

Tablet by
Dr. Lyn Carson
30/4/08
Lyn Carson

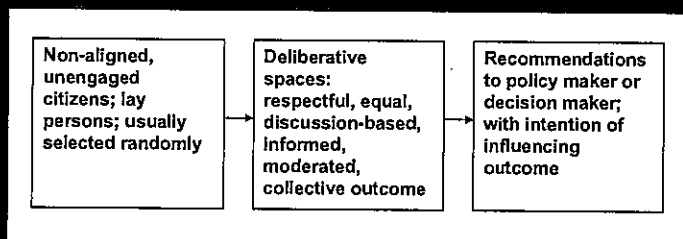
Public Accounts Committee, Inquiry into State Plan Reporting, Public Hearing: 30 April 2008

Re: Mechanisms for review and updating of the Plan

The development of the Plan involved community forums, peak representative forums, submissions and feedback and “people welcomed the community forums being held in all parts of NSW” (State Plan p.15).

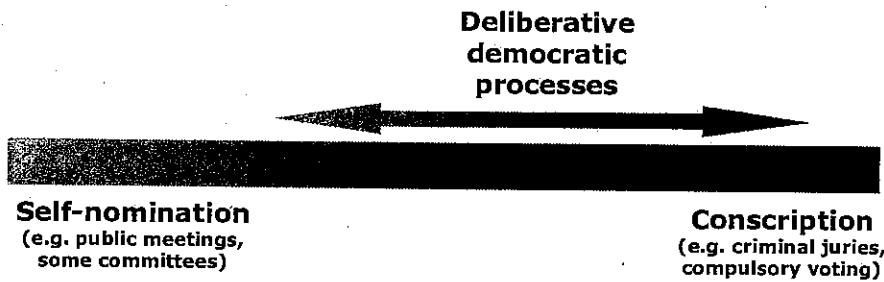
What are less well reported are the deficiencies of that process. For example, instead of a friendly invitation to a forum, a formal letter signed by the Premier was received; potential participants were left perplexed, scared, suspicious and reluctant to show up in the numbers that organisers would have liked. Some were encouraged to bring friends or family, passers-by were asked to join in to make up the numbers—hardly randomly selected and even then short of numbers. Real community voices were under-represented and less well heard than the “usual suspects”. The data collected from forums were inadequately analysed. Premiers Delivery Unit handled data from online survey and did a much better job than those analysing forum data. The time frame for the whole process was unrealistically short. No effective evaluation took place.

For the review of the State Plan some important changes need to happen. Sufficient time should be allocated to planning and implementation. The original participants need to know what has transpired so the review must involve them and be extended in order to be genuinely inclusive. It should be deliberative, not superficially consultative. The review must incorporate an evaluation of the process. It should make a difference to government decision making (this happened in the early stages of the State Plan when feedback was taken on board and reported back). This should not be a public relations exercise—it should be *collaborative governance* (see 2020 Summit report). Some principles are worth noting, as is a snapshot of Australia of deliberative democratic processes and NSW’s poor performance when compared with other states.

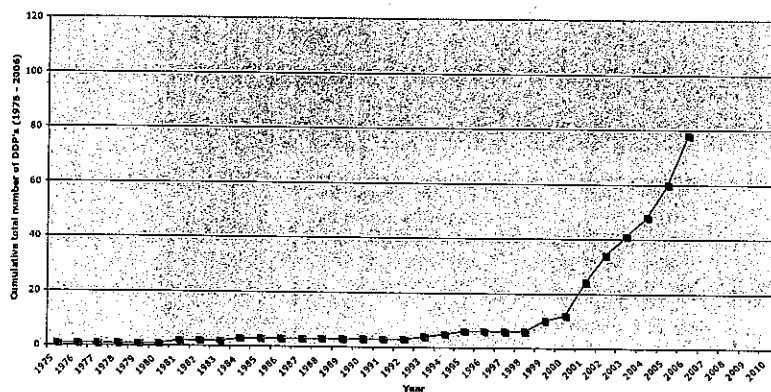


Adapted from Hendriks (2005)

Randomness (a continuum)



Timeline of democratic deliberative processes 1975-2006



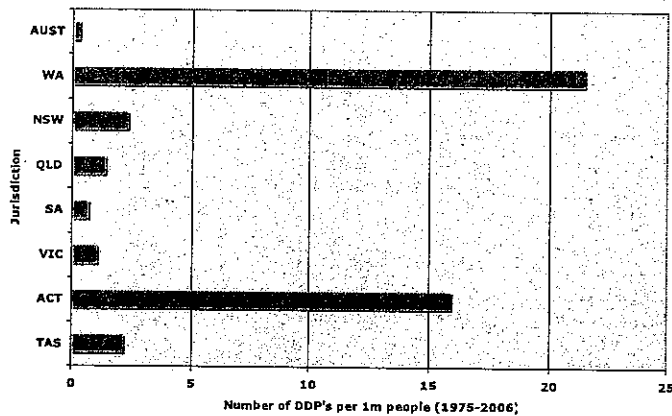
Commissioning body/funding body, by state

	NT	WA	SA	Qld	NSW	ACT	Vic	Tas	Nat'l	Total
Federal govt					1		1			2
Local govt		3			3					6
State/territ'y govt		33		3	4	1	1			42
Govt agency		2				2				4
Research org'n		2	1	2	4	1	2		2	14
Non-govt org		1		1	2	1	1	1	3	10
TOTAL	0	41	1	6	14	5	5	1	5	78

Democratic deliberative processes, method by state

Method	NT	WA	SA	Qld	NSW	ACT	Vic	Tas	Aust	Total
Citizens' juries		8		5	8	3	5			29
Deliberative poll/survey		5	1		1	1			2	10
21 st century dialogue		10								10
Consensus conf/forum		12							1	13
Deliberative forum		3		1	5	1		1	2	13
Multi criteria		3								3
TOTAL	0	41	1	6	14	5	5	1	5	78

Democratic deliberative processes by state and territory - per 1m people



Recommendations

Build trust between government and communities. Implement a major idea which arose at the 2020 Summit: *Collaborative Governance: Revolutionising the ways that government and communities interact.*

Close the loop. Go back to the people who were involved in the development of the Plan.

Have a much longer lead time to brief consultants and local people. Build up some momentum prior to meeting people.

Having reported back, open it up to some new voices. Draw together a randomly selected group of people. Bring them to several locations: city and country. Create a mini-public. Make the event/s representative, deliberative and influential.

Carefully evaluate the process that is used so that improvements can be made.