoing input*
- *When the MLA has done the work to listen to community views, represented them in the assembly and has reported back on the outcome*
- *The MLA explains where they have taken a different view to community*
- *Advocate for holding citizen assemblies on issues that are contentious*
- *They hold deliberative forums and participatory community events*
- *Reports and media on community events and deliberative forums*
- *They involve the community through seeking volunteers, surveys and feedback*
- *They create and publish a highly visible scorecard on their progress and what they said they would achieve*
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- *The budget is balanced*
- *By talking to other MLAs*
- *The representative can provide reasons, clear information, data for their assembly voting results*
- *They support civil society in a variety of ways, ensuring the general community can obtain verbal information/advice to enable them the representative to account*
- *The issues that community has raised are brought to light in assembly or to other appropriate bodies*
- *They address issues holistically, looking at root cause and effect*
- *They are prepared to be challenged and to review their positions, openly and convincingly*
- *They divulge any conflicts of interest they may have or other impediments to honesty*
- *They have limits to personal wealth gathering and don't immediately attain jobs related to portfolios after leaving their political roles*
- *Being inclusive*
- *Strong community services*
- *Harmony in the community – lack of serious disagreement between community with policies*
- *Through unbiased media reports on their work*
- *Interactive media, infographics and community dashboards that demonstrate their effectiveness*
- *Through measuring things like speeches (quantity, content, thematic qualitative analysis of how speech relates to community input and ideas received through deliberative forums)*
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- *Policy turnaround if original policies weren't popular*
- *Adherence (or not) to expert opinion and evidence (e.g. cost benefit analyses)*
- *Good community feedback, visible positive results in community*
- *Follow through on commitments while taking into account new information*
- *Prioritising issues according to urgency and need*
- *Demonstrating progress or achievement in multiple policy domains*
- *Has the backbone to stand up to unreasonable pressure from interest groups that are not aligned with public good*
- *By sensing the changes in the community, good quality of life*