

# A job description for our elected representatives

1.5 minute read

In these four articles I explore these issues:

1. Why is CAPaD doing this? (this article)
2. Why have a job description for our elected representatives? (second article - 2 minute read)
3. What are the elements of a job description? (third article - 5 minute read)
4. What are some associated questions we need to think about? (fourth article – 3.5 minute read)

CAPaD wants a democratic Australia — where citizens trust their elected representatives, hold them accountable, engage in decision making, and sustain the public good. We do this by promoting individual and community well-being and the common good in a healthy environment by advancing education to inspire people to participate in strengthening democracy.

To this end, we seek to improve the performance and accountability of our representatives as well as help build understanding, participation and trust in the political system by helping voters and candidates better understand the role of elected representatives and for voters and candidates to experience how to assess election candidates on their qualities and skills for the job of a member of parliament (MPs).

A second brief point to clear up before diving into the job description, is accountability. We use the term a lot in politics and a job description is one means of ensuring our MPs are accountable to us. So, what is accountability?

A brief working definition is that a representative:

- is answerable to the community who elects them,
- takes responsibility for the decisions and actions they take on behalf of the community,
- the community is able to reward and sanction the representative for their decisions and actions.

An accountability mechanism is one where the community can monitor what their representative is doing and then has the means to call the representative to report and explain to the community what they have done and why. A later phase of our project will be to build such a mechanism.

So why have a job description for our elected representatives?

The reasoning is given in the second article.

However, in practical terms, is that we want to hold candidate forums for the upcoming federal election and the job description will be the foundation we build questions for candidates on.