AUSTRALIA'S DEMOCRACY

A STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR RENEWAL

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Introduced by:

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AN INITIATIVE BY
THE CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

INTRODUCTION

In Australia today, we citizens enjoy a stable governance structure gifted to us by our farsighted forebears – citizens from all walks of life, not just the powerful and privileged. They strived for near 30 years to piece our Federation together, based on a liberal democratic 'representative government' model, and to gain popular support for it.

It is now time for this generation of Australians to put in a similar effort for the benefit of today's citizens and for future generations.

During the nineteenth century the system of representative democracy evolved to the antecedent of the current forms in use. The system aimed to address the perennial challenge for societies characterised by competing ideas and interests of finding a trusted process to make 'common interest' decisions that the vast majority can accept.

This system has worked reasonably well for the past hundred years in meeting the needs of those many societies who adopted it - including Australia. However, there are significant signs that the system as practised today is not now meeting the needs of today's societies and the myriad of new and distinctive 21st century challenges they face.

Frustration with the failure of our political system to move with the times has morphed into growing lack of trust, cynicism and disengagement by citizens who increasingly believe the system is no longer geared to achieving the common interest. Instead of leading through transparent and fact-based, deliberative policy development - supported by processes of appropriate community consultation - politicians have become reactive, risk averse and partisan in their policy development. Societies are venting their frustration through voting for political extremes or fragmentation. We are also seeing a growing pattern of civil disobedience as citizens resort to more radical action in the belief this is the only way to have their voices heard.

While these patterns of dysfunction are evident across most liberal representative democracies, the good news is that the system can evolve to overcome the current shortcomings.

The accompanying paper, written by Dr Mark Triffitt – lecturer in public policy with the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne – seeks to inform and improve understanding of the serious systemic challenges Australia faces in our governance structures and practices, while bringing together a number of possible remedies into a potential roadmap for democratic renewal.

In bringing these matters to your attention, we are seeking to enlist your involvement in building public awareness of the issues involved and the imperative for community wide engagement, discussion and consideration of how we can make our democracy work better. We need your name on a list of citizens supporting us, we need tax deductible donations and we need public commentary to help build broad awareness of the need and opportunity for this project. All details are at **democraticrenewal.org.au**

Our end objective is to stimulate the establishment of an Australian citizens' assembly, that is reflective of our whole community, to determine how we can regenerate and strengthen our democracy, through:

- Better enabling the discourse, deliberation, legislation, regulation and enactment of Government policy making to be conducted in a transparent, fact-based, consultative, timely and civil manner with the common good given overriding priority;
- Better representing the views of our population in government policy formulation;
- Establishing a constitutional review process that will give us a contemporary constitution promulgated and legislated by the people of Australia (in place of the current constitution legislated by the UK Parliament in 1900!) that sets the framework for governing our country wisely as we face contemporary and future opportunities and challenges.

Efficient and effective government decision making is central to a sound economy and the wellbeing of the entire community. In today's world this requires that citizens see adequate ongoing listening to, and weighting of their views, in the policy development processes.

We need your active help to achieve this, as it will take action by those normally outside the political system to catalyse the impetus for change.

Glenn Barnes & Verity Firth
Co-Chairs, Citizens for Democratic Renewal

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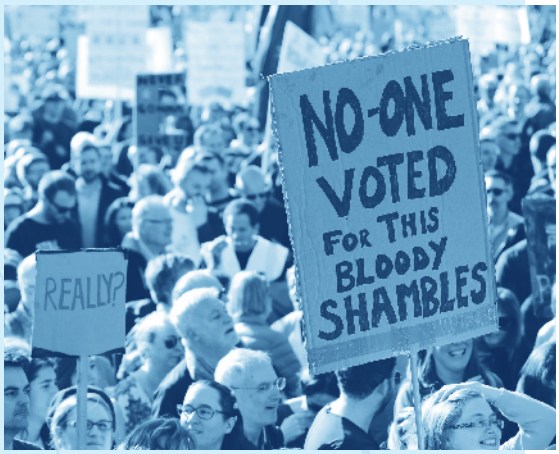
PART A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The paper highlights the imperative for major renewal of our democracy in view of declining public trust, engagement and increasing policy inertia which is threatening our nation's capacity to govern itself effectively in the 21st century. The paper argues that these problems are not one-off or temporary; rather they represent a deepening pattern of dysfunction across many democracies around the globe, including Australia's.



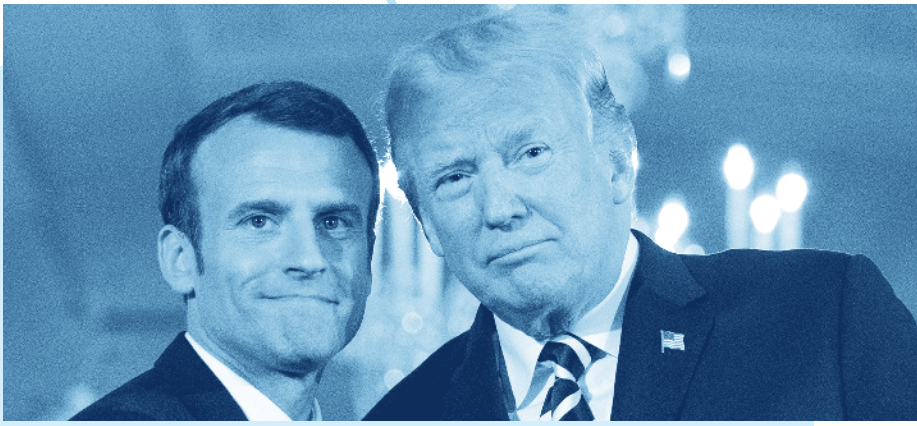
Above: Yellow vests protests in Paris

Below: Brexit protesters in the UK

The paper argues that the causes are much deeper than conventional views that blame 'bad' political leadership. Instead, failure is occurring because of a fundamental and growing structural disconnect between our democratic system – still largely configured to operate and engage with citizens in much the same way as they have done for the past 100 years – and the new and different realities of the 21st century. In short, democracy has been disrupted in much the same way that many other areas of our society have been disrupted over the past 20 years.

This disconnect is creating two interlinked crises for our democratic system – **representative** and **functional** – which are feeding off and amplifying each other. These two crises have combined to create an environment where major policy change and public support for it is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve. The paper outlines a roadmap for renewing Australia's democracy to improve our nation's ability to meet and stay ahead of the myriad of complex and difficult economic and social policy decisions that now face us. The roadmap recognises the need to shift from piecemeal solutions that look at one problem in isolation, to a broader, innovative and multi-staged agenda for reforming our political and policy system so that Australia's democracy better aligns with the fundamentally changed social and political conditions of the 21st century.

THE PROBLEM OF DEMOCRATIC DECLINE



First row left to right: Theresa May; Emmanuel Macron & Donald Trump

Second row left to right: Jeremy Corbyn; Bernie Sanders

Democracy globally is at a tipping point. Nearly every key indicator of its health – in particular, public trust and engagement – has been falling over the past decade. These trends are not peripheral or temporary, but are now strongly evident across the democratic world, particularly in long-established, so-called 'core' democracies.

The percentage of Americans, for example, who say 'they can trust the government always or most of the time' has not exceeded 30 percent since 2007. In 2019, this number is 17 per cent[1]. Trust in the British government stood at 26 per cent at the beginning of 2017, while trust political parties and political leaders to 'do the right thing' also stood at unprecedented low levels, at 18 and 19 per cent respectively[2]. A similar trust crisis is evident in national democracies across Europe, and in particular in its continental democracy, the European Union[3].

Young people in particular are detaching themselves in droves from active (or even passive) participation in formal democratic systems. Again, in the US, only 7 per cent of young people now consider running for public office, reflecting what is now a deep distaste for mainstream politics and distrust of the current democratic system to achieve public interest outcomes[4]. Likewise, young people in the UK feel largely alienated from mainstream politics, believing the current system does not reflect or address the issues that matter to them[5].

SUPPORT FOR AND ENGAGEMENT WITH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IS ALSO DROPPING ACROSS MUCH OF THE DEMOCRATIC WORLD, WHILE PARTY MEMBERSHIP IS AT NEGLIGIBLE LEVELS.

THE PROBLEM OF DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

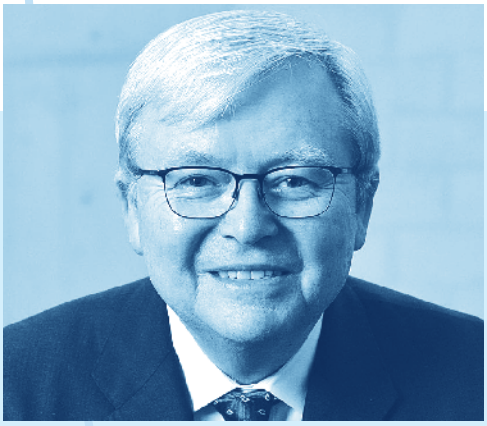
Support for and engagement with major political parties is also dropping across much of the democratic world, while party membership is at negligible levels. Although there remains a sense of party identification amongst voters, the authority and influence of political parties as important conduits to aggregate and organise voters into stable blocks of support and consensus is fast eroding. In key European democracies – despite a strong public tradition of party membership and allegiance – membership levels are estimated to have dropped from 15 per cent in the 1990s to less than 5 per cent[6]. In the United States, the numbers of voters who state they are aligned to either Democrats or Republicans declined to record lows in 2015, reflecting increasingly voter frustration with political polarisation and policy gridlock[7].

Moreover, overall voter election turnout has sharply declined in key democracies where voting is optional. For example, turnout in Japan declined from 75 per cent in 1990 to 52 per cent in 2015. In Greece, turnout has plummeted from nearly 90 per cent in 2000 to just over 62 per cent in 2015. Significantly, some of the sharpest declines in voter turnouts – as well as in public trust and engagement in democracy – are occurring in eastern European countries, which enthusiastically embraced democracy following the end of communism only a quarter of century ago[8].

There are some variations in these downward trends. Some indicators in some democracies remain comparatively more positive. Short-term circumstances play a role: a particular leader is elected, or responds to a particular event or crisis in a way that leads to a bounce in public trust measures[9], or voter turnout in a particular country's election is high. This in turn provides short-term affirmation for those who believe that democracy's current problems are reversible and that change is not needed. However, a longer-term reading – set against similar patterns in the large majority of democracies – should conclude these are essentially one-off or temporary blips[10].

OVERALL VOTER ELECTION TURNOUT HAS SHARPLY DECLINED IN KEY DEMOCRACIES WHERE VOTING IS OPTIONAL.

DEMOCRATIC DECLINE IN AUSTRALIA



First row left to right:
Kevin Rudd; Julia Gillard

Second row left to right:
Tony Abbott; Malcolm Turnbull

Below: Scott Morrison

SINCE THESE STUDIES WERE RELEASED, PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY HAVE DETERIORATED EVEN FURTHER TO HISTORIC LOWS.

The same trends are evident in Australia. As with other democracies, there is nothing new about public distrust and other negative perceptions among Australian voters of their democratically-elected politicians. But as with other democracies in the second decade of the 21st century, Australia's democracy is showing clear and unprecedented signs of malaise.

The Australian National University's Australian Electoral Study (AES) – which specialises in surveying long-term public attitudes of Australia's political system – found in 2010 that 72 per cent of Australians were dissatisfied with Australia's democracy. The 2014 AES survey also found that only 42 per cent of Australians thought it doesn't make a difference which major political party is in power. A Lowy Institute survey[11] in the same year found that only 48 per cent of young people preferred democracy over other forms of government. In the same survey, 23 per cent believed that given a specific set of circumstances, 'a non-democratic system would be a preferable form of governance'.

DEMOCRATIC DECLINE IN AUSTRALIA

The AES survey in 2014 found only 16 per cent thought the democratic system was being run for the people while nearly 50 per cent of Australians through it was being run on behalf of a few big interests.

Since these studies were released, public attitudes to Australian democracy have deteriorated even further to historic lows. The 2016 AES study released in the wake of the 2016 federal election[12] found record levels of public distrust, disinterest and disengagement across our political system, as well as little faith in its governance structures or capacity to deliver on important public policy objectives. Key findings included that a record low level of interest in the 2016 election; that only 26 per cent thought government can be trusted (the lowest number since it was first measured in 1969); while around 70 per cent of the Australians believed that government policies made little difference to their own or the country's finances.

Words as well as statistics highlight the visceral distaste many Australians have developed for their elected representatives and the political system they inhabit. Focus group research conducted by Ipsos in conjunction with Fairfax Press[13] highlights that sentiment and comments such as these among voters is widespread:

AROUND 70 PER CENT OF THE AUSTRALIANS BELIEVED THAT GOVERNMENT POLICIES MADE LITTLE DIFFERENCE TO THEIR OWN OR THE COUNTRY'S FINANCES.

"Stop bribing us,"[14]

"They all just fight and when they get in government, before you know it, they're changing leaders",

"The opposition just bloody opposes everything for the sake of it",

"They don't know how we live"

Significantly, these opinion surveys were conducted prior to the removal of Malcolm Turnbull as Prime Minister in September 2018 – the fourth time a sitting Prime Minister has been ejected by their party between elections in the past eight years. It is likely this latest leadership saga – which was largely met with disbelief and disgust by ordinary Australians – will translate into a further deterioration in public trust in and engagement in our democratic system when future surveys are conducted[15].

What's at Stake?

Decline of Effective Government

A Shift to Extremism

PART B

Decline of Effective Government

These trends are not only significant because they represent deeply negative shifts among Australians in their attitudes to democracy and politicians. They go to the heart of the capacity of democratic societies like Australia to function and govern themselves effectively.

The reality is that very few major changes to achieve better functioning economies and societies can be achieved without being channelled through our democratic system and it's forums – for example, elections that provide a public mandate for change, a functioning parliament to give legislative approval for this change, and the bureaucratic machinery of the democratically-elected government being coherently directed by our political leaders and representatives to implement this change.

In short, without a democratic system that can deliver and sustain public trust in government, stimulate rational empirical-based debate, while building lasting consensus on complex issues, the growing number of 'wicked' policy problems that confront us in the current age will never be adequately addressed[16].

THESE TRENDS GO TO PEOPLE'S GROWING DISTRUST WITH AND LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AMID A GROWING VIEW THAT DEMOCRACY IS BECOMING DYSFUNCTIONAL GIVES CREDENCE TO GROUPS THAT ARE HOSTILE TO DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICES.

A Shift to Extremism

The second major implication of democracy's decline is a shift in character and tone of democratic societies in recent years. As a number of commentators[17] have observed, intensifying levels of public distemper and distrust in what is perceived to be an out-of-touch and largely ineffectual political class is transforming democracy into an arena for immoderate, polarised if not in extremist views.

This is happening in two ways. First, as more of the public becomes more distrustful and invests less interest in, or commitment to democracy – thereby literally 'exiting' the system – our democratic systems become increasingly dominated by those with narrow if not unrepresentative world-views and life-experiences. The most obvious example of this is the growing unrepresentative character of political parties and parliaments in Australia. The major parties are now dominated increasingly by former political advisors and career party functionaries with comparatively little broad life experience[18]; this at a time when occupational, gender and life-experience diversity and difference in the broader world is increasing at a rapid rate[19]. This 'representativeness gap' within Australia's political class – in which the major parties in particularly continue to organise themselves around narrow ideologically-driven and 'culture war' policy and debate – in turn feeds the cycle of public discontent and disengagement.

Second, people's growing distrust with and lack of confidence in the democratic system amid a growing view that democracy is becoming dysfunctional gives credence to groups that are hostile to democratic institutions and practices. Strong-man authoritarian regimes are increasingly viewed as favourable in democracies because they are seen as more 'effective' in addressing real-world problems, regardless of whether they damage or destroy long-established democratic practices and values[20]. The election of Donald Trump as United States President may appear an outlier. But in reality, it can be seen as a mainstreaming of trends which have been developing and coalescing in core democracies over the past two decades.

PART C

- Who's To Blame?
- What's to Blame?
- Democracy Disrupted
- Two Connected Crises

WHO'S TO BLAME?

On occasions over the past century, democracy's imperfections have amplified into deeper disjuncture and crises. History shows, however, that previous periods of malaise were followed by rebounds, leading to some analyses today to downplay the current problems as largely temporary – that democracy is simply going through another 'bad patch'.

To reiterate, the figures outlined previously show voter disgruntlement and disconnection with democratic politics point to the problems being not episodic or temporary but unprecedented in their scope and potentially irreversible in their nature. They speak to a need for a fundamental re-look at how we view contemporary democracy's problems and how we might begin to address them.

Two main prisms are used to view these problems, diagnose their causes and recommend solutions.

The conventional view is to see the problem through the prism of a failure of individuals, not the democratic system itself. Specifically, a chronic run of 'poor' individual leaders and 'bad' individual leadership are to blame[21]. 'Poor leadership' is usually defined as a chronic obsession among politicians and parties with spin, or a fixation on short-term political interests to the detriment of the longer-term decision-making that is made in the public interest. It is also associated with a perceived inability for political leaders of today to communicate effectively in a way which articulates a compelling public interest case for change.

THE CONVENTIONAL VIEW IS TO SEE THE PROBLEM THROUGH THE PRISM OF A FAILURE OF INDIVIDUALS, NOT THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM ITSELF. SPECIFICALLY, A CHRONIC RUN OF 'POOR' INDIVIDUAL LEADERS AND 'BAD' INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP ARE TO BLAME

Democracy's current malaise, it is argued, will be resolved once more strategic, better communicated leadership from more competent individuals returns. In Australia, this framework seems to be particularly compelling for those with a rear-view fixation with 1980s economic reforms in which strong leadership and effective communication was seen as crucial for achieving major change. Perceptions that policy and political malaise are largely down to poor leadership have been internalised in particular by Australia's political class. This is partly why we have witnessed an unprecedented revolving door of federal leaders in recent years as the major parties – driven by opinion polls showing public distemper with the performance of individual leaders – seek to find the 'right' leader.

From the perspective of precedent, the prism of 'individual failure' is an attractive framework. Democracy's history is replete with leaders who were able to take difficult decisions, corral a fractious public and generally act in a far-sighted way for the good of the wider community while still commanding broad public trust and respect. So why shouldn't today be any different? The leadership prism also has the virtue of simplicity as it does not need to acknowledge that our political system might be now seriously flawed. Significantly, it assumes that the society of today that underpins our political system is basically the same as previous times – that there is that little substantially different today that shapes and constrains 'good leadership' compared to say, the 1980s.

WHAT'S TO BLAME?

The irony with this perspective is that many other parts of our society have been exposed to major disruption over the last two decades. Any number of bestselling authors and commentators detail with data, analyse with explanatory frameworks and confirm our personal observations that the potent combination of digital technology and globalisation over this period has significantly changed the expectations we have of nearly every other system in our lives – be it communication, travel, retail, finance and business. These disruptive forces, which continue to intensify, have fundamentally altered the way we interact with these systems and how the individuals and organisations within these systems interact with us as stakeholders.

Yet, we resist applying the same reasoning or analysis to our democratic system. The unspoken assumption is that democratic processes, structures and institutions have been, or can be quarantined from the same disruptive impacts that have forced other parts of our society to adapt and innovate or face decline.

This paper rejects the assumption that democracy can be excluded from the paradigm of disruption. Instead it argues that the world has fundamentally altered since the 1990s but our democratic system – whose main purpose is to reflect, steer and shape the world around it in purposeful ways – has not changed. As a result, Australia's democracy is shackled to an outdated form of politics and policy-making that can no longer effectively represent 21st century voter opinion and sentiment or deliver good, consistent policy outcomes. To go further, we have a static, square peg of a political system attempting to fit itself within a world which has become increasingly centrifugal.

This is not to say that poor individual leadership is not a factor. Democratic leadership has been and remains an integral ingredient to the success of the overall system because positive, legitimate leadership both reflects and amplifies public opinion, while skilfully shaping it to achieve consensus and collective ends. But relying on individual leadership alone as the prism to analyse and address democracy's deep-seated problems means ignoring the reality that any individual operating within a system that is increasingly less fit-for-purpose will inevitably underperform.

For the *leadership prism* to have explanatory or predictive validity, an Obama, Trump, Turnbull or any number of political leaders over the last 10 years who promised to overturn or disrupt the 'old politics' purely through individual leadership rather than structural change would have succeeded in restoring some level of public trust and engagement in the democratic system. At the very least, they would make some progress through their leadership toward halting what are seriously negative trends.

THE WORLD HAS FUNDAMENTALLY ALTERED SINCE THE 1990S BUT OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM – WHOSE MAIN PURPOSE IS TO REFLECT, STEER AND SHAPE THE WORLD AROUND IT IN PURPOSEFUL WAYS – HAS NOT CHANGED.

Using the *structural prism*, on the other hand, explains these leadership failures within the context of an amplifying and accelerating pattern of deeper dysfunction. From a predictive perspective, it points to a depressing trajectory for the coming years if democratic renewal at a deeper, system level is not attempted. One leader is seen to be failing and is written off or ditched for another. But within a short space of time, the replacement is seen to be equally lacklustre. As a result, voters become enmeshed in a permanent version of 'buyer's remorse', investing themselves in fresh leadership in the hope that things will get better, only to find that the latest manifestation has made things worse by feeding the cycle of distrust and disengagement. In short, we need to see democracy's problems more about 'what' is at fault rather than 'who' is to blame?

WHAT'S TO BLAME?

The term 'democratic disconnect' is often used to summarise what ails contemporary democracy. The term is often framed in terms of the disconnect, or growing distance, between individual politicians as well as particular aspects of the democratic system, such as parliaments and political parties on the one hand, and their constituents on the other[22]. This paper argues the disconnect is more basic – that of a disconnect between our democratic system itself and the new and different realities of the 21st century world.

THE DISRUPTION OF OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM BECOMES CLEARER WHEN WE LOOK CLOSER AT THE MACHINERY OF THIS SYSTEM, AND ITS ORIGINS.

When we talk of Australian democracy, we are talking about a liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is the template for just about every national democracy in the world. While it is near universal, we need to remember that the institutions and processes of liberal democracy are a particular way of delivering 'democracy'. We also need to remember that liberal democracy – as a specific delivery mechanism of democracy – arose and evolved out of specific historical, economic and social conditions. And these conditions – particularly due to the disruptive nature of social, technology and cultural change over the past few decades – no longer have the same salience, or are even in play.

Liberal democracy is organised around the following set of distinctive institutions and processes in which 1) citizens effectively delegate their voice to elected representatives who act and speak on their behalf between one election and the next. Representatives convene in 2) parliaments or elected assemblies where they advocate and deliberate on our behalf as citizens (comparatively minimal input from citizens in the actual policy and decision-making process). 3) representation is decided through mass elections every three, four or five years which are dominated by 4) mass political parties that offer competing political and policy programs to attract our vote.

We like to view and think about democracy in the abstract. But this overlooks the critical point that liberal democracy emerged from very specific 19th century conditions and ideas about how the political world should be ordered and organised. Specifically, it assumes that the chain of influence and power in politics will be top-down, flowing downwards from a select group to a community which is comparatively far less fragmented and diverse than exists today.

We should remember that our current representative system is based on an 19th century assumption that major information asymmetries exist between our elected representatives and citizens who elect them. The concept of delegating decision-making powers to those who are assumed to be better educated and informed – and therefore in position to 'know more and know faster than those they represent – amounts to an immense reality gap in a 21st century world where education levels, unprecedented levels of information as well as geographical and social mobility coalesces into intense expectations from the public that more transparent governance systems and processes should be in place to engage with and represent their views on important public policy decisions.

One of the fundamental shifts in society over the last 30 years has been the reordering of how these chains of influence – in particular social, political and economic authority and influence – are created, accessed and exchanged.

Much has been written about this basic disruptive shift across different disciplines and forums, but the general consensus is the exponential rollout of digital technologies since the 1990s, together with exponential rates of information being created and shared due to this rollout, has led to chains of influence in 21st century society being increasingly organised around digital information flows.

DEMOCRACY DISRUPTED

Due to the significantly enhanced capacity for ordinarily people to create, access and exchange their own chains of influence and information via easily accessible technologies such as laptops and smart phones, it is much easier to accrue influence that directly challenges those who traditionally have control.

The levelling out of power, in favour of looser networks of smaller players, has also shaped new mind-sets in which the public expects to be actively involved in decision-making, or at least be substantially consulted on it.

Social, political and economic disruption created by rapid digital innovation has been layered by the impacts of globalisation over the same period. Public opinion on issues as well the political affiliations of individual voters are now shaped by forces and influences that range well beyond national boundaries. This in turn weakens the hold of established political institutions that have traditionally relied on distinctive geographical boundaries and cleavages to organise and sustain political support for change.

In sum, chains of influence have become increasingly more contested and more intensively in flux: put another way 'power has become easier to get, but harder to use'[23] This broad transformation in chains of influence has opened up a number of fault-lines in our current democratic system that now severely impede its original intent and function. A number of books and papers have analysed the system-level problems the fault-lines which have opened over the last two decades[24]. These analyses refer to the following four broad problems:

A political party system in which the major parties – wedded to outdated ideological divisions and highly adversarial political and policy debate – increasingly struggle to engage with voters. This in turn makes it increasingly difficult to attract sufficient, stable blocs of voter support to claim a mandate for policy change, creating a feedback loop that amplifies voter distrust (which further amplifies the barriers to create public consensus needed for change).

A representative system – organised predominantly still around a two or three party system – that increasingly struggles to adequately represent what has become a more diverse, fragmented community. The major parties increasingly draw candidates from narrow pathways of political careerism, while increasingly privileging a small group of vested interests that are able to prop up political parties with donations and other in-kind support. This in turn amplifies the disconnect with and distrust of citizens.

An electoral system which restricts the input of citizens into the political and policy-making process to what is effectively a passive 'head-count' every three or four years (read mass elections). Where consultation is attempted, it is typically narrow-banded around a pre-determined set of terms of reference. This at a time when the public increasingly expects more active participation in policy-making and has greater access to information and expertise to deliberate on policy.

A parliamentary system in which these deepening fault lines feeds into an institution that is increasingly relegated to an arena of ideological division, political stunts and anachronistic protocols.

TWO CONNECTED CRISES

Clearly no system or organisation can function effectively in perpetuity if it remains unchanged or sees itself as immune from disruption, particularly during a period of disruption as far-reaching and broad-ranging as over the past two decades.

Australia's core institutions have not been modernised in any substantive way since Federation in 1901. To use an analogy, if our democratic system was our telecommunications systems, we would still be communicating via the telegraph. If it was our transport system, we would be largely getting around, at best, in a Model T-Ford.

The case for renewal becomes more potent when we consider that our democratic system should be at the centre of this disruption – steering and directing it into optimal policy and legislative outcomes – instead of being increasingly bypassed, ignored or seen as irrelevant by the people it is meant to represent and serve.

As a result of its growing disconnect with the fundamentally changed dynamics of the 21st century, Australia's democracy as well as the policy and public governance system attached to it is facing two interlinked crises which feed off and amplify the other.

1. On the one hand, we have an emerging **'crisis of representation'** – in which an increasingly fragmented and diverse electorate is unable to be coherently and legitimately represented by a political system dominated by two or three major parties which have a shrinking and increasingly less diverse membership bases. This representative disconnect is occurring a time when demand from citizens for a greater direct representation and participation in policy-making is growing, underpinned by an internet-driven world where the capacity to bypass the political party system and convey views and opinions on politics and policy-making at a grass-roots level is unprecedented.

2. On the other hand, we have an emerging **'crisis of functionality'** as the democratic system is increasingly unable to deliver good public policy in a consistent or coherent way. This is partly due to the deterioration in the ability of the public service to deliver independent, quality policy and governance advice to ministers. But it is also due to the crisis of representation in which an increasingly distrusting and disengaged public withhold sustained support and trust from politicians and by extension to their policy programs and decisions. Political parties and their leaders – increasingly shorn of stable, consistent bases of electorate support – increasingly think and act in the short-term and for narrow interests rather than the long-term and public interest.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR LEADERS – INCREASINGLY SHORN OF STABLE, CONSISTENT BASES OF ELECTORATE SUPPORT – INCREASINGLY THINK AND ACT IN THE SHORT-TERM AND FOR NARROW INTERESTS RATHER THAN THE LONG-TERM AND PUBLIC INTEREST.

PART D

- A Roadmap for Renewing our Democracy
- Reforms and Rationales
- Conclusion – Renew or Wither Democracy?

A ROADMAP FOR RENEWING OUR DEMOCRACY

So what is to be done? The **first step** is to recognise that it is not democracy per se that is failing, or that we should 'do away' with democracy. To reiterate, failure is occurring because the current delivery mechanism and arrangements of democracy – namely a 19th century-derived system of liberal democracy – has been disrupted and is increasingly out of synch with the 21st century world around it.

The **second step** is to recognise that it is neither practical nor desirable to advocate for disregarding or discarding our core democratic institutions and simply start again. Nor it is respectful of the critical role these institutions have played – and can continue to play – in building Australia's strong, democratic tradition, legacy and values. What the above analysis – as well as the reform proposal outlined below – highlights is the need to renew and supplement our current system with new processes and structures that help them better align with, and function better within the changed social and political dynamics, conditions and public expectations of the 21st century.

The **third step** is to begin to think innovatively and strategically about these renewal processes so they address democracy's twin, interlinked crises – representative and functional.

Despite a continuing reliance on the 'bad leadership' paradigm in a lot of debate and commentary, there is a growing realisation among policy makers, think-tanks and commentators that deeper forces are at play to account for current problems. A number of proposals have emerged in recent years which call for changes to institutions and systems to provide improved incentives, scope and/or context for political leaders and policy makers to act in a more functional way and increase public trust and confidence in political and policy decision-making.

Proposals include improving budget transparency, reporting and long-term policy planning by enhancing the role of the Federal Parliament's Parliamentary Budget Office[25]; reforming the Council of Australian Governments to make it a more impactful body in driving national policy agendas and outcomes[26]; introducing a federal anti-corruption body to improve the integrity of national policy-making systems while increasing public trust in government[27], as well as various calls to introduce fixed four-year terms to federal parliament to improve national policy certainty.

These and other proposals show legitimate and shared concerns about the current state of our system. However, they also point to gaps in understanding the extent of the challenge, as well as the need for more innovative reform. Renewing our democratic systems requires multi-level renewal efforts to address multiple, interconnected issues.

For example, any proposal to make policy-making more streamlined and co-ordinated (reforms to address the 'crisis of functionality') will inevitably fall short of their goals if they are not accompanied by reforms to rebuild trust, participation and consensus with citizens that in turn allow these 'functional' reforms a greater chance of politicians attracting sustained, broad-based support to implement them.

RENEWING OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS REQUIRES MULTI-LEVEL RENEWAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS MULTIPLE, INTERCONNECTED ISSUES.

A ROADMAP FOR RENEWING OUR DEMOCRACY

As a result, the democratic renewal debate – and proposals that flow from it – needs to shift from piecemeal solutions to a) recognising the need for broad suite of innovative changes that address multiple, interrelated changes and b) recognising the process of democratic renewal needs to be multi-staged so change is advanced in a realistic way.

A ROADMAP FOR RENEWAL NEEDS TO CONSTRUCT A WAY FORWARD WHERE KEY REFORM OPTIONS ARE NOT ONLY IDENTIFIED BUT PRIORITISED TO ACHIEVE LASTING REFORM OVER THE MEDIUM TO LONGER TERM.

The barriers to reforming liberal democracies are very high, particularly in Australia where our constitutional arrangements – aimed by their founders at fostering political stability – make it very difficult to change the system. There are also a number of vested interests that would prefer the system stay as it is, because its representative and functional problems allow them to steer a deteriorating system to their benefit. Lastly, and potentially most important, a highly distrustful public need to be persuaded that democratic renewal is in the interest of everyone.

A roadmap for renewal needs to construct a way forward where key reform options are not only identified but prioritised to achieve lasting reform over the medium to longer term. As a result, the roadmap for democratic renewal outlined below divides proposed reforms into two distinct stages.

The first is **creative governance** which utilises a combination of existing innovations in democratic governance and urgent governance changes to address immediate problems while building credibility around a longer-term reform process by delivering tangible improvements in the health of Australian democracy. The underlying objective of this first stage of the renewal would be to help renew citizen interest and trust in the political system and in the process, create an informed appetite within both the community and our political and policy leaders to attempt more substantive, systemic change.

The second stage recommends **systemic renewal**. These are bigger changes that involve reforming our system's key institutions in a substantive way and require a remit from politicians and the public, if not constitutional change. To achieve this deep public understanding and support of the imperative for major, lasting democratic renewal is required. While this second stage of reforms appear ambitious, they are critical to underpinning sustained improvement in the way our political and policy system works now and in the future.

REFORMS AND RATIONALES

As stated, there is no shortage of reform proposals being floated by concerned groups and individuals. The challenge is to organise them in a way that addresses the complex nature of the problem but in a practical, focussed way. The roadmap below draws on a number of renewal proposals outlined by think-tanks, commentators, academic experts and interested individuals. These range across both functional and representational reform proposals.

The proposals outlined in the roadmap have been selected because they reflect considered thinking on what it needs to address the underlying problems outlined in the paper, as well as reflect or mirror proposals that to reform the core institutions and processes of democratic systems around the world that are facing similar challenges.

At the same time, the roadmap is not meant to be exhaustive but a guide as to what can and should be possible by bringing together the growing number of worthy ideas now emerging – and attracting growing public support – to renew and reinvigorate Australia's democracy.

STAGE 1 – CREATIVE GOVERNANCE

	PROBLEM	REFORM SOLUTION	POTENTIAL OUTCOMES
1	**(Representative)** Lack of direct citizen input into major policy decision/ creating problems of public 'ownership' of and consensus-building on major policy issues, in turn leading to declining public engagement and trust	Trial use of citizen juries on policy decisions at both a federal and state level[28]	Greater public engagement and interest in policy decision-making, stimulating greater community /trust in political/ policy outcomes. A segue into systemic reform of creating permanent Citizens Chambers attached to state and federal parliaments (see below)
2	**(Representative and Functional)** Lack of transparency and uniform regulation on political donations, leading to inadequate and delayed disclosure	National uniform disclosure of all donations/funding to political parties + restrictions on third-party campaigns such as business and unions[29]	Provide greater/more accurate transparency on political donations + restore public transparency of, and trust in political process
3	**(Representative and Functional)** Expensive, advertising-driven election campaigns by parties, fuelling financial and policy dependence on vested interests.	Uniform caps/limit election spending by political parties and candidates[30]	Reduce dependence on political parties on vested interests/provide greater incentives for parties to argue empirical grounds and engage more directly with voters rather than rely on ad-based slogans
4	**(Functional and Representative)** Politically-motivated advice increasingly dominating policy outcomes/short-term party considerations increasingly marginalising evidence-based policy making	Mandate the adoption of Wiltshire criteria for major government policy decisions to create a consistent, future-focused policy-making process that is rigorously evidence-based and inclusive of public opinion[31]	Restore boundaries between political and executive decision-making/promote greater accountability, transparency and public trust in major policy decision-making
5	**(Functional)** Elections staged around short-term advantage, undermining policy consistency and stability	Introduce fixed, four-year terms for federal House Representatives[32]	Encourage longer-term decision-making and planning + improve public debate
6	**(Functional)** Lack of independent integrity body to oversight federal political and policy-arena	Introduce an anti-corruption commission at a federal level[33]	Improve transparency + integrity of federal politics and policy-making/ enhance public confidence + trust in federal politics and governance

STAGE 2 – SYSTEMIC REFORM

	PROBLEM	REFORM SOLUTION	POTENTIAL OUTCOMES
1	**(Representative)** Long-term, structural disengagement with the democratic system, requiring deep, long-term change to bring citizens directly into the policy-making process	Creation of Citizens Chambers at both state and federal levels, that act as a non-partisan check and balance on the agendas of both legislative houses while ensuring more formalised, ongoing citizen input and feedback from citizen into legislative programs. Representation would be randomly selected to be representative of the broader community[34]	Promote greater and more continuous participation from citizens in public policy, in turn creating greater policy consensus and public ownership of policy decisions.
2	**(Representative and Functional)** Parliament has become an arena of partisan, combative theatre rather than a forum of deliberate debate and decision-making. Arcane protocols and procedures increase the democratic disconnect with citizens.	Modernize parliamentary protocols and standards, including the following reforms: 1. Mandating appointment of an independent speaker 2. Removing question time 3. Reviewing and removing anachronistic procedures and protocols, of parliament 4. Mandate a code of ethics for parliamentarians[35]	Create a more open and modern institution which reflects contemporary behaviour and attitudes and increases public confidence in parliament.
3	**(Functional)** Overlapping and dysfunctional allocation of roles and responsibilities between Australia's tiers of government, creating policy inefficiency and fuelling public distrust in public governance	Full review of how the Federation assigns responsibilities and revenue raising capacities including how to empower COAG to co-ordinate national policy and governance in an ongoing way	Improved efficiency, transparency and co-ordination of national governance and policy
4	**(Functional)** Ministerial decision-making is largely in the hands of political careerists who often have limited experience and expertise on policy issues. This is creating poor policy outcomes or outcomes that are framed within party partisanship	Adopt a cabinet system at state and federal levels in which selected ministers are also appointed from outside parliament on the basis of demonstrated expertise and knowledge[36].	Provide more expert and accountable ministerial decision-making that decreases the influence of political partisan considerations in policy-making and increases public confidence in policy governance.
5	**(Representative and functional)** The Senate's contemporary role and function as 'House of Review for states' is significantly different from that envisaged when the Federal Constitution was written. Today's Senate operates as highly politicised institution that many argue is not representative of the broad cross-section of voter interests, let alone state's interests	Review the House's role and function in conjunction with Systemic Reform 1 as a potential 'People's House of Review', including the potential to elect citizens directly to the Senate through sortition.	More representative and functional legislative system that decreases partisan politics and improves government functionality.
6	**(Representative)** Communications between politicians/policy-makers and citizens remains predominantly analogue-driven as digital communications increasingly becomes the dominant form of public communications and information exchange	Review and potentially incorporate digital technology to facilitate real-time citizen participation and input into policy deliberation and decision-making (i.e. trial use of decision-making apps at federal and state levels)[37]	Align democratic participation with the increasingly dominant way people communicate views and opinions in the 21st century + increase timely citizen engagement and participation

CONCLUSION – RENEW OR WITHER DEMOCRACY?

Australia was at the forefront of democratic innovation in the 19th century with the introduction of secret ballots and extending the voting franchise. We need to lead again with a systematic and far-reaching approach and program to democratic reform that re-aligns our political and policy system with the contemporary conditions it is meant to both direct and serve.

To reiterate, this recommended roadmap for renewal is based on the premise that reforming our democratic system means revisiting and rebuilding its foundations, not patching up the walls.

'Time is running out' is an often-used phrase to make the case for urgent action in important areas of public policy. But in relation to the deepening problems with Australia's democracy, this is the stark truth. If the public standing of our democratic system – which relies intrinsically on the people's trust and engagement to maintain its legitimacy – continues to decline at the rate we have seen over the last decade, the reality is that we will reach a point of no return within 10 to 15 years. In other words, public trust in our political system will become so degraded and irreversible that we will reach a tipping point where no reform – regardless of its nature or scope – will restore its functionality or representativeness.

IF THE PUBLIC STANDING OF OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM – WHICH RELIES INTRINSICALLY ON THE PEOPLE'S TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT TO MAINTAIN ITS LEGITIMACY – CONTINUES TO DECLINE AT THE RATE WE HAVE SEEN OVER THE LAST DECADE, THE REALITY IS THAT WE WILL REACH A POINT OF NO RETURN WITHIN 10 TO 15 YEARS

To put the challenge in even starker perspective, this means we have around three to four electoral cycles not to just start the process of democratic renewal, but propel it with a sense of purpose that reverses public distrust and disengagement in our democratic system and puts it back on the road to 21st century relevance and functionality. Therefore, it is critical that our political leaders also recognise the urgency of the task and commit to the democratic renewal process.

The alternative is a democracy without the people and without coherent policy direction or purpose, which is no democracy at all.

PART E

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES & COMMENTARY

Australia is in a Democratic Death Spiral
QUEENSLAND TIMES, 2 JUN 2018

Party's Over: In a Nation of Cynics, We're Flocking to the Fringe
ABC NEWS, 19 SEP 2018

The Breaking of Australian Politics: Why and How We Got Here
SMH, 24 AUG 2018

Is Democracy in Its Death Throes?
PETER HARTCHER
THE AGE, 23 APR 2018

Anarchic Senate is Undermining our Democracy
PAUL KELLY
THE AUSTRALIAN, 23 OCT 2018

Pointless: Australian Democracy is Now an Even Bigger Laughing Stock
PETER HARTCHER
SMH, 24 AUG 2018

Guardian Essential Poll Finds Most Voters Sick of Australia's Polarised Politics
THE GUARDIAN, 17 JUL 2017

Australian Voters Disengaged and Disillusioned
MICHELLE GRATTAN
THE CONVERSATION,
8 JUN 2016

Yellow Vests Anger Sums Up Our Spreading Western Malaise
HENRY ERGAS
THE AUSTRALIAN, 28 DEC 2018

A Deeply Damaging Week for Australian Democracy
SHARRI MARKSON
DAILY TELEGRAPH, 31 MAY 2018

The Australian Democracy Faces its Final Crisis
PAUL KELLY
THE AUSTRALIAN, 29 SEP 2018

Our Politics is a Dreadful Black Comedy
RICHARD FLANAGAN
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, 18 APR 2018

Democracy in Decline Around the World
SBS NEWS,
22 JUN 2018

Sorry State of Politics
HERALD SUN, 5 APR 2018

BOOKS, THINK TANKS & REPORTS

Who's in the Room? Access and Influence in Australian Politics
GRATTAN INSTITUTE
SEP 2018

A Crisis of Trust: The Rise of Protest Politics in Australia
GRATTAN INSTITUTE
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Democracy in Retreat: The Revolt of the Middle Class and the Worldwide Decline of Representative Government
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2013

Finding Legitimacy, The Centre for Public Impact
A BCG FOUNDATION
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IVAN KRASTEV
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Overcoming Distrust and Rethinking Government
PROFESSOR KEN SMITH
ANZSOG, MAY 2018

Democracy in a Divided Australia
MATTHEW LESH
2018

Rebooting Democracy: A Citizen's Guide to Reinventing Politics
MANUAL ARRIAGA
2014

Edge of Chaos: Why Democracy Is Failing to Deliver Economic Growth and How to Fix It
DAMBISA MOYO
2018

The Life and Death of Democracy
JOHN KEANE
2009

Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust
PIERRE ROSEVALLON
2008

How Democracies Die
STEVEN LEVITSKY & DANIEL ZIBLATT
2018

Making a 21st Century Constitution: Playing Fair in Modern Democracies
FRANK VIBERT
2018

Democracy When the People are Thinking: Revitalizing Our Politics Through Public Deliberation
JAMES S. FISHKIN
2018

Against Elections: The Case for Democracy
DAVID VAN REYBROUCK
2016

CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL: AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Where this started

During 2017 a group of concerned Australians – representing a wide range of political views and social elements of our society - gathered in two symposium meetings to discuss the question: "What changes can we agree upon to deliver effective long-term decision-making which earns public trust?"

The outcomes of those meetings could be clustered into three categories:

- Firstly, improved transparency and accountability in government to minimise the impact of political and partisan influence on government decisions that affect the whole community and, in this way, help to restore public trust in government
- Secondly, seeking evidence-based and openly consultative government policy making on all decision-making and matters of significance.
- And thirdly, a refresh and rebooting of Australian democracy through changes in some of our governmental processes - and broadly re-engaging our citizens in the processes for making the policy decisions that are required for the common good.

The issues inherent in the first category are topics of ongoing discussion in the public arena.

In the second category Professor Percy Allan AM has progressed a widely publicised piece of research - and guidance for governments based on the work of Professor Kenneth Wiltshire, of the UQ Business School.

The issues within the third category have the potential to produce the most impactful and sustained change for the better - but due to the size and degree of difficulty in implementation, there has been limited progress to date. A small group of participants from the 2017 seminars have, with the support of the New Democracy Foundation, been discussing a way forward with various interested parties. Matt Ryan has contributed reflections on his experience in developing South Australia's extensive program of democratic innovation and knowledge of citizen participation practices that are emerging internationally. Dr Mark Triffitt has written and contributed a paper that details a description, and evolution, of the challenges our democracy faces – and a way forward in addressing these.

The convening group have now taken up the challenge of moving forward through helping to inform our citizens on the challenges and issues at play, suggest potential remedies - and to build momentum for community dialogue and ultimately a citizen's assembly to determine a way forward for "Australia to improve our governance systems and do democracy better".

Objective:

Our end objective is to stimulate the establishment of an Australian citizens' assembly, that is reflective of our whole community, to determine how we can regenerate and strengthen our democracy, through:

- Better enabling the discourse, deliberation, legislation, regulation and enactment of Government policy making to be conducted in a transparent, fact-based, consultative, timely and civil manner with the common good given overriding priority;
- Better representing the views of our population in government policy formulation;
- Establishing a constitutional review process that will give us a contemporary constitution promulgated and legislated by the people of Australia (in place of the current constitution legislated by the UK Parliament in 1900!) that sets the framework for governing our country wisely as we face contemporary and future opportunities and challenges.

Clockwise from top left: Glenn Barnes; Verity Firth; Kate Crowhurst; Matt Ryan

Who We Are

GLENN BARNES

Glenn is a consultant and company director who has over twenty years of governance experience in banking & financial services, business information, healthcare & wellbeing, body protection, consumer goods and the not-for-profit sector.

He has had a long term interest in economics and political systems, was a board member and Victorian President of the *Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)* and Co-Chair (with Verity Firth) of a 2017 Symposium on Trusted Long Term Decision Making (by Government).

Glenn was involved in packaged goods and the banking and financial services sectors for over 30 years, as an executive, business leader and director in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States of America, Republic of Ireland, Japan and China. He has also held a number of regional and global leadership roles.

Glenn recently retired as Chairman of *Australian Unity Limited* and is the Chairman of *Ansell Limited* an ASX100 company. He is a Senior Fellow of the *Financial Institute of Australasia*, a Certified Practising Marketer and Fellow of the *Australian Marketing Institute*, the *AICD* and the *Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce*.

VERITY FIRTH

Verity Firth is the Executive Director, Social Justice at the newly established *Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion*, *University of Technology Sydney*. She is currently spearheading the University's Social Impact Framework, a first of its kind in the Australian university sector.

Ms Firth has experience at the highest levels of government, not for profit and education sectors in Australia. As NSW Minister for Women, implemented sector wide strategies to improve women's recruitment and development; as Minister for Education and Training, focussed on equity in education and as CEO *Public Education Foundation*, the Foundation became a major provider of support to public education.

KATE CROWHURST

Kate has a distinct passion for increasing the engagement of citizens in politics and decision making. She is currently an adviser and executive officer. In 2018, she was featured on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list for her work in financial literacy and currently runs *Money Bites*, a financial education start-up working to create more engagement in personal finance. Prior to that, she founded *Advocate* to connect more young people directly with politicians. Over a number of years, she has stood on the shortlisting committee for the McKinnon Prize in Political Leadership and has also worked with youth-led organisations including the *Foundation of Young Australians* and the *Global Shapers*, linked to the World Economic Forum.

MATT RYAN

Matt is a former Deputy Chief of Staff to South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill. In that role he helped to craft a strategic policy agenda and advised on inter-governmental relations and the state's participation in the Paris Climate Summit. He also led work on the government's internationally recognised democratic reform program, which included multiple citizens' juries, large scale participatory budgeting, and open innovation challenges. Matt has also been a Director at *The Australian Centre for Social Innovation* where he co-authored a major report on public sector innovation. He is a Senior Fellow of The GovLab at New York University, where his work includes supporting members of the US Congress to better involve citizens in decision-making. Matt is a member of the *Institute for Public Administration Association (SA) Strategic Advisory Committee.*

Left to right:
Lisa Chung;
Steven Münchenberg;
Dr Mark Triffitt

LISA CHUNG

Lisa is a non-executive director of a variety of commercial and for-purpose boards, spanning a wide range of sectors. She was previously the Chairman of *The Benevolent Society*, Australia's oldest charity and is the current chair of leading consultancy, *Urbis* and *The Front Project*, a for-purpose organisation which advocates for universal access for all Australian children to quality early learning. Lisa is a non executive director of *Australian Unity* and *Artspace* and is Deputy President of Trustees of the *Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences*.

In her earlier career, Lisa was a partner, specialising in commercial property, of law firms *Maddocks and Blake Dawson* (now *Ashurst*), where she also held a number of senior management roles, including Sydney Managing Partner and Executive Partner. Lisa has a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Tasmania and completed the Advanced Management Program at INSEAD in France in 2004.

Lisa is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a member of Chief Executive Women.

STEVEN MÜNCHENBERG

BSc (Hons), LLB (Hons)

Steven is the Managing Partner of advisory firm *Blackhall & Pearl*, leading its board performance practice as well as developing new technologies to identify shifts in community attitudes and expectations.

Steven has over 20 years' experience working directly with the chief executives and chairs of Australia's largest companies. Steven was previously the CEO of the *Australian Bankers' Association*, Chairman of the *International Banking Federation* and Chairman of the *Finance Sector Council of Australia*. Prior to that, he led government relations for a major bank during the financial crisis.

Before joining the finance sector, Steven was Deputy CEO of the *Business Council of Australia* and an inaugural member of the *ASX Corporate Governance Council*. He began his career with the Federal Government.

Steven is a Director of *The Big Issue* and *Homes4Homes*.

DR MARK TRIFFITT

Mark worked in senior positions within Australia's policy and political system for nearly 20 years. He was a political and policy advisor with the Victorian Government in the 1990s and a strategic communications executive in the corporate sector in the 2000s. Prior to these roles, he was a political journalist. His PhD, completed in 2013 at the University of Melbourne, focused on the reasons for the structural decline of Western democracy in the 21st century. Mark has lectured at the University of Melbourne in a range of fields including political theory, public policy and political communication. His op eds and commentary on politics and policy – particularly on ways to renew our democratic system – have appeared in a number of leading media outlets and journals.

CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL: AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Left to right:
Dr Janette Hartz-Karp;
Percy Allan AM

DR JANETTE HARTZ-KARP

Dr Janette Hartz-Karp, Emeritus Professor, Curtin University Sustainability Policy (CUSP) Institute (WA), and Director 'Empowering Participation', is a well-known practitioner, teacher and researcher in deliberative democracy.

For over 4 years, Janette worked with a WA Government Minister to implement around 25 deliberative democracy initiatives across the Planning and Infrastructure portfolio. She co-led Australia's 1st Citizens' Parliament (IAP2 Innovation award). Also, Janette led a 4 year deliberative democracy research initiative to develop a more sustainable City-region in WA, including two 100% Participatory Budgeting Panels (3 IAP2 Awards and international acclaim).

Additionally, Janette worked on deliberative democracy initiatives in Alberta Canada (climate change), Bangalore (transport planning) and Pune (precinct planning) India, Be'er Sheva Israel (local area planning); with the Club of Madrid (past Presidents and Prime Ministers) on their initiative 'Democracy in the 21st Century' in both Egypt and Timor Leste.

PERCY ALLAN AM

Percy Allan advises on public policy, finance and management. He is a former Secretary of the *NSW Treasury* and Chair of the *NSW Treasury Corp* and a former Finance Director of *Boral Ltd*.

He has chaired the NSW Premier's *Council on the Cost and Quality of Government*, a financial services practice (*Market Timing Pty Ltd*), a wholesale funds manager (*Constellation Capital Management Ltd*), a racing code (*GRNSW*), a sporting complex (*Wentworth Park Trust*) and was National President of the *Australian Institute of Public Administration*.

He is a Visiting Professor at the *Macquarie Graduate School of Management*, founder, convenor of the ASX sponsored *Reform Club*, and a member of the *CEDA Council on Economic Policy*.

In 2018 Percy coordinated and co-funded the newDemocracy Foundation's evidence based research project that received widespread media coverage. (https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/our-work/477-evidence-based-policy)

TIMELINE FOR A NATIONAL CONVERSATION

2019

1. Build community awareness and discussion of the governance challenge and potential solutions through community leaders, journalists and politicians.
2. Commence an electronic petition to Australia's governments for the establishment of a citizens' assembly on how we can implement democracy better.
3. Commence a supporter's fund to financially support broad community awareness of the need for, and support of, a citizens' assembly.

2020

1. Continue to build community awareness and support for a citizens' assembly, petition support and fundraising.
2. Assist in drafting the detail of a citizens' assembly proposal.

2021

1. Continue to build community awareness and support for a citizens' assembly, petition support and fundraising.
2. Seek a commitment by Australia's governments to implementing the citizens' assembly proposal.

2021+

1. Be the consistent advocate for democratic renewal and openly challenge attempts to divert or distort the public interest case for change.
2. When the citizens' assembly makes its recommendations, be the advocate for implementing these and openly challenge attempts to divert or distort the public interest case for change.
3. Once the processes for change have been implemented disband and donate any surplus funds to the Museum of Australian Democracy, Canberra.

ENDNOTES

1 Pew Research Centre https://www.people-press.org/2019/04/11/public-trust-in-government-1958-2019/. This compares to 77 per cent in the late 1960s. This number fell to less than 20 per cent following the Presidencies of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter, rebounded following the 9/11 terrorist attacks to 60 per cent and has been around 20 to 25 per cent since 2008.

2 Edelman Trust Barometer 2017 – UK Findings, 16 January 2017 https://www.edelman.co.uk/magazine/posts/edelman-trust-barometer-2017-uk-findings/

3 See survey results from Eurobarometer – the European Union's public opinion survey arm- which found that trust in national governments and parliaments among Europeans has declined and remained stagnant at around 25 and 30 per since 2007 http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_first_en.pdf

4 https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/book-party/wp/2015/05/20/why-we-may-never-have-a-millennial-president/?utm_term=.bc47e091d766

5 See for example D Marsh, T. O´Toole, T., S. Jones, Young People and Politics in the UK Apathy or Alienation? Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 or B. Bowman, The under 30s in the UK: A generation used to not getting what they voted for http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/the-under-30s-in-the-uk-a-generation-used-to-not-getting-what-they-voted-for/ for an analysis of the underlying trends accounting for why young people are marginalising themselves from, and being marginalised from mainstream democratic politics in Britain, despite some recent indications – in the wake the 'Brexit' referendum in 2016 – that young voter poll turnout is now higher than for some time.

6 See I. Van Biezen, P. Mair,. and T. Poguntke,., 'Going, Going … Gone? The Decline of Party Membership in Contemporary Europe', European Journal of Political Research, 2012 51, 1, pp 24-56.

7 Gallup, 'Democratic, Republican Identification Near Historical Lows', 11 January 2016, http://www.gallup.com/poll/188096/democratic-republican-identification-near-historical-lows.asp

8 In Slovenia, for example, voter turnout has dropped from when 85 per cent in 1992 to 54 per cent in 2014.Pew Research Centre https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/21/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/

9 For example, public trust levels in the US government soared in the wake of the 2001 9/11 terrorist attacks, reversing a significant decline over the previous two decades. Yet that reversal was relatively short-lived.

10 Voter turnout is an example of what are sometimes contradictory trends that, when viewed within a broader or longer-term context, highlight underlying malaise. In the UK for example, a long-term decline in electoral turnout has been reversed in several recent elections, but public trust in government and their democratic system which ultimately underpins voter engagement has nose-dived. Even in those democracies where voter turnout has remained relatively stable or even increased, these figures mask a declining proportion of young voters turning out to vote.

11 The Lowy Institute, Democracy Survey 2012-2017, https://lowyinstitutepoll.lowyinstitute.org/democracy/. Similar results were recorded in the Institute's 2018 poll.

12 'Voter interest hits record low I 2016 – ANU Election Study' http://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/voter-interest-hits-record-low-in-2016-anu-election-study

See also the ANU's Electoral Study for raw data and analysis of the decline in voter interest and trust in Australia's democratic system since the 1990s http://www.australianelectionstudy.org

13 Tony Wright, 'Fairfax-Ipsos focus groups: Turnbull and Shorten have reason to fear the depth of discontent', Sydney Morning Herald, 7 August 2016, http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/voters-express-discontent-at-both-major-parties-in-fairfax-focus-groups-20170806-gxq97d.html

14 See for example 'Dutton leadership drama "a complete waste of time": Here's what you think about the drama': ABC News, 26 August 2018 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-23/heres-what-you-think-about-the-liberal-leadership-drama/10156964 and 'Australian's lash out at latest leadership change' Fox News, 24 August 2018,

https://www.foxnews.com/world/australians-lash-out-over-latest-leadership-change

15 The United States is a good example of how dysfunctions in are See analysis such as C. Chizzila, 'The least productive Congress ever,' Washington Post, 17 July 2013 https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/07/17/the-least-productive-congress-ever/?utm_term=.88dac63b49beand D. Faris, 'Why the GOP Congress will be the most unproductive in 164 years'17 July 2017, https://theweek.com/articles/711503/why-gop-congress-most-unproductive-164-years

16 The United States is a good example of how dysfunctions in its democratic system, particularly around growing polarisation between the major parties, are having a major impact on the capacity of the Congress to pass legislation. See long-run statistics on Congressional legislative performance at https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/statistics as well as analysis such as C. Chizzila, 'The least productive Congress ever', Washington Post, 17 July 2013 https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/07/17/the-least-productive-congress-ever/?utm_term=.88dac63b49be

17 See, for example, Peter Hartcher 'Fairfax-Ipsos focus groups: major parties doing nothing to prevent populist anger infiltrating Australia', Sydney Morning Herald, August 7 2017 http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-opinion/fairfaxipsos-focus-groups-major-parties-doing-nothing-to-prevent-populist-anger-infiltrating-australia-20170806-gxqea5.html and Paul Kelly 'US election: Trump-lite Shorten and far Right surf the populist tide'

The Australian, November 16, 2016, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/columnists/paul-kelly/us-election-trumplite-shorten-and-far-right-surf-the-populist-tide/news-story/7f4476eee709a86331eba6b54d2cd71c

18 See for example Tom McIlroy, Australia's career political class: rising number of Australian MPs are former staffers and ministerial advisers, Sydney Morning Herald, 25 March 2017.

http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/australias-career-political-class-rising-number-of-australian-mps-are-former-staffers-and-ministerial-advisers-20170323-gv4ne9.html

A report by public policy think tank Per Capita released in January this year echo these findings. The report found 'a surge in MPs running for office after having worked as ministerial

ENDNOTES

or political advisers; almost 40% of MPs (and more than half of Labor MPs) worked as advisers in state or federal government before running for office themselves'. See https://percapita.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/The-Way-In-Representation-in-the-Australian-Parliament-2.pdf

19 The increasingly unrepresentative make-up of the major political parties is acting as a significant disincentive for the public to join parties according to former Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and John Howard – and a key reason for growing public discontent with Australian democracy. See John Howard and Bob Hawke criticise career politicians 'with no life experience,' ABC Online, 17 August 2017 http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-17/john-howard-and-bob-hawke-criticise-career-politicians/8814572

20 R. Foa and Y. Mounk, 'The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnet', Journal of Democracy, July 2016, 27, 3, pp. 5-17.

21 See, for example, A. Gunn, and M. Mintrom, 'Political Leadership and Public Policy Debate in the 2016 Australian Federal Election', Australasian Parliamentary Review, Autumn/Winter 2017, Vol. 32, No. 1 as well as 'Ken Henry savages Australia's political leaders', The Australian, 23 February, 2017

22 See for example http://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/democratic_deficit.html

23 Moises Naim, The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being in Charge Isn't What it Used to Be, p. 216, Basic Books, New York, 2013.

24 See for example, B. Cammaerts, and L. Van Audenhove., 'Online Political Debate, Unbounded Citizenship and the Problematic Nature of a Transnational Public Sphere', Political Communication, 22, 2005, pp. 179-196; S. Coleman., 'The Lonely Citizen: Indirect Representation in an Age of Networks', Political Communication, 22, 2005, pp. 197-214; M.P. Crozier, M.P., & A. Little, 'Democratic Voice: Popular Sovereignty in Conditions of Pluralisation', Australian Journal of Political Science, 47 (3), 2012, pp.333-346; P. Mair,., Democracy Beyond Parties, Centre for the Study on Democracy, UC Irvine, 2005, www.escholarship.org/uc/item/3vs886v9,. M. Naim, The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being in Charge Isn't What it Used to Be, p. 216, Basic Books, New York, 2013; W.E. Scheuerman, Liberal Democracy in an Age of Social Acceleration, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004; F. Vibert, The Rise of the Unelected: Democracy and the New Separation of Powers, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

25 Business Council of Australia, Response to the Better Budgeting Discussion Paper, April 2017, http://www.bca.com.au/publications/submission-to-the-better-budgeting-discussion-paper

26 Committee for Economic Development of Australia, A Federation for the 21st Century, 2014, https://www.ceda.com.au/Digital-hub/Video-archive/2014/OCT/A-Federation-for-the-21st-Century-Report-Launch

27 The Australia Institute, The Case for a Federal Corruption Watchdog, August 2017, http://www.tai.org.au/content/case-federal-corruption-watchdog-icac-needed-fill-gaps-our-integrity-system

28 Use of citizen juries, selected by random polling, to deliberate and decide on important policy issues has been trialed in many jurisdictions internationally and is beginning to gain traction in Australia as a way of improving functionality and transparency of government decision-making while enhancing public participation and trust in policy making. It was successfully used, for example, by the City of Melbourne in 2015 to develop its 10-year financial plan and Future Melbourne Plan in 2016 (see https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/future/city-calls-jury-its-citizens-deliberate-melbournes-future). For more information about its rational, processes and case studies, see newDemocracyFoundation's website https://www.newdemocracy.com.au

29 Proposal by Maxine McKew to Symposium on Trusted, Long-Term Decision-Making, October 2017

30 A number of European democracies have set limits on campaign spending by candidate and parties. These vary but in some European democracies, spending has been significantly restricted. See European Parliament report Party Spending and Referendum Campaigns in EU Members States, 2015 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/519217/IPOL_STU(2015)519217_EN.pdf pp.30-33

31 The Wiltshire criteria involves ten sequenced policy-making steps developed by Professor Kenneth Wiltshire AO from the University of Queensland Business School. The steps include understanding clearly what the objectives are for the proposed policy change, rigorous empirical-based analysis of the pros and cons of change, a demonstrated consideration of other potential options and thorough public consultation on the change and its impacts. In October last year, two leading think-tanks, the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) and Per Capita Australia - identified with opposite sides of the political spectrum - both endorsed the process as integral to sound policy making after using the Wiltshire criteria to analyse 20 major federal and state government policy decisions. See https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/our-work/477-evidence-based-policy

32 Proposal by constitutional expert George Williams, to the Symposium on Trust, Long-Term Decision-Making, October 2017

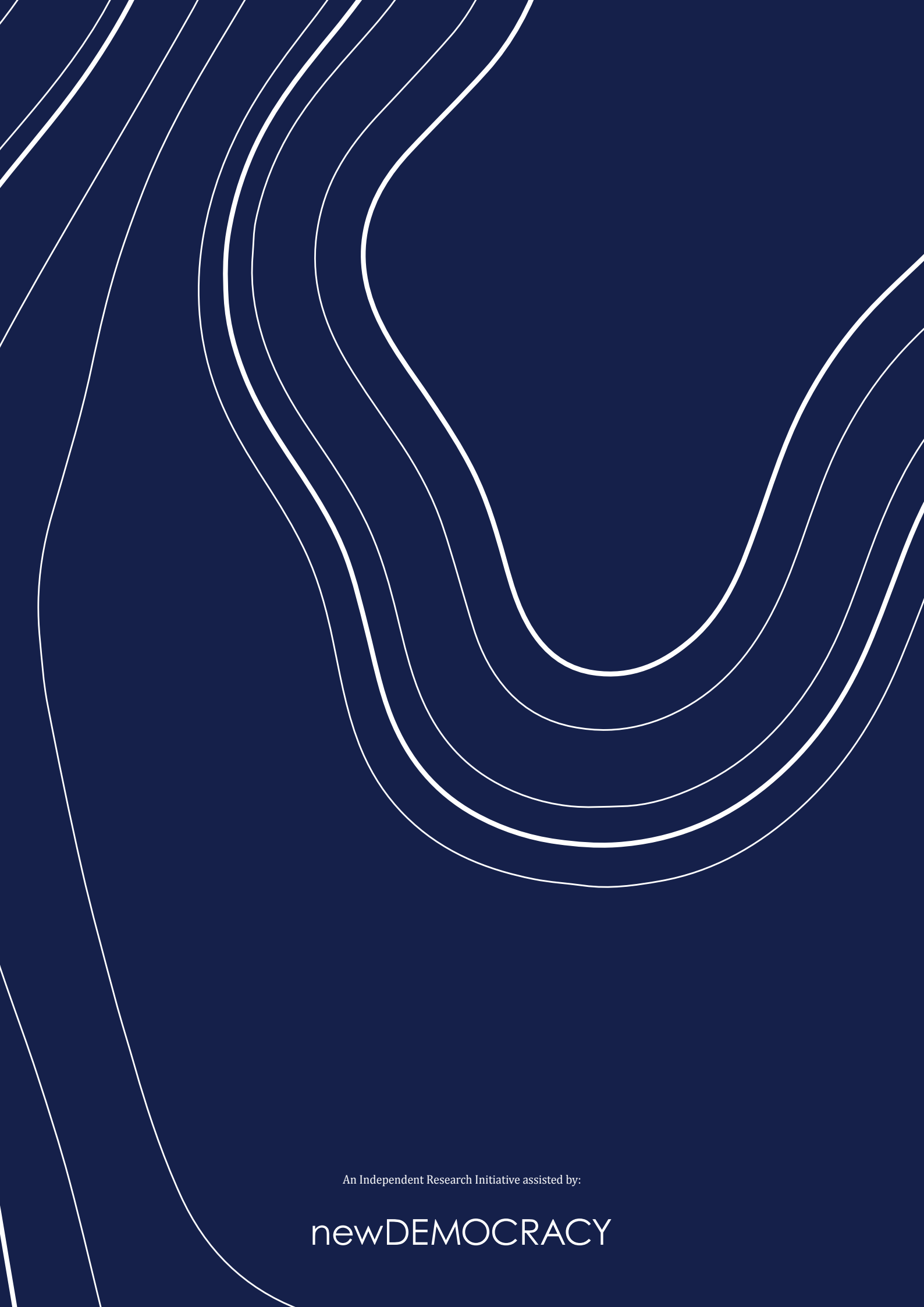
33 A Commonwealth Integrity Commission was agreed to by the Federal Government in December last year although the current proposal has been criticised as a watered-down version of similar anti-corruption bodies set up at a State level. See https://theconversation.com/the-proposed-national-integrity-commission-is-a-watered-down-version-of-a-federal-icac-108753

34 Proposal for a Citizens Chamber by economist Nicholas Gruen and environmentalist Tim Flannery to the Symposium on Trust, Long-Term Decision-Making, October 2017

35 Proposal by former judge and anti-corruption advocate, Tony Fitzgerald. See http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/majority-of-federal-mps-refuse-to-sign-up-to-tony-fitzgeralds-ethical-standards-20170710-gx820x.html

36 See the following University College London report for a detailed discussion on this proposal https://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/publications/tabs/unit-publications/151-cover.pdf

37 For a summary of the potential of decision-making apps as a platform for citizen participation on policy-making see https://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2463735 and https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/73635/114_ready.pdf?sequence=2



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