Deliberative Democracy
– new forms of engagement to find the public interest

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1. Tackling the big issues – car dependence, urban sprawl etc.

2. Reordering priorities – social, economic and environmental determinants, harm reduction.

3. Supporting controversial but necessary initiatives to assist marginalised populations eg. Drug consumption rooms.
ONE EXAMPLE – CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY CITY – (1)

1. Fixed transit, preferably rail, above and below ground
2. Mixed use, mixed income neighbourhoods
3. Buildings of different age, condition, size
4. Living spaces everywhere, especially near downtown
5. Large or small public square at all significant intersections
ONE EXAMPLE – CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTH CITY – (2)

6. Lots of people coming and going
7. Street trees and rooftop gardens
8. Light rail or rapid transit to airport
9. Working farms adjacent to or (better still) within city limits
10. Shops that open onto sidewalk, and not onto parking lots

(Reference Sustainable City News)
WHY DO THESE ISSUES CHALLENGE US?

1. Vested interests – commercial and residential (NIMBY)
2. Fundamentalism – ideological and religious
3. Post-truth politics – all beliefs are equal
TRADITIONAL POLITICS
– CAN IT DELIVER?

1. Political leadership and political nous
2. Elections and alliances
3. Knowledge through science
4. Leadership + Accountability + Science = Progress
5. Trust? Results? Do we need reform?
“...an assembly of citizens, demographically representative of the larger population, brought together to learn and deliberate on a topic in order to inform public opinion and decision-making” (Escobar and Elstub, 2017)

Examples – Citizens’ Juries, Consensus Conferences, Planning Cells, Deliberative polls, Citizens’ Assemblies.
## TYPES OF MINI PUBLICS

*Source: Escobar and Elstub (2017)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developed by (first instance)</th>
<th>Citizens' juries</th>
<th>Planning Cells</th>
<th>Consensus conferences</th>
<th>Deliberative polls</th>
<th>Citizens' assemblies</th>
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| No. of citizens | 12-26 | 100-500 | 10-25 | 100-500 | 100-160 |
| No. of meetings | 2-5 days | 4-5 days | 7-8 days | 2-3 days | 20-30 days |


| Activities | Information + deliberation | Information + deliberation | Information + deliberation | Information + deliberation | Information + consultation + deliberation |

| Result | Collective position report | Survey opinions + Collective position report | Collective position report | Survey opinions | Detailed recommendation |

| Destination of proposal | Sponsor and mass media | Sponsor and mass media | Parliament and mass media | Sponsor and mass media | Parliament, government and public referendum |
THREE KEY CONCEPTS....

- **Empowerment** - beyond consultation, sharing power
- **Representativeness** - adding random sampling to existing system of elections and referendums
- **Deliberation** - giving evidence a chance

= The theory and practice of deep democracy
Using Deliberation....

1. It might be a small but seemingly intractable local issue
2. It might be a challenge from new technology whose consequences aren’t fully understood
3. It might be a major, society wise issue like The Constitution
4. It might be a wicked problem in a complex environment e.g. the challenge of city policy
RECENT EVIDENCE FROM AUSTRALIA

• 54% think the current system is broken due to self-interested politicians and increasing complexity of issues

• 71% agree that everyday people should play a bigger role in government decisions

• 57% support the idea of a citizen jury (only 12% against and 31% need more convincing)

• (Pollinate, March 2017, research for new Democracy)
Projects – water pricing, local governance, nuclear fuel cycle, local budgeting, infrastructure planning, obesity, cycling policy, transport nodes, safe and vibrant cities, energy policy, parliamentary reform.
Western Australia: The Gallop Government!

(Dialogue with the City, 2003)

- **Focus**: Urban density, car dependence
- Discussion papers, community survey, well-based discussion, school competition, listening sessions for those usually excluded, citizens’ assembly (1/3 randomly selected, 1/3 invited stakeholders and 1/3 self nominated), continuing workshops. Government supported recommendations.
WHAT HAPPENS?

THE FINDINGS

1. Participation beyond the usual suspects.
2. A better policy conversation.
3. More sensible, more actionable and more defensible recommendations.
4. Increased public trust.
5. Makes it easier to decide about “hard” issues.

(Reference David Schecter, 2017)
BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Source: Hopkins 2007

Democratic benefits

- Builds stronger communities
- Increases citizenship capacity
- Allows citizens input on issues
- Empowers citizens
- Reveals community needs and wants
- Improves relationships with citizens

Practical benefits

- Improves services
- Increases user satisfaction
- Ensures more informed decisions
- Demonstrates a commitment to democracy
- Assists in prioritizing policy options
- Raises awareness of issues

- Creates new solutions for issues
- Reveals actual or potential problems
- Taps new sources of information and resources
- Reduces conflict
- Improves public image
- Raises awareness of issues

- Increases likelihood of policy acceptance
- Increases legitimacy for decision-marking
- Develops a shared sense of ownership for collective issues
- Increases trust in government
- Improves image
- Increases legitimacy and credibility
- Produces long-term financial savings
- Decisions have greater legitimacy and credibility
CONCLUSIONS

➢ It’s not just a case of democratic theory
➢ - deliberative techniques should be in the policy kitbag!

➢ A new alliance – city health reformers and deliberative democrats.
REFERENCES


2. Escobar, O and Elstub, S. *Forms of Mini-Publics* (new Democracy Foundation, 8 May 2017)


• Hopkins, D. *Multiple Dialogues and Conflicting Agendas on Governing the City: Western Australia’s “Dialogue With the City”*, State of the Cities Research Network (2007)