Deliberative Democracy Theory and Practice: Crossing the Divide

Report from a Workshop of Deliberative Democracy Researchers and Practitioners, held at the University of Canberra, Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, 6 March 2015

Report prepared by Wendy Russell with assistance from Lucy Parry

This workshop represented a step in an ongoing conversation about deliberative democracy in Australia. This report provides a summary of the workshop and helps us to track this conversation as it moves forward to the next step. More information can be found through the Deliberative Democracy Workshop LinkedIn group or the Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance at the University of Canberra.
Executive Summary

This invitation-only national workshop was hosted by The Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance (CDDGG), a centre within the Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA) at the University of Canberra. It brought together individuals working actively in the field of deliberative democracy from across the theory-practice spectrum to share their experiences and insights from research and practice; to explore specific issues about the design, implementation, evaluation and embedding of deliberative processes and systems; and to consider how to move deliberative democracy forward in Australia.

The one-day workshop was attended by 28 participants from across Australia, including six researchers, eight practitioners, seven identifying as researchers and practitioners, and seven representing organisations using deliberative processes (these are approximate, as some participants identified across these categories).

Research and practice developments

As a theory, deliberative democracy emerged in the 1980s with a focus on public reasoning, but broadened to consider communicative processes (discourse) in the wider public sphere in the 90s. The 2000s saw an empirical turn with experiments in small-scale deliberation – citizens’ juries and other ‘mini-publics’. Recent years have seen a shift back to a more macro focus on deliberative systems. During this time, deliberative democracy has shifted from a marginal concern to a mainstream idea in political science and policy studies. Deliberative democracy (DD) now represents a diverse and complex ‘ecosystem’, with growing connectivity between deliberative communities, including globally. The field is enriched by interactions between scholars and practitioners.

In practice, deliberative democracy is no longer a fringe approach and there is strong interest from a growing number of politicians at all levels of government in Australia and from other decision makers in a variety of sectors. Some adopters have seen electoral success, which has increased the influence of the approach. DD provides decision makers with scope to act by improving trust in decisions. It has resolved some difficult, long-term political problems, such as budget reforms and changes to alcohol laws. There is scope to innovate, and deliberative methods are being constantly improved, including in representativeness and in tailoring processes to decision making contexts.

Recent deliberative processes/organisations showcased at the workshop include:

- **South Australia Better Together**
  This broad-ranging agenda, spearheaded by Premier Jay Weatherill, has included a range of demonstration projects, including citizens’ juries (safe and vibrant nightlife, cyclists and motorists sharing the road), crowd-sourcing (Fund my Idea), Country Cabinets and an open data initiative. It is gradually becoming embedded in SA government and is changing the way they do business.

- **new Democracy Foundation**
  This independent, non-partisan research foundation, set up in 2005, identifies, designs and profiles democratic innovations, seeking to create a shift in Australian politics from
adversarial to deliberative approaches. They have contributed to a range of projects at local, State and Federal level, several of which were discussed in detail at the workshop.

- City of Melbourne’s Peoples’ Panel  
  A champion of deliberative engagement, the City of Melbourne ran a participatory budgeting process in 2014 to generate a new ten-year plan for the city. The process involved a citizens’ panel (a mini-public) but also broader deliberative processes to get internal staff and councillors on board and to engage and gather input from the wider community. Some challenges and lessons were discussed.

- Mosaic Lab, Victoria  
  This collaboration between well-known community engagement practitioners in Melbourne reported back on a diverse range of projects and the lessons to emerge. These included the importance of remit, tailoring recruitment approaches to purpose, and the challenges of providing accurate information and of integrating wider community engagement with micro-deliberation.

- Deliberative Democracy in Greater Geraldton
  This initiative, led by Prof. Janette Hartz-Karp of Curtin University, involved a range of initiatives that transformed community consultation in Geraldton. The approach focused on wicked social and environmental problems and developed a model for collaborative governance using deliberative methods including deliberative polls, community-based deliberative conversations and participatory budgeting.

**Key insights**

- There is no simple theorist-practitioner divide in Deliberative Democracy (DD). There is considerable cross-over and many sub-categories (e.g. empirical researcher, ‘user’, designer, champion). There are cultural, communication and practical differences and challenges within this complex community that need ongoing work to bridge them.

- DD is not a new idea; it’s becoming mainstream, with associated opportunities and challenges. In this context, DD needs strong advocates, but also commentators and researchers to study it critically. We need to understand the triumphs and the challenges.

- DD has the potential to restore trust in political decision-making. It requires a willingness of decision-makers to share power. DD is not a panacea but a pathway to a richer democracy.

- DD can reveal to citizens the complexity of political decision-making; this increases the political legitimacy of DD. Integration into complex decision-making settings remains challenging, but deliberative processes can be used at different points in decision-making cycles and can play multiple roles – in decision-making, visioning, dialogue and conflict transformation.

- Integrating broad community engagement with micro-deliberation—funnelling from broad (e.g. online engagement) to deep (e.g. citizens’ juries) – is a critical challenge.
• Random selection is not the be-all and end-all of recruitment for DD processes; a range of approaches is available to increase inclusiveness in different contexts. Including minority groups is challenging but important when they bring new perspectives to the issue at hand.

• Consensus can be valuable but is not the holy grail of DD and can be nuanced.

• Online tools are useful to support and complement DD but are not a substitute for face-to-face deliberation.

• Evaluating success is critical and challenging as criteria may emerge during the process and some measures, e.g. of capacity, extend across deliberative systems and over time, (not just single events). Evaluation should take account of connections and comparisons with other arenas including representative politics and the public sphere.

**Key strategies**

• Make sure you have a clear remit and as high a level of authority and influence as feasible within the constraints of the context.

• Find ways to bring politicians, bureaucrats, stakeholders and the wider community along on the journey. This can be through including them in deliberation, providing perspectives to inform the deliberative process, or in oversight of the process.

• Look for opportunities to innovate, to consolidate DD in more stable long-standing forms, and to make existing forums more deliberative.

• Look to wicked problems as an opportunity for DD to lead to real changes, but use DD for more routine problems as well.

• Find ways for citizens to set the DD agenda (rare to date).

• Form new relationships with the media to help with ‘scaling up’ and connecting with the broader community.

• In making the case for DD, point out both idealistic/normative (re democracy) and practical/instrumental reasons (re solving problems) for adopting it; these are not mutually exclusive.

• Conduct research/trials on a) minority group deliberation, b) online deliberation, c) deliberation just with politicians.

• Build structures to support and develop DD such as a DD hub, a ‘buddy’ system to match researchers and practitioners, and a DD scholarship.

• Consider ways to teach deliberation in schools, and develop pilot approaches to test these.
Introduction and background

This workshop was hosted by The Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance (CDDGG), a centre within the Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA) at the University of Canberra. It was an invitation-only workshop for researchers and practitioners working actively in the field of deliberative democracy. It sought to bring individuals from across the theory-practice spectrum to share their experiences of developments in deliberative democracy research and practice, and to share insights and lessons about deliberative democracy in Australia and how to move it forward.

The aims of the workshop were:

- To provide those active in the field with an opportunity to meet, share, and develop ongoing links
- To share recent theoretical developments in deliberative democracy
- To share the triumphs and challenges of recent deliberative processes held in Australia
- To explore specific issues relating to the practice of deliberative democracy, the application of theory in deliberative processes, and issues associated with the design, implementation, evaluation and embedding of deliberative processes and systems
- To further the development of deliberative democracy

The workshop followed a similar workshop entitled Deliberative Democracy: Connecting Research and Practice, held in Sydney in February 2011 and organised by Professor Lyn Carson from the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy at the University of Western Sydney, which many of the same participants attended.

The Crossing the Divide workshop was initiated and facilitated by Wendy Russell (Double Arrow Consulting, Associate of CDDGG) and organised by Wendy Russell, Selen Ercan (IGPA), Juliana Rocha (IGPA) and Nicole Curato (IGPA). We would like to thank Keith Greaves, from Chit Chat in Melbourne, for his assistance with the design and co-facilitation, other IGPA staff for their assistance in organising the workshop and on the day, and all participants for their energy and enthusiasm.

More information about workshop attendees, format and program can be found in Appendix A.
Developments in the theory and practice of deliberative democracy

Research developments – Carolyn Hendriks

Dr Carolyn Hendriks is Senior Lecturer at the Crawford School of Economics and Government – the Australian National University’s graduate public policy school. She has a PhD in Political Science from ANU and has spent 15 years as a researcher of deliberative democracy in consulting and academic environments in Australia and Europe. She is an associate of the Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance (CDDGG) and is on the research committee of the New Democracy Foundation.

Carolyn began her overview of central issues and developments in deliberative democracy scholarship with a description of the rich diversity of ‘public deliberation’. Many different kinds of actors have been attracted to the topic, for different reasons: practitioners, citizens, NGOs, social movements/change agents, governments, politicians, businesses, researchers (normative theorists through to empirical researchers) and many more. Most are interested in a mix of things, including making deliberation happen and improving practice, promoting and funding change, connecting with constituents, legitimising decisions, exploring normative/theoretical questions, and researching empirical questions.

It is clear that deliberative democracy is a much more complex ecosystem than the classic practitioner-theorist divide suggests. There is growing connectivity between different ‘deliberative communities’ (particularly in Australia) but much more could be done. Hence the importance of workshops like this one and groups like the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (ncdd.org; US).

Deliberative democracy scholarship has come a long way. Once a marginal interest in political theory, today the topic represents a dominant idea in contemporary democratic thought, and a popular topic in key journals in political theory, political science and policy studies. In mid-February 2015, the CDDGG hosted its first Summer School, bringing together over 30 scholars working in the field. This is just one example of the many gatherings worldwide for those interested in the broad field of public deliberation.

A number of themes have remained central to deliberative democracy theory, including:

- Deliberation as a form of face-to-face communication: early Habermas (communicative action)

- Deliberative democracy as a means to secure democratic legitimacy: later Habermas (Between Facts and Norms): collective decisions are considered legitimate to the extent that they have included and considered the perspectives of affected publics; Deliberative democracy as a radical transformative project, an alternative to aggregative forms of democracy

- Understanding deliberation in either micro or macro terms:
  1. Micro deliberation: structured deliberative forums, small number of participants
  2. Macro deliberation: unstructured, open, discursive even contestatory forms of communication in social movements and the broader public sphere (later Habermas); less academic interest in ‘macro’ than ‘micro’.

- public deliberation in multiple spaces: ‘the deliberative system’ (which considers both the micro and macro dimensions)
Deliberative Democracy emerged in the 1980s with a strong emphasis on public reasoning. It took a discursive turn in the 1990s, broadening to consider deliberation as more than rational argumentation - it can be discursive and even contestatory. An empirical turn in the 2000s saw new methods established to create deliberative conditions and demonstrate that citizens can deliberate when given the opportunity. The role of power and politics in and around deliberative processes was explored, including the question of how deliberative innovations could get a ‘better grip’.

In the mid-to-late 2000s began a systemic turn, signalling a new generation of deliberative scholarship looking beyond discrete forums towards a broader appreciation of the various sites, spaces and actors that contribute to public deliberation. This is increasingly referred to as the ‘deliberative systems approach’, in which public deliberation is seen as something that occurs within a broad system composed of multiple, differentiated, yet interconnected, spaces, from highly structured forums to loose informal social gatherings and public interactions online. Some of these sites are more deliberative than others; some occur within the state, others outside; some sites are on-going or established political institutions; others are short-term measures or one-off innovations. Few, if any, entail all the ideal aspects of democratic deliberation in isolation, but, ideally, as a collective they foster inclusive and reflective discussion on matters of common concern.

Studying these systems empirically is very challenging, but an example comes from John Boswell, who studied the obesity debate in Australia and how it developed and crossed-over between political spaces, the media and civil society, and particularly whether ideas emerging from deliberation in some of these spaces influenced the debate in others.

Recent issues engaging deliberative democracy scholars include assessing the quality of deliberation; the role of power and self-interest; cultural dimensions of deliberation (is it tied to the liberal west?); deliberative democracy as a market (the role of consultants) and as a social movement; and the promise and problems of ‘mini-publics’ (eg citizen juries). Other issues include how to map and study deliberative systems, the relationship between deliberative governance and other modes of governing e.g. elite institutions, network governance, community development, how to better embed public deliberation in existing political settings, and applications of deliberative democracy to global issues.

Some cutting edge issues for deliberative democracy include the role of non-verbal communication in deliberation e.g. silence and body language; boundaries of deliberation particularly in deliberative systems and in relation to power and self-interest; and deliberative inequalities (who is excluded? Children, disabled, ethnic groups, animals?). Methodological debates about how best to study deliberation empirically (quantitatively and qualitatively) are ongoing. There are also links with other fields including social capital, public relations, political marketing, business ethics, linguistics and psychology.

Practitioner perspectives are crucial and provide a range of insights. These include what works, when and how (‘staging and setting’ deliberation, the role of facilitators); the policy and political dimensions of deliberation and how to navigate them (e.g. leadership and ‘deliberative entrepreneurship’); and insights about deliberators (recruitment, behaviour, capacity). Practitioners are also important in developing and learning about deliberative innovations (eg the possibilities and pitfalls of online deliberation); identifying research questions and forming links to related ‘communities of practice’ eg conflict resolution, participatory practice (IAP2), community development and post-crises management.
Practice developments – Iain Walker

Iain Walker is Executive Director of the new Democracy Foundation (nDF). He has a Masters in Public Policy from the University of Sydney and a Bachelor of Business from UTS. His career has spanned commercial roles in professional sport and IT.

Iain brought two challenging ideas to the group. His first point was that ‘we are beyond the purists’. When nDF was first set up, there was a realisation that making the case for deliberative democracy would be challenging, because it required recognition that the political status quo needs changing. There was the possibility that no-one would be interested, that nobody would want to innovate in this field. Iain’s experience of talking to elected representatives is that they are indeed not interested in the concept in their first term, when the electoral democratic system seems rosy. However, after several years, the conversation changes, the limitations of power become apparent, the limits of political decision making are magnified, and they start to be interested in new approaches. Four years ago, politicians had little interest in talking about deliberative democracy; now, nDF receives 6-8 calls from governments and elected representatives each week.

The idea that politicians don’t want to change is a misconception. They see that for most policy issues, virtually all courses of action are closed to them, because of criticism ‘out there’. Iain gave the example of alcohol reform (deliberative processes have been held in NSW and SA on ‘safe and vibrant nightlife’): “If you increase regulation of alcohol, you are criticised as ‘the nanny state’ or ‘the fun police’. If you don’t do anything, you aren’t protecting our kids, you’re ‘asleep at the wheel’ and you are equally criticised. Even if there is a rigorous process of policy development, involving independent experts, there will be suspicion that the alcohol industry was behind it; there is so little trust.”

Politicians now see trust as the number one commodity that will give them scope to act. Deliberative processes build trust. They provide circumstances where an average voter, who doesn’t have the time to read in depth about a policy issue, will see a process that involved ‘people like me’ making the decision, and trust it. The representativeness of deliberative processes is not perfect, but current approaches, involving stratified random sampling, are giving results that are much better than the alternative. There are groups who are being represented in these processes that are usually excluded from such discussions, such as those with disabilities and ethnic groups. This is in contrast to most situations when government think they have ‘asked the community’, when in fact they have only spoken to community groups that yell at them. You have to hear from these groups, but the community and community groups are two different things. Are you hearing from both, or only from those with ‘pester power’?

The second point was that there is scope to innovate. There is much to learn from what is being done; a lot of what is being done is new and pushing the edges. nDF is now seen, including by premiers and ministers, as an organisation that can help to solve problems; difficult political problems. This is giving great scope for more projects and innovation. nDF is not going in with a ‘cookie-cutter’ approach; they are learning lessons with each new project and applying these to the next.

As an example, nDF sponsored a research process by researchers at UTS looking at the ‘safe and vibrant nightlife’ deliberation in Sydney from the perspective of activist groups involved. Two out of the eleven groups were unhappy with the process, and commented about the
element of luck involved in bringing a jury together and providing them with information and resources for deliberation. They wondered how you know if you’ll get ‘the right people’, will adequately draw on the range of perspectives and experiences in the community.

Drawing on this issue, in designing the process for a deliberation currently running in SA, nDF asked some of the most ‘animated’ stakeholders: “who would need to speak with the citizen panel for you to trust the process?”. They came up with a shortlist of 5 speakers and nDF arranged to get them in front of the panel, to provide a neutral starting point. Despite potential resistance from their government clients, nDF had confidence that they could include these speakers, because they had sign-off at the outset to give them control of the process. The stakeholders are now advocates for the process, as a result of this scope to act.

Questions and discussion
There were questions and discussion following the presentations. Someone asked about scaling up, including to federal level. Iain commented that this was very much the aspiration of nDF. They started at local government levels, because citizens understand the idea applied to local councils, then hoped to move on to higher levels, eg parliamentary committees, ministers, a premier’s office. They effectively achieved this in about 3 years. Some they have worked with have had electoral success, and this has increased the influence of nDF, so that they are now talking to federal government. However, they need to prove the value of the approach in a range of tough environments, and wait for government to approach them. nDF will only take on projects where there is potential for decision impact.

Another question was about whether the processes had led to more effective policies and better outcomes. There are now good examples of this, including deliberative processes that resolved 10 year budgetary issues for local governments, and very difficult reforms of alcohol laws undertaken in two states following deliberative processes.

A comment was made that very few governments, at any level, consider the effectiveness of their decisions over time, and that there is some inconsistency in the high standards that deliberative processes are held to in relation to sustainable or improved policy, standards which are not necessarily applied to assessing non-deliberative settings. This goes also for deliberative methods such as mini-publics (citizens juries etc), which are scrutinised far more than the many enquiries, stakeholder forums, advisory committees and boards that provide advice to policy makers. Moreover, it is the deliberative democracy community itself that holds these high standards and is sometimes its own worst critic. This sometimes makes life hard for us, and is something we need to keep in mind. However, the value of critique and critical thinking was emphasised.

Another comment was made that a focus on political decision making is important. Deliberative systems expand the focus to other discursive processes in society, but influencing public policy decisions – reaching that apparently impenetrable political space by leveraging citizen input – remains a key mission. As well as the issue of deliberativeness of a process, the question of whether its role is advisory or involves devolution of power to citizens is important. Another comment was that decision making is often considered in a simplistic way and needs to be understood in its complexity, including early stages of opinion formation and agenda setting. The group was also reminded that public decision
making is not only made by governments, and an example of a deliberation influencing policy of an energy company was put forward.

Some other processes potentially related to deliberation were discussed. These include design and co-production, which have a focus on designing outcomes together with the people who will be most affected by them. There seems to be considerable overlap, but a question about whether they have the same level of impact on political decision-making. One person’s experience suggested that the design work precedes the ultimate decision-making, but is important in reaching that point.

One person commented that deliberation is just one form of citizen engagement; another suggested that the change in the last five years has been that deliberation is becoming embedded in citizen engagement and most engagements now have a deliberative aspect (described as ‘choice work’). Another comment took issue with deliberative democracy being regarded as just another tool for public policy, rather than as a transformative, radical, democratic project, but it was noted that deliberative democracy has many different meanings.
Showcase of deliberative processes

SA Better Together


In this presentation, Emily Jenke, community engagement specialist and facilitator, interviewed Gail Fairlamb, Director of Strategic Engagement and Communications, South Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Matt Ryan, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Premier of South Australia. The focus was on the Better Together agenda as a whole – where it’s come from, how the initiatives fit together systemically, and some ongoing challenges – followed by a taste of the range of projects.

Matt talked about the intentions of the SA premier, who has said he is ‘renovating democracy in SA’. The shift is from an ‘announce and defend’ approach to community engagement to ‘debate and decide’. The premier’s thinking was influenced heavily by a particular book: Coming to Public Judgement\(^1\) by Daniel Yankelovich.

There are a number of stages involved in going from public opinion (vox pop) to a really considered judgement. The easy bit is the rational side, eg how the numbers stack up. The difficult thing, particularly for politicians to deal with, is the value conflicts. The real innovation in the SA citizens’ juries is the unlocking of compartmentalised thinking that can happen in communities, and helping politicians to navigate that. For the premier, it’s about involving people in working out what the questions should be and how they should be framed, as well as designing the solutions.

There are pockets throughout the public sector in SA where these approaches are starting to spring up. The aim is to elevate that to a higher standard and to a coherent narrative across the whole of government. The belief driving the work is that bringing communities into decision-making, using a suite of methods, leads to better policies, programs and services, brings innovation and reduces waste. It’s also pitched as a risk management strategy (for the unconvinced), and there are efforts to demonstrate productivity gains through, for example, participatory budgeting and to gain other measures of impact.

Gail described the range of initiatives across three broad areas. The first is ‘showing by doing’ (demonstration projects), for example:

- Country Cabinets – 100 senior political decision makers are taken out into the regions for a series of events that bring them into conversation with local people
- Fund My Idea – crowd-sourcing grant project where communities make suggestions about what they would like to see funds allocated to
- Go Chat – call-in sessions for communities to speak with people designing services
- Schools as Hubs – a scheme to share school facilities with communities
- Open data – to devolve decisions involving data out to communities
- Citizens Juries – highly deliberative mini-public processes


11
Another area is capacity building within the public service, eg Learn and Read training program, and consultancy advice and support across the government, delivered in a holistic way. The third area is about Innovation through Participation, which involves trialling some very new things for government. SA Better Together is about making the community engagement process better, from start to finish, but this has led to the realisation that the underlying system needs to be re-engineered in transformative ways, and the next lot of work is looking at how that can happen.

Deliberative mini-publics (citizens’ juries) have been adopted as a tool to resolve some policy dilemmas in SA. The Premier has a philosophical view of democracy and its importance but also a very practical desire for better and more sustainable policy. Recent cases of federal and state policy being dismantled highlights the impacts and the electoral cost and this provides considerable motivation to get it right. The Premier started thinking about this ten years ago. Citizen juries were a way to bring this to the fore in SA and demonstrate to political colleagues how this process could work to involve ordinary citizens in decisions that affect their lives and to share some power. In this model, government is about an ongoing discussion with people about what they want to see happening in their community, not just going to the ballot box every three years.

As well as being generally impressed with how seriously jurors take to the process and their willingness to listen to other ideas, the Premier often shares an anecdote about a comment from a juror. He said he wanted to be involved, ‘to show my son that politics can work’. In contrast to growing distrust, seeing that people still have an appetite for politics to work provides a strong motivation to make it work.

A citizens’ jury was held last year on motorists and cyclists sharing the road, tailored to the SA context. The process was very successful, with 18 of the 21 recommendations already adopted. Success factors included:

• The involvement of the Premier throughout (particularly in giving the jury its mandate)

• Bringing the bureaucrats along on the journey (buy-in from those who will give life to the recommendations and no surprises for them); getting bureaucrats and stakeholders (reference group) involved in shepherding the process without influencing the jury (this is an art!)

• Amplifying the process out to the wider community to bring them along too (social media strategies: tweetathon, blog; online citizen group; local newspaper on board)

• Great facilitation

Challenges include moving from public opinion to public judgement, and how to do this at scale. The citizen jury processes are micro deliberative processes. Some other projects, eg Fund my Community are larger scale and highly devolved, but where do they fit on the deliberative spectrum? And how can online processes be made more deliberative (raising requirements of people giving input, analytics)? There is a tension between participation (ease) and deliberation that is relevant.
new Democracy Foundation


Iain Walker presented his showcase of new Democracy Foundation work by focusing on two practical examples around influence and authority: one a project associated with an energy inquiry in NSW in 2012, the other about public infrastructure in Sydney in 2014.

In 2012, a Liberal party MP who chairs the Public Accounts Committee, Jonathon O’Dea, approached nDF. He was conducting an inquiry into futures and preferences for renewable energy generation. This inquiry could have been a ‘political hospital pass’, with low levels of trust, given that even if the inquiry drew on all the facts, one set of outcomes could look like pre-cut Liberal policy, another set of outcomes could look like pandering to the wealthy North Shore electorate who don’t much care about energy prices. The conversation turned to authority, and the need for a citizen process to influence a decision, to not just be a token process that barely influences the government’s final policy response. The politician responded with concern about committing to recommendations that might come from the process, given the constraints of his position. So the conversation became one of “What can you do?”. The responses included compelling a government response within 90 days and compelling debate within Parliament”. So, it was agreed that this would be the commitment to the 50-person citizen panel.

This was actually a great level of authority to have and can potentially connect with political self-interest. When politicians look at deliberative approaches, some love them, but there is often a level of scepticism. In this case, several politicians involved in the inquiry observed one of the citizens’ juries in Tamworth. In a discussion of energy prices, a participant suggested that a fair pricing system would see residents’ first 5 kilowatt hours costing 5c and the 20th kilowatt hour costing $3. A labor MP turned to his Liberal compatriot and said, “You have fun with that! I can see the headlines: Power prices up 1000%!”. The response was: “It’s not us saying it, it’s them”. With authority, they were able to broaden the debate.

Citizens were invited to participate on the basis that the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee would use what they said to compel a government response and a debate in Parliament. This resulted in a response rate a bit greater than 10%. Since then, there has been fundamental energy pricing deregulation in NSW, a politically very complex area.

That’s the first example of where devolving authority was in the government’s interest.

The second example relates to a deliberative process held in 2014, associated with a small federal project called the Moorebank Intermodal Authority (MIA). Lucy Cole-Edelstein, from Straight Talk, was also involved. The project involved a new rail line to take freight (1.2 million freight containers per year) from Port Botany to a 24 hr freight terminal in western Sydney, for onward transport by truck. The MIA approached nDF concerned that the community was very unhappy about the project, based on discussions about the proposal to put a terminal in. The first question nDF asked was, “Why are you asking them what they think about putting a terminal in?” given that it was pretty clear that that decision had already been made.

When asked what could actually be changed at this point, the MIA said that they had about $1 million to spend on mitigation measures, advertising or anything that would improve public opinion of the project, and had already hired a PR company to produce some advertising. nDF suggested that they devolve the million dollars to a jury of citizens, to
answer a different question: “How can I live with this terminal being built in my area?” Communications changed to acknowledging that the terminal was going to be built, and that it would have impacts, and the citizens were asked what could be done to mitigate them. The authority the citizens had was how to spend the pot of $1 million.

Of the three recommendations the citizens made, the MIA dislikes one of them. However, another relates to the promise of jobs, which the citizens were cynical about, and is a proposal that anyone in the vicinity of the terminal can apply and receive a TAFE scholarship. The response of the CEO was that all the money paid to PR firms hadn’t come up with something that good. The topic is still red hot (it was on Alan Jones radio show again this morning), but there was an honest conversation with people in the community, and some benefits are likely to come from it.

In all projects, nDF has to be clear about the authority the process can get, to get as much as possible, and to demonstrate the value of having that on the table. This is improving as nDF’s track record improves.
Melbourne City People’s Panel

Desley Renton, Community Engagement Manager, City of Melbourne, began by talking about the general approach to community engagement at the City of Melbourne. Engagement may be initiated in the City in a number of ways. A large engagement exercise is undertaken at the commencement of a 4 year cycle and then much of the engagement is driven by Council plan and budget actions. The CE team works with the relevant teams to both drive and respond to engagement requirements.

In 2013, The Chief Financial Officer had been doing a lot of thinking about planning and there was a push for longer-term planning than the usual four-year and annual plans – a 10 year financial plan. While City of Melbourne is currently in a good financial position, projections based on current planning and priorities, particularly environmental standards and infrastructure, suggested that there would be a $900 million shortfall in ten years’ time. The question was, how can we best engage on that?

It created a great opportunity for a participatory budgeting process – a new approach for the City of Melbourne. Planning started 18 months before the process began, with the engagement team needing to bring the bureaucrats along on the journey. There was a deliberation behind the deliberation, with lots of time spent involving the politicians and building unanimous support. The team conducted research on participatory budgeting, with examples from South America, the US, Europe and Australia. The politicians called in their own experts (e.g. statisticians) to critique the proposal; they consulted with new Democracy; they tested it with their reference groups. There was a lot of debate within the house about the proposal, much more than usual for community engagement initiatives, and it required extensive conversation and consultation. This was because $4 billion dollars was at stake, but also because it impacted every single branch, division and department.

What was agreed upon, as a result of this internal process, was a participatory budgeting exercise, but different from what you might see elsewhere. There was a citizens jury at the heart, but surrounded by ‘concentric rings of engagement’. The process sought to capture as many voices as possible, including children, visitors, students etc, feeding in to the jury. The process has been internally and externally evaluated and valuable lessons were learnt, which Desley is happy to share. Desley then showed a video summarising the process:

Link: http://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/10yearplan (scroll down - the top video)

Before beginning her presentation, Nicole shared some stories about the panel. There was a woman on the panel who had breast cancer and was going through treatment, but only missed one session because of chemo. Another member texted in his ideas from the labour ward as his wife had a baby. There were people who came back from their holidays for the day to attend panel sessions. The panel was just amazing!
Nicole Hunter, from MosaicLab, represented her colleagues Kimbra White and Keith Greaves. They have been undertaking a number of deliberative processes through various and varied projects over the last few years. A sample of these projects is highlighted below, followed by the lessons and insights these practitioners drew.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bayside City Council</td>
<td><strong>Child Care Futures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 person panel meeting over 5 evenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child Care Futures - a decision on whether council would remain in the business of child care or close its two centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyndham City Council</td>
<td><strong>Learning Community Strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44 members - meeting over 4 evenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Community Strategy - development of a strategy covering all learning providers in the City about how to be a learning community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington Peninsula Shire</td>
<td><strong>Waste Strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>120 person assembly meet over two evening sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To advise the council on “How can council manage the disposal of its landfill waste (all those items that can not be recycled) in the medium term?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Melbourne</td>
<td><strong>Ten Year Financial Plan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Democracy Foundation and City of Melbourne worked together on the design of the broad approach to the process and in undertaking the recruitment for this project. We were the facilitators only, the other projects we were the process advisors as well as the facilitators. 43 member people’s panel meeting over 6.5 full days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Coast Shire</td>
<td><strong>Dogs on Beaches</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This was a community in outrage at having been banned from walking dogs on all Inverloch beaches between 8 am and 8pm from December to March last summer. This was a project that aimed to move from outrage to deliberation; so following an angry public meeting, we then held three ‘collaborative meetings’ for people representing every interest to come together, to put down their activism and collaborate on a set of recommendations to council for sharing the beach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson 1: Remit**

*The clearer the remit - the easier it is to work with the group*

The power of choosing a great question for the deliberation is key to making the whole process run effectively. Having a clear remit - like “Do we stay in the business of childcare or not?” or “How can dogs, people and birds safely share the beach?” - is far easier to work with than a statement like “How can we remain one of the most livable cities in the world while addressing our future financial challenges?” This remit did not state a core issue of there being a $900M hole in the budget over 10 years if the current level of services are maintained and a couple of major projects implemented. It took most panel members at
least 2 meetings to understand the full implications of the financial position being presented to them and their real task of reducing spending or finding increased revenue.

**Lesson 2: Recruitment**

*Recruitment needs to match the purpose: New or moderate level of interest, different from when people are outraged. Be aware of topic bias in recruitment – people will come along if the topic interests them – this can be positive and/or negative*

A couple of things have worked really well in MosaicLab projects:

- nDF getting the right number of young people for the Ten Year Financial Plan. Given the very young demographic of the area this was done through contacts at Melbourne University and 50% business people
- Using a different model for recruitment for the Wyndham project - to have any chance of success in implementing the findings Council needed to involve people from every sector of learning in Wyndham - schools, TAFE, child care, libraries, universities, private providers, youth programs and almost every department in council as it was a strategy for the community, not just the council. So there was a process of finding 1-2 people to represent not only every type of organisation but also every user group: a school teacher, a parent and a young person.

**Lesson 3: Information needs**

- *Insist on presenters being willing to take advice on their presentations - content, process format and length; consider screening them*
- *Get the right balance between information provided by client vs information initiated by participants*
- *Thinking up different ways to present information to participants - as these processes are always so information dense*

These processes call upon organisations to provide a lot of in-depth information. Some of the challenges we have faced are:

- Off topic speakers at Wyndham
- Speakers with far too much to cover e.g. 160 powerpoint slides in 20 minutes!
- Last minute changes to speakers
- So much information it can be overwhelming for participants

**Lesson 4: Data Flow**

*To properly honour wider engagement work, it needs to be more integrated into the entire engagement process with a built in feedback mechanism to the wider community*

Often there is a desire to hold a wider engagement process leading in to a deliberative process. In the Ten year Financial Plan project, the City of Melbourne designed a wide-ranging lead-in process with pop up caravans, open public workshops, small discussion groups and an online budget tool. This created a lot of interest in the project and a lot of data.

However, we found it difficult to integrate the results of the wider engagement into the panel process. Panel members were provided a large document at the end of panel session
3 and just a short time allocation in session 4 to attempt to share and understand the results. This was late in the process because the wider engagement was not completed prior to the commencement of the panel and it just became one data input amongst many.

**Lesson 5: Report Writing & Presenting Findings**

*Report writing needs to develop alongside the dialogue. Get participants to present the findings to decision makers.*

Report writing is key to a strong deliberative process. The power of the ‘words on the page’ being those of the group are transformative in terms of ownership and commitment to the final product. We found some difficulties in getting the report written in the time we had and are investigating processes that will assist with ‘reporting as we go’ – developing and refining a report as the dialogue progresses.

Enabling the deliberative group to present their findings to the decision makers is another key empowering step. Planning for this as part of the process adds weight and significance to the process.

**Lesson 6: Living With It!**

*Ask people if they can ‘live with it’.*

Getting to decisions with a large group of people can always be tricky even when lots of time has been dedicated to dialogue. The language of “living with” a decision versus “agreeing with” a decision we found as key to shifting people forward to resolution. Using a spectrum to help people identify where they stand on an issue was also useful to understand the nuance of disagreement.

**Lesson 7: Using Outrage to Fuel Deliberation**

*Moving from Outrage to the Sweet Spot of deliberation is possible.*

Many of our projects have begun when the problem has already ‘exploded’ and people are outraged at decisions made or unmade; solutions being offered that don’t consider the whole issue; decisions made by untrustworthy decision makers; or simply outraged that the process is seen as unfair. When faced with these situations we have found that it is possible to move people to deliberation once the outrage is properly heard and empowerment of these individuals in the deliberation design has helped give confidence in a process. We believe there is more in the space of outrage management that can inform deliberation.
**Geraldton DD**

Prof Janette Hartz-Karp from Curtin University discussed her work with the City of Greater Geraldton and some recent international projects including in Canada and India – all on diverse sustainability issues. These have shown that deliberative democracy is not only applicable to the west, but also to developing countries. Moreover, they have shown that deliberative democracy can provide an effective pathway to developing and implementing more sustainable solutions to tough problems.

As background - surveys conducted throughout the western world show significantly declining trust in government, at all levels. This erodes democracy, is a major obstacle to government implementing policies and plans, and prevents build-up of social capital. At the same time, in the area of environmental sustainability, there are major crises that we may not be able to turn around, and ‘we’re currently sitting back, watching as ‘Rome burns’.

We’re faced with a myriad of wicked problems, but we don’t trust government to resolve them, and to date, governments have not been able to come to grips with them, let alone effective resolution. Deliberative democracy as a pathway towards greater efficacy, is worthwhile testing.

After being involved in an important regional planning deliberation process which Janette designed and facilitated in the south west of WA, as part of a proposed ARC Grant, the new CEO of Geraldton offered CUSP $100 000 a year to work in Geraldton on deliberative democracy and sustainability (an example of indirect impact!). The work is exciting because it represents a different trajectory. Geraldton had been fairly traditional in its community consultation – too little, too late, with government’s reliance on ‘power over’, which, as is often the case, resulted in a vicious cycle of more disaffection with government and increasingly less trust in them. Janette’s approach, like Iain’s, is that she won’t work with policy/decision-makers unless they are willing to share power to the extent feasible, making this commitment clear to the public. In her view, we need governance involving ‘power with’ the people. However, this isn’t feasible if you are only listening to the same people, often ‘squeaky wheels’ and/or those who have a vested or special interest in the particular issue. This is where public deliberation comes in: getting diverse voices into the discourse, who have time to understand the different viewpoints including the science and data, to surface assumptions, and then to try to bridge gaps to find ways forward, rather than simply arguing with each other. This is taking a participatory sustainability or a deliberative democracy approach.

Janette showed a scheme of the deliberative process in Geraldton (the complexity of it eliciting some laughter)

The project started with the issues concerning people and government, in particular, the big wicked problems hitting the region and the people. Geraldton, which is north of Perth, is in decline. Traditional industries such as fishing and agriculture are in decline and climate change has had a big impact. Mining companies have proliferated with fly-in fly-out work forces. The kids mostly leave to study and later live in Perth, and community is being lost.

The first step was to devise a new form of collaborative governance, which could oversee and champion the principles of shared, deliberative governance. An alliance governance group was formed. It looked great; it had several randomly sampled citizens on it, with demographic and interest groups well represented, including, NESB and Indigenous people,
industry, community, environmental groups, and various other stakeholder representatives. But after a year, when this group realised that didn’t have enough power to directly influence decisions, they started to leave. Without power sharing, it was just an ‘add-on’. So instead, there was a shift to a more continuously rolling approach of ‘power with’, where with each wicked problem that faced the City-Region, the extent to which power could be shared with the people, and how this could best happen, would be agreed and if power sharing was feasible, a process would be implemented.

The first issues addressed were those of the fly-in fly-out mining workforce, and its impacts on Geraldton, and Greater Geraldton’s carbon footprint (this was the time of the new federal carbon tax legislation). A deliberative poll was carried out which showed surprising results. The Councillors thought they were both non issues for the people. However the survey results showed the citizens wanted to find ways to reduce fly-in fly-out, and they wanted their City Region to become carbon neutral. These views were further reinforced following the one day deliberation where all viewpoints on both issues were listened to and considered. The survey prior to the deliberation showed that the deliberation participants reflected the views of the broader population and the survey after deliberation showed that participants felt even more strongly about those issues. The prior inaction by the Council on those two issues was called into question. (Notably, Councillors had been sure their inaction reflected the will of the people.) This led to further deliberations with energy suppliers, providers, experts, potential funders, industry groups and other interest groups, who decided together to submit to the Federal government a joint Plan for alternative energy and carbon neutrality. This Plan was supported by the Federal Government, but ran foul of the State government, which was not interested in pursuing alternative energy.

Numerous pioneering efforts to scale-up public engagement were implemented using innovative online deliberation as well as social media. However, it became clear that these could not replace face-to-face deliberation. They were really useful for gaining ‘public opinion’, which is important, but not for eliciting ‘public judgement’ or ‘public wisdom’. It was found to be helpful to funnel these ‘public opinions’ into a small scale or large scale mini public that could carefully deliberate the issues; and also to use social media and online deliberation to keep open opportunities for the broader public to feed into these deliberations.

It was important that every public engagement effort would clearly be going somewhere where it would influence a plan or policy or decision.

In WA, the State Government determined that every local government would be required to develop a community strategic plan that would drive their budget/operations. In Greater Geraldton, all the outcomes of the public deliberations that had been carried out to date were integrated into a Community Charter which eventually evolved into a Community Strategic Plan. These outcomes included the Deliberative Poll and later the online and social media input, together with the grass roots deliberations using volunteer community champions, trained to run World Cafes and further down the track Conversation Cafes. Additionally, a large-scale Enquiry-by-Design (EBD) was run to develop a City Region plan, followed by smaller scale EBD precinct planning deliberations and mini Participatory Budgeting initiatives to enable immediate action. Also included were the results from a community and youth survey followed by a Citizen Jury which developed a Digital Future Plan for the City Region.
After 3 years of this work, the City decided to raise rates and taxes in response to budget shortfalls, without the sort of engagement the people had come to expect. The people were outraged. They hired lawyers and took the Council to the Tribunal for lack of adequate consultation. During the mediation process that resulted, the City committed to setting up Participatory Budgeting for the forthcoming budgets. This involved two Participatory Budgeting Panels (randomly sampled mini publics), one allocating the 10 year public works budget (over $71 million) – taking over 4 weeks; and the 2nd allocating 100% of the 2014-15 budget (over $70 million) – taking over 8 weeks. Each Panel took a different approach to consulting the wider community (the 1st, going out to the community for their infrastructure proposals, and the 2nd, engaging with the community on their draft recommendations). One success factor was that the editor of the local newspaper, who had been on the Alliance Governance Team, became a partner in the process and helped the PB Panels to stay connected with the community.

In summary, the approach was to take each wicked problem as an opportunity for a community engagement process culminating in a public deliberation process, mostly involving mini publics with real influence. This can lead to macro change, as the Geraldton process testified. Notably, e.g. once again, the City ran a version of a PB process by themselves for the 14/15 budget.

Janette is now running similar processes in India, in Bangalore and Pune, working on how to make them more liveable. She’s also working in Egypt, where this year, they will hold an international Conference, including representatives from the Club of Madrid, on ‘21st Century Democracy’, with a specific interest in random sampling/sortition and deliberative democracy, not only for public deliberation but also more radically, within the institutions of government. The work has been amazing and exciting. She shared some inspiring anecdotes.
What important issues are emerging for this community?

The questions provided by participants give a good reflection of current topics of interest, challenge and exploration in the field. The questions, and themes into which they were grouped by the organisers, are listed below, with the results from discussion sessions presented for each theme.

**New and Old Methods of Recruitment**

- From a practitioner’s perspective, are there recent innovations in participant selection/recruitment that consider other factors aside from representativeness based on demographic characteristics?
- How important is random selection in pursuit of diversity?
- Is random sampling truly representative? And what are the alternatives?
- What are the key issues practitioners face when designing deliberative forums, and trying to assure inclusiveness?
- It is often said that there are trade-offs between inclusiveness and deliberative quality—the more people participate in a deliberative forum, the less opportunity there is to deepen the discussion. Is this a fair impression? Is convening a large-scale deliberative forum a feasible proposition?
- What’s the ‘magic number’ of participants for a productive public deliberation?
- What is the effect of individual personality on deliberation? What are some practical solutions of behaviour management? Can individuals have a distortive effect on the quality/outcome of deliberation? Is there any research on this?

Random selection is an important element of the mini-public model. However, it has tended to be over-emphasised. Random selection is not the be-all and end-all of selection for deliberative processes. It is not essential. There are other approaches that are important, and necessary to ensure that all voices are present, including assembling a mix of representatives of communities of interest relevant to the topic. An emphasis on diversity is more important than randomness, and should be the aim in assembling a group, but also within deliberative processes (mix it up!). This means not just having them in the room, but you need diversity of views as part of the deliberation at all times (to avoid group think).

There are blended models, for example, using random selection for two thirds of participants and one third from targeted segments or from particular groups e.g. decision makers (MPs). Non-demographic stratification is also a useful tool. Online tools can be used to ‘push out’ and broaden the reach of the deliberative process.

Involving minority groups is important, and feasible with targeted approaches. However, a relevant question is: Do the views of minority groups differ from mainstream views (on the topic)? Evidence to answer this is necessary to support actively including them. Deliberative processes could be run with just minority groups to explore this.

For legitimacy, it is important to ensure that organised stakeholders play an oversight role in the selection process, but not to dominate or control it. Deliberative democracy processes
threaten stakeholders and potentially undermine their power base. They can threaten the process if they are excluded.

Managing particular personalities in a group is best achieved through self-management by the group, which often happens spontaneously. Alternatively, if a personality is dominant, mechanisms involving a third party can help to resolve disputes and are preferable to the facilitator ‘managing’ the personality. These can include an internal group or person nominated for such a purpose e.g. internal review committee.

Convening a large-scale forum is feasible without compromising deliberative quality! There are various methods to bring large groups into deliberative discussion, generally based on smaller group discussions feeding into a larger discussion e.g. 21st Century Dialogue. This has been demonstrated in Australia, e.g. Janette Hartz-Karp’s Dialogue with the City (Held in Perth in 2003 with over 1000 people). It requires considerable resources, planning and time. Deliberative processes can certainly be supported by online tools. There were remaining questions about the quality of deliberation online.

Possible Outcomes of Deliberation: Consensus and beyond

? How would a deliberative event work if it was not aiming at a collective decision/outcome? ie. As a stand-alone process (I am interested in the value of deliberative democracy as a method of public engagement)

? What to do when deliberative forums fail to yield any agreement/consensus on the issue at stake?

? Processes to go beyond majority democracy when it comes to the pointy end (after thorough discussions, analysis of info, etc) of decision making

? Appreciative versus contestatory inquiry – is deliberation being too narrowly defined?

Consensus can be useful in creating ‘constructive pressure’. Consensus can be interpreted in different ways, and can be more nuanced, for example, by using ‘Can I live with it?’ rather than ‘Do I agree?’ This can create opportunities to maximise agreement, without losing the diversity of perspectives. Sometimes contestation can be productive for deliberation, e.g. Dogs on Beaches, and deliberative processes can work with debate-based processes.

The role of consensus is influenced by the many roles that deliberation can play, including whether used for decision-making, or for visioning, dialogue or conflict transformation.

A remaining question that emerged was: Is Deliberative Democracy a process based on values and reasoning, rather than on data and information, or does deliberation rely on exploring values and reasoning in response to data and information?

Design Innovations

? What are some of our most exciting innovations in deliberative democracy and how can we more effectively encourage government/practitioners to keep pushing the envelope/innovating in deliberative democracy?

? Applying deliberative democracy to the private sector – boards and organisations.
How do we ensure flexibility and appropriateness in design as deliberative processes become more popular and people want ‘out-of-the-box’ designs?

Flexible process designs – blending approaches etc

What are the key principles for deliberative processes, and what are different ways that those principles can be met (as opposed to just using a particular process formula)?

What’s coming up in the future of deliberative democracy?

Some noteworthy design innovations:

• Including marginalised voices in deliberative conversations
• Providing transformative experiences for internal staff and politicians
• Linking wide/broad engagement with the ‘deep dive’ (of deliberation), including integrating with online, and how to integrate these more seamlessly in final recommendations
• Developing new relationships with the media in seeking ways to ‘scale up’ and to be accountable to the broader public
• Independent evaluations to capture learnings during as well as after deliberative processes
• Using deliberative democracy processes throughout the whole cycle of decision making, including policy development, ongoing monitoring, reviewing not just at the beginning, as part of the whole

Promises and Perils of Online deliberation

What are the most useful methods for getting collaborative report writing achieved by a jury or other? Can online tools help with this in-between official sessions

Using technology to support small group process and achieving consensus— in room and in between sessions

How to use online to do truly deliberative democracy

Social media is driven by citizens and they can use it in the context of deliberative processes to ‘bring everyone along’. Online content such as videos have a lot of power, being short and visual, and are able to create an emotional connection (e.g. City of Melbourne People’s Panel video). There is concern about access to online fora and platforms, but perhaps this is not such a big issue any more, as citizens from most groups are now accessing online media.

It’s important to see online as complementing face-to-face rather than replacing it. It has great potential to provide scale and transparency, but what about deliberation? There is a need to gather evidence on this. Dialogue is generally considered to be very difficult or impossible online, so another relevant question is: Do you need dialogue for deliberation?

In defence of online deliberation, one participant had experienced it working effectively at scale and across a range of agencies, providing that public servants are empowered to respond in a policy-based way, to genuinely engage in the conversation and be part of the deliberation.
Impact & evaluation

? How to measure the impact of participatory/deliberative democracy

? How do we evaluate for impact when impact pathways are indirect (e.g. when processes raise awareness that shapes future debates?)

? What impact do genuine deliberative processes have on the sceptics and cynics – elected officials or other?

? What evidence do we have for the benefits of deliberative process?

? Can we develop a meaningful deliberative democracy evaluation methodology, including long term impacts, that can be easily applied across the globe?

We need to know what it is to be successful in deliberative processes. The evaluation challenge is how to measure complex but critical dimensions such as trust, emergent outcomes and capacity. We agree that trust is a key measure and if it increases, this indicates that the process has been a good one. But as for other success measures, we work with complex problems, and as our understanding of the problem grows, our understanding of the success of the process also emerges. We need to make some allowance for success criteria to emerge during the process.

Building deliberative capacity (described as ‘collaborative muscle’) is particularly difficult because of its long-term and cumulative nature (in a wider cultural context). Citizens, and organisers, get better at this over time, and it’s hard to measure the contribution of a single process.

The issue of defining success is critical to evaluation. In deliberative processes, success is often not defined or defined too narrowly, focussing on easily measurable criteria and outcomes, and ignoring other process aspects. Questions arise: how to expand this notion of success? Success for whom? Whose interests were served? (critical in terms of inclusion)? Who evaluates success? There is also sometimes a tendency to focus on successful aspects (particularly for practitioners who want to promote themselves and the practice), rather than on aspects of failure or weakness. Understanding these aspects is important for ongoing learning and improvement.

Some defining measures:

- Empowerment of participants – indicated by self-confidence, self-esteem
- Impact
- Meeting the specified objectives (success criteria tailored to the particular process)

It is important to evaluate the relationship between the process and other arenas of contestation, including representative politics, the wider community, and the everyday experiences of individuals (this connects with idea of deliberative systems). Understanding these links and connections is difficult and often missing from evaluation. The deliberative process needs to be understood in terms of the prospects for connections with these domains, and the difficulties and obstacles to making these connections. Some design innovations, such as involving decision-makers and politicians and using social media to connect with discussions in the public sphere, are relevant to these connections.
Deliberative processes often operate in the context of complex politics and complex problems. In this context, deliberation may not resolve the problem or find a solution, but may reveal complexities, uncertainties and trade-offs, which is a valuable outcome in itself. This ability of deliberation to reveal to citizens the complexity of political decision-making is a feature that increases its legitimacy in the eyes of decision-makers, particularly politicians.

Toward deliberative systems

Where are there sites to trial new democratic processes in ongoing ways i.e. beyond one-off non-legislated events? What forms might trials in these spaces take? Who is interested in researching this?

Citizens usually feel a sense of ‘empowerment’ and political efficacy after participating in a deliberative process. How can these be sustained outside a formal deliberative process?

How to ‘scale up’ resource intensive participatory democracy processes in a time of shrinking resources (in government)

I’m interested in micro processes – cheap and cheerful while still being credible and having deliberative integrity

How to best link deliberative processes based on a select number of people to wider engagement processes (larger numbers of people) - jury processes provide a real feeling of influence to a smaller number of people - how can this be translated to large numbers (whether face to face or online)

Transmission is a key issue for deliberative systems i.e. how are outcomes from deliberation ‘transmitted’ to other spheres (e.g. wider public, politicians). Modes of interactions between spheres are critical. These are influenced and strengthened by new approaches to external engagement e.g. videos, media, online.

Deliberative systems would benefit from a broader empowerment of citizens in relation to agenda setting (beyond just involvement in implementation). This relies partly on a contestatory public sphere (in which challenges to priorities and agendas are raised). This contribution to deliberative systems would be challenging to evaluate.

New approaches to involving decision makers and ‘mixing’ citizens and decision makers, breaking away from linear thinking and false dichotomies, are exciting for deliberative systems theory, and raise interesting challenges and opportunities.

Deliberative processes can play many roles across a range of settings:

- Decision-making
- Visioning
- Dialogue
- Conflict transformation

Power in and of deliberative forums

What decision-making power should the deliberative forums have? Should they remain advisory, or should they have full decision-making authority?
Have deliberative democrats hit a wall-of-power with decision maker resistance?

Bringing leadership theory into deliberative practice - what type of leader is needed for deliberative practice to work?

The impact of deliberative processes is strongly influenced by their mandate to act/decide based on the deliberation. There needs to be appropriate power sharing, whether the process has a decision-making mandate or is advisory. Champions are very important, and these are not only the ‘leaders’ who make these processes happen, but also those who emerge through the process and help to build legitimacy. There is an emphasis on deliberation around wicked problems, but deliberative democracy is relevant to a wide range of problems. It is still rare for citizens to get the power to decide what will be deliberated on. This may be a next generation challenge and one for the establishment of deliberative systems in which gaining input from citizens becomes more routine and not just reserved for tough problems.

The culture of expertism reinforces power. We need to unpack this - Are people who rise to power those with technical skills and knowledge? Is there gender bias operating, especially in relation to collaborative work and openness to new ideas? We also need to understand why experts might not want to relinquish power, especially public servants and senior decision makers. How should we deal with that? It may suggest bringing people along earlier in the process, but how do we get their ‘allegiance’ to a DD process around an issue that they are already invested in?

Another important aspect of power is agenda setting - what should be deliberated on? Currently this is usually done by government. How can this be opened up to allow the community to set the agenda? Should we ask the community about their role? Should we go out ‘at scale’ (online) to gauge sentiment about what people want to deliberate about (generating a forward agenda)? How would government then exercise power in that context to select from a range of issues raised by citizens. What would be the basis for those decisions? What role might deliberation play in that process? Deliberative processes also need the power to look at the wider issue/problem, not just the remit of the formal process, which is often highly constrained.

Several further questions emerged.

- How do we have balanced deliberative processes when citizens are already mobilised? What tools can be used?
- Can deliberative democracy be a substitute for political debate?
- Design vs decision? What does DD ultimately deliver?

Who has the ultimate power to decide (outcomes)? DD process can be empowered to distinguish between priorities, but not to make the ultimate decision about what is taken up and delivered on through the system. There needs to be clarity of commitment in relation to the process that follows on from the DD process and takes the results forward.
Taking deliberative democracy forward (advocacy)

? What are the major blockages to getting a deliberative approach to sticky government problems and how do we overcome them? What impact do genuine deliberative processes have on the sceptics and cynics – elected officials or other?

? What are the highlights/challenges you can expect from a deliberative process (what has our combined experience told us)? What evidence do we have for the benefits of deliberative process?

? How are we imagining deliberative democracy to be, to look like? Is our picture of what DD is potentially raising barriers for those who may otherwise be looking for more democratic processes?

? How can we get more traction in our efforts to encourage/persuade politicians and government administrators to implement best practice deliberative democracy? How should we break into new areas? Boldly or gently?

There is a need to engage sceptics, including interest groups, stakeholders, public servants and politicians, ideally by involving them in deliberative processes. It is important, in advocating for deliberative democracy, to recognise that there are idealistic (e.g. democratic representation of citizens) and practical (e.g. risk management) aspects to be emphasised, and that these are not mutually exclusive. You can approach deliberative democracy pragmatically, to achieve certain goals, without losing sight of normative aspects. The deliberative democracy community needs to seize opportunities and showcase examples, including not only how things were done but what the outcomes were. Engaging/involving the media, including mainstream and social media, is key, as discussed elsewhere.

There are ‘massive’ transaction costs in creating opportunities for large-scale deliberative processes such as participatory budgeting. These include the obstacles of DD being an ‘unknown’ process, the difficulty for decision makers of giving control of the process/decision away, elevating the status of ‘average’ citizens compared with experts, existing mindsets.

Several suggestions were made to take DD forward:

- Undertake a citizen jury of elected officials, so they can experience DD. Suggested topics: “Can the public make decisions on public policy?” or rate capping (Vic) and the public (citizens) are expert witnesses. (new Democracy Foundation could fund this and make it happen through Local Governance Associations)

- Pro-active research – trialling things - where researchers intervene in government/governance to trial demarchy (rule by the randomly selected) vs meritocracy; eg in connection with long-term existing governance structures like management or advisory committees; try something in an ongoing space, move beyond moments in time

- DD community sets the agenda: design a large deliberative process on a big, relevant issue (eg family violence, refugees), use existing processes tailored to the event (eg study circles, national issues forums, textalk); not run by government, gain the auspname/ money for it; run a deliberation to define this? Start at a local level then move up through states to a national scale.
• There is a need to embed deliberative processes into legislation, in the same way that consultation was embedded 20 years ago, to provide a legislative driver.

• Enhance training for practitioners

• Make existing spaces/institutions more deliberative (parliament, citizen committees etc); shift institutions so that they are oriented towards deliberation

Potential Research/Trial Topics

Research Topic: Run citizens juries in parallel with different samples: random mainstream vs random minority. Use the same charge, the same info, same facilitators etc. Compare the results.

Research Topic: Understand online deliberation communities (with divergent views that have to solve problems) that work. Investigate what makes them successful. E.g. Australian Facilitators Network, Wikipedia.

Research Topic: Run a deliberative process with a group completely online. Upload information, exchange ideas etc. Can deliberation be achieved online? Or will it just generate a bucket of ideas? Will it be as transformative for participants? This could be done with a national issue involving communities of interest with no geographic proximity e.g. agricultural issues or nanotechnology.

Research/Practice Topic: Could a process be run where citizens decide what will be deliberated on? (something like OurSay??)

Research/Practice Topic: Undertake a citizen jury of elected officials on the topic: “Can the public make decisions on public policy?” and the public (citizens) are expert witnesses.

How should deliberative democracy be moved forward?

Embedding DD - discussion

The next session was described as an “embedding deliberative democracy” session. Because this title carries certain assumptions about how to take DD forward, we began with a discussion of ‘embedding’ and whether this should be a priority for the community.

One of the practitioners wasn’t compelled by the idea of embedding DD in society, despite seeing lots of value in the practice and being a passionate advocate. She felt that it took the practice into a whole new realm – a realm of advocacy, activism and politics. Her focus was on deliberation, rather than democracy. It seemed ironic that we talk about designing a process for elected officials to encourage them to deliberate, when that’s the one thing they’re meant to do - that’s why they’re elected.

A researcher spoke up also against embedding, pointing out the danger of privileging DD when there are other things going on (in terms of democratic innovation). In particular, the move toward DD systems represents a move outside of an arena definition of politics (i.e. based on institutions of government). Taking a broader definition requires considering new forms of civic participation in politics more generally, and recognising that a lot of them are not deliberative. DD needs to be thought about in terms of how this work fits in that
context. There may be a need to advocate for deliberation not only amongst politicians and decision makers, but also amongst citizens, particularly young people.

DD is about representing views of people into the policy process; but this is only one part of the problem of democracy, another part is the demonization of politics and politicians. DD should be concerned with improving the policy-making process, but also with informing citizens about just how difficult politics is in the context of finite resources and the need to make choices. Ultimately, political decisions are not about what should be done but what can be done.

Practitioners responded that in their experience deliberative processes do effectively engage citizens with the challenges and trade-offs of political decision-making. This aspect perhaps needs to be emphasised more. This is not always helped by the media, who seem to be active in demonising politicians, tend to focus on ‘vox pop’ democracy, and often misrepresent DD processes. Engaging with the complexity of political decisions is in fact one of the remarkable achievements of deliberative processes. It contrasts strongly with the monologic, “dump-and-run” approaches seen often with social media, in which people don’t engage with complexity. What we’re aiming for is a citizenry that would like to feel some responsibility for where we’re going as a society, and are prepared to engage with the complexity of this.

Speaking in favour of embedding, another participant suggested that ‘success is trust’. The ultimate goal, in establishing a more representative and less adversarial democracy, is for new policy initiatives to be met with trust by the wider community. Some of the less deliberative examples of civic engagement have not necessarily contributed to greater trust, becoming ‘wish list’ exercises. Some make it more difficult for leaders to lead.

Another person spoke in favour of embedding so that organised interests could be disempowered and policy no longer be informed by arguments between political lobbyists who may not genuinely represent their constituencies, let alone the public interest. The vision was of citizens being prepared to take responsibility and contribute when their time came, and the rest of the time feeling confident that other citizens are doing the same.

There was some discussion of key episodes in recent Australian politics, particularly around tax reform. There was concern that around some issues (e.g. mining super profits tax), interest groups can swing the public debate by sheer force of advertising dollars. This pointed to the importance of DD, influencing processes at multiple levels (civic capacity, expectations of media, political accountability) in bringing more robustness to public debate. It was also pointed out that major tax reform had a much better chance of being agreed to by a random group of citizens than by any government, given the pressure of interest lobbies. In this context, there is a sense that embedding of deliberation is important in resolving some of the concerning deficiencies of democracy in this country.
**Strategies and Actions**

**Buddy practitioners with theorists** (14 dots)
and empirical researchers!
and young practitioners, facilitators (mentoring)
and young pollies/public servants (maybe separate scheme? Or three-way scheme?)

**Actions:** Abbie, Matt & Nicole will develop a proposal

**A Deliberative Democracy HUB** (11 dots)
(online, social, evaluation, practice sharing, peer reviews test and pilots)
CDDGG could provide?, IGPA Blog (Dave), Listserve or LinkedIn group;
Better Together group? More practitioner associates of centre may help drive this

**Action:** Wendy will set up a Deliberative Democracy LinkedIn group with us as the initial group

**Make existing institutions more deliberative**
(parliament, citizen committees etc) (8 dots)

**‘National Conversation’**
get DD community and citizens to design the actual process and agenda (7 dots)

**Delib Democ scholarship** (6 dots)
– 12 month process to develop skillset to run DD processes
Increasing demand for DD but needs to be done well
- rigorous, buddying, mentoring
- funding?

**Action:** Lucy & Emily will develop a proposal

**Develop criteria for identifying skilled practitioners** (5 dots)
a one-pager describing the skills need to run a DD process

**Action:** Lucy & Emily will write one-pagers on this

**Teach Deliberation in schools** (5 dots)
Teaching skills – groups and individuals (civic engagement, critical thinking); difficult to get new things into curriculum
Civics education - Linkage grant (Dave has contacts interested in this)
Egs Bolivia Democracy in Practice, Costa Rica program
Alternative to debating (extracurricular)?

**Action:** Lucy P, Stuart, Wendy, Sergio and Kei will have an email conversation to explore this
‘Sell’ DD to senior execs and politicians as how to be successful not as DD for its own sake (4 dots)

Public Forum in Canberra on DD (for policy advisors), IGPA Parliamentary Triangle seminar? (verbal support)
timing important (COAG meeting?); pitch important – seek input

Action: Wendy will follow up with IGPA

Democratic Theory journal special issue with contributions from practitioners and scholars (verbal support)
Short pieces (~2000 words) around a central question
e.g. Possibilities and Obstacles to involving Citizens in Political Processes or Bridging the Divide

Action: Selen will follow-up

Other strategies

• Academic trial ideas welcome in SA – Come and talk! (3 dots)
• Randomly selected monitors (3 dots) – a different group – not only in developing policy but also in evaluating processes; quality control, extended peer review
• Legislate ‘it’ (2 dots) Principles of influence, inclusiveness and deliberation: Model Engager cf Model ?
• Regulators (eg Auditor General) and organisers to adopt a set of ‘principles’ plus continuous improvement (2 dots)
• Taking Deliberative ideals into other places (beyond ‘the forum’)
• Educating – getting more people to have an expectation of deliberation - understanding of what’s required (1 dot)
• Expand the narrow notion of who is capable of deliberation (1 dot)
• More common understanding of DD particularly amongst engagement practitioners – need to explain differences!!
• Promote/join up processes so more awareness built not random (!)
• Recognise specialist skills needed for ethical effective deliberation – competencies professional
• Practitioner to practitioner buddy system to develop skills
• Create (new) deliberative institutions
• Scaling it out so more people become active citizens
• Research – transformative, outcomes, efficacy, info quality, delib techniques
• Fund more Centres of Deliberative Democracy at universities!
• Challenging existing mindsets re importance of deliberation
• Lack of training for practitioners
• Practitioner led workshop where the academy informs the practice
• Don’t see other new forms of participation as less important than deliberation – it’s what young people are doing!
• Clone Iain Walker!
Appendix A – Workshop attendees, program and format

Attendees
Lyn Carson, University of Sydney
Helen Christensen, Bayside City Council
Lucy Cole-Edelstein, Straight Talk, Sydney
Nicole Curato, Institute for Governance & Policy Analysis (IGPA), University of Canberra
Roger Davis, IGPA, University of Canberra
Selen Erkan, IGPA, University of Canberra
Gail Fairlamb, South Australian Premier & Cabinet
Paul Fawcett, IGPA, University of Canberra
Chad Foulkes, Healthy Together Geelong
Keith Greaves, MosaicLAB & Chit Chat, Melbourne
Janette Hartz-Karp, Curtin University of Technology
Carolyn Hendriks, Australian National University
Ian Holland, Uniting Care
Nicole Hunter, MosaicLAB & , Melbourne
Abbie Jeffs, Urban Growth NSW
Emily Jenke, community engagement and facilitation specialist, Adelaide
David Marsh, IGPA, University of Canberra
Kei Nishiyama, IGPA, University of Canberra
Lucy Parry, University of Sheffield
Desley Renton, City of Melbourne
Martin de los Rios, Coresolv, Sydney
Wendy Russell, Double Arrow Consulting, Canberra
Matt Ryan, South Australian Premier’s Office
Nivek Thompson, University of Technology Sydney & new Democracy Foundation
Stuart Waters, Twyfords, Wollongong
Iain Walker, new Democracy Foundation
Kimbra White, MosaicLAB & ?, Melbourne
Karen Wright, Uniting Care

Apologies
John Dryzek, IGPA, University of Canberra
Simon Niemeyer, IGPA, University of Canberra
Mark Evans, IGPA, University of Canberra
Max Hardy, Max Hardy Consulting
Andrew Hollows, Victorian Local Governance Association
Program

9:00 Registration, coffee and hellos

9:15 – 9:45 Welcome: David Marsh, Wendy Russell
Who’s in the room?

9:45 – 10:45 Where are we at, where are we going?
Summary of theoretical developments (Carolyn Hendriks, ANU)
Summary on practice and context developments (Iain Walker, nDF)
Roundtable Discussion

Morning tea

11:00 – 12:20 Showcase of deliberative processes
SA Better Together processes (Emily Jenke, Gail Fairlamb, Matt Ryan)
new Democracy Foundation (Iain Walker)
City of Melbourne (Desley Renton)
Mosaic Lab, Vic (Nicole Hunter)
Deliberative Democracy in Greater Geraldton (Janette Hartz-Karp)

Questions and synthesis

12:20 – 12:55 Crossing the Divide discussion
Small group exploration of questions from participants
(in themes – see attached)

12:55 – 1:40 Lunch

1:40 – 2:25 Crossing the Divide discussion
Report back and synthesis

2:25 – 3:40 Embedding deliberative democracy session
Introduction on policy context (Mark Evans)
Group discussion of opportunities, challenges and strategies
Report back 3 best strategies, voting

Afternoon tea

4:00 – 4:45 Next steps
Where should we go from here?
Suggestions and actions
Conclusion and thanks
Workshop format and methods

Participants were asked to indicate their expectations as they were arriving. Most were too busy catching up! Those who did indicated that they hoped for practical insights about deliberative democracy, including for specific contexts such as policy decisions, or ‘sticky’ issues such as animal representation. One person was there to be convinced that deliberative democracy is as important as some people think. This person provided a welcome sceptical filter for the discussions.

The workshop began with an introductory activity in which participants introduced themselves and explored their interconnections (with elastic!). This was followed by presentations from key figures in the field giving overviews of the state of research and practice, and a showcase of recent deliberative processes. These were punctuated with questions and discussion involving the whole group.

In registering for the workshop, participants were asked to provide three questions that they wanted answered during the workshop. The questions were sorted into groupings of similar questions, which were then themed. The themes were used to structure the discussions that followed the presentations.

During the showcase, the participants were asked to focus on one of the themes, and were given jotting sheets with the questions. Immediately after the showcase, those with the same theme grouped themselves next to a poster and were asked, very quickly, to come up with some key points in response to the theme questions.

After lunch, longer small group discussions were held, with each group discussing a particular theme and taking notes. Participants were invited to move between groups if they wished. Not all themes were explored during this session. They were asked to particularly consider areas of agreement, areas of ongoing divergence of views, and ‘gems’ that emerged. Groups then reported back in a plenary session at the end.

The final sessions focussed on moving the field forward and began with a plenary discussion about embedding deliberative democracy. Groups then formed to discuss and develop strategies to further advance the field. Some participants used this time for more general reflection. Strategies were written down on cards that were posted on a sticky wall. Participants used sticky dots to vote for the most popular. The strategies were then discussed as a whole group, focussing on the most popular; actions were identified and participants volunteered to take these forward, generally by agreeing to draft a proposal to bring back to the group.
Appendix B - Evaluation

Feedback from the participants

Twelve out of the 29 participants (41%) completed an online survey. Of these, four identified as practitioners, four as researchers, two as researchers and practitioners, and two as ‘users’ e.g. policy makers.

Respondents were asked to rate different aspects of the workshop. The responses are summarised in the chart below.

![Chart showing participants' satisfaction with various aspects of the workshop.](image)

**Fig. 2 Participants’ satisfaction with various aspects of the workshop.**

These categories correspond with the following statements: How you found it overall (overall); how useful it was to you (usefulness); how much you learnt (learning); how much it facilitated understanding and sharing between participants (bridging); how much you felt your contribution was valued (valued contribution); how well organised and structured it was (organisation); how good the facilitation was (facilitation); how suitable the venue was (venue)

**Strengths of the workshop**

Participants commented most on the value of the workshop in making connections, building relationships and sharing, particularly between practitioners and academics.

“Sharing between researchers and practitioners is a great idea and there should be more workshops along these lines.”

Several participants particularly liked the showcase and the chance to see “applications of deliberative democracy and the lessons learnt”. There was also a comment on the value of “setting some future directions for co-operative work”.

**Improvements**

Some participants felt the need for longer and deeper conversations and sharing - to understand different perspectives, focus on particular issues and problems, consider how the field is evolving, and work towards particular goals or outputs. Suggestions included
more guided activity and networking, more time, more challenging of ideas particularly in small group discussions, and more regular workshops to build a sense of collegiality. There were specific suggestions for extending the case study discussion, perhaps with presenters providing written overviews beforehand to allow more time for discussion, or for a session focusing on what worked and another on failures and gaps in practice.

One participant felt the need for clearer expectations on the process and output of the day. Another suggested a particular theme or focus for such a workshop, relating to a challenge or area for improvement in the field. Still another respondent felt that having more time (2 days) and some money available to support projects that emerge (as was the case with the 2011 Sydney workshop) would provide a stronger catalyst for research and action.

When asked whether anyone was missing, the following people were mentioned:

- John Dryzek (“sadly. Hope he's travelling OK”)
- Dr Annie Bolitho
- Alannah MacTiernan, MP for Federal Parliamentary perspective
- Decision makers?
- Simon Wright from New Zealand
- Ron Lubensky from Melbourne
- Baogang He
- International guests

**Suggestions for a next workshop**

The majority view (6 of the 12 respondents) was that an annual event is desirable (1 person thought 2 years). It was pointed out that the LinkedIn group could work for day-to-day communications between events. A suggested location was Geelong, and another suggestion of the next one in South Australia came up at the workshop.

In terms of topics and formats for future workshops, there were suggestions of contentious aspects of Deliberative Democracy, practical challenges, where DD is going, and what's next to expand the practice. A particular theme or focus for each workshop was suggested “as a way of moving the field forwards”. For a larger workshop, a 'dating' workshop concept could be used, “where presenters give a 10 minute run down on projects and participants get to select tables/topics that they are interested in for 10 minute sessions”.

**Feedback from the lead organiser**

The workshop was a great opportunity for these two important groups to come together and to consolidate a sense of community for people working in this field. It was clearly appreciated in achieving this. The presentations gave a terrific snapshot of current work in the field. The diverse and extensive experience of the participants also provided a useful opportunity to work on some strategies to strengthen the field, and the final session allowed some actions for moving forward to be crystallised.

I felt that the objective of bridging between scholars and practitioners was only partially met. There was clearly a spectrum of people, from ‘hard-core’ academics, through to people connected to academia and practice, through to ‘hard-core’ practitioners. It seemed that those closer to the middle of the spectrum were very engaged, interacted with the range of participants and thoroughly enjoyed the day. Those at the ends seemed to get less out of it.
While planning the workshop, it was suggested that we actively sort people into mixed groups for the discussions. At the time, I felt that this was unnecessary, as people would recognise the need to do this and automatically mix up, and might react negatively to being ‘organised’ into groups. I think I underestimated the challenge that was at the heart of the workshop, the challenge of crossing ‘the divide’. This divide is based on different knowledge, perspectives, styles and cultures. It was clearly quite difficult for people to begin conversations with new people and a tendency to group with familiar people. This was particularly the case given the short duration of the workshop, and the opportunity it gave people to catch up with colleagues they don’t see often.

I agree with comments that more time (e.g. a two-day workshop) and a slower pace, at least at times, would help to make the bridge. More time was needed for people to get to know each other, to express themselves (in their own styles and languages), hear each other and find ways to communicate. More time was also needed to move beyond excitement and celebration of the great work that’s being done, to looking at some of the remaining challenges, difficulties and blind spots.