

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

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City Health International 2017 Conference, Basel  
13 September 2017

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# CITIES and HEALTH - CHALLENGES

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?
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# MINI-PUBLICS AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

“...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.

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# TYPES OF MINI PUBLICS Source: Escobar and Elstub (2017)

	<i>Citizens' juries</i>	<i>Planning Cells</i>	<i>Consensus conferences</i>	<i>Deliberative polls</i>	<i>Citizens' assemblies</i>
<b>Developed by (first instance)</b>	Crosby (USA, 1971)	Dienel (Germany, 1970s)	Danish Board of Technology (1987)	James Fishkin (USA, 1994)	Gordon Gibson (Canada, 2002)
<b>No. of citizens</b>	12-26	100-500	10-25	100-500	100-160
<b>No. of meetings</b>	2-5 days	4-5 days	7-8 days	2-3 days	20-30 days
<b>Selection method</b>	Random selection	Random selection	Random + self-selection	Random selection	Random + self-selection
<b>Activities</b>	Information + deliberation	Information + deliberation	Information + deliberation	Information + deliberation	Information +consultation +deliberation
<b>Result</b>	Collective position report	Survey opinions + Collective position report	Collective position report	Survey opinions	Detailed recommendation
<b>Destination of proposal</b>	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**)

# NEW DEMOCRACY FOUNDATION

[www.newdemocracy.com.au](http://www.newdemocracy.com.au)

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.

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# 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.
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# 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 Schechter, 2017)

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# BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Source: Hopkins 2007

## Democratic benefits

## Practical benefits



Builds stronger communities	Improves services	Creates new solutions for issues	Increases likelihood of policy acceptance	Produces long-term financial savings
Increases citizenship capacity	Increases user satisfaction	Reveals actual or potential problems	Increases legitimacy for decision-making	Decisions have greater legitimacy and credibility
Allows citizens input on issues	Ensures more informed decisions	Taps new sources of information and resources	Develops a shared sense of ownership for collective issues	
Empowers citizens	Demonstrates a commitment to democracy	Reduces conflict	Increases trust in government	
Reveals community needs and wants	Assists in prioritizing policy options	Improves public image		
Improves relationships with citizens	Raises awareness of issues			

# 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.



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