

How can Australia's democracy deliver? Centre for Policy Development Roundtable

Details:

Date: Friday 10 November 2017

Time: 13:00 for 13:30 start. Roundtable concludes 16:30pm, followed by drinks and canapés

Venue: Corrs Chambers Westgarth (Level 25, 567 Collins Street, Melbourne)

Please contact Luisa Boll (CPD Events Officer) on 0411 184 360 or luisa.boll@cpd.org.au with any questions

Background and Focus:

This roundtable asks how Australia's democracy can deliver. It forms part of the Centre for Policy Development's 10th Anniversary Series, which has democratic renewal as its centrepiece. It takes place a week after former Indonesian Foreign Minister, Marty Natalegawa, delivered CPD's inaugural John Menadue Oration on the topic: 'Can Democracy Deliver?'

Our roundtable will delve further into the question of democratic renewal. Democracy and the international rules-based order face profound pressure across the globe. Australia is not immune to this pressure. There is a gap between expectations of government in the community and government's capability to build and deliver an agenda. There is a question mark over assumptions that have underpinned public policy over the past few decades, such as the nature of growth, economic structure, the role of government, and the delivery of human services. Broad sections of the Australian community appear to have 'buyers' remorse'.

CPD's motivation for holding this roundtable is our belief that successful democracies are stable but not static. We also believe the debate about democratic renewal cannot be resolved by focussing simply on 'trust', 'leadership', and 'deliberation'. It requires a deeper discussion about Australian attitudes to democracy and to government, the connection of those ideas and preferences with more effective government, and a clearer shared purpose of what Australia's democracy should pursue.

We want an interactive discussion about what democracy and the social compact means for Australians today, what the community expects of government (informed by new CPD research on this question), and what reforms Australia's democracy needs most – new ideas, structures, institutions and processes. We will not be seeking a communiqué or attempting to reach an artificial consensus. We want a frank exchange of views under the Chatham House Rule on the pressure facing Australia's democracy and new ideas to ensure Australia's democracy can be fit for purpose.

Provisional Agenda

Note: Discussions at the roundtable will be held under the Chatham House Rule.

Time	Topic	Additional Information
13:00 – 13:30	Arrival	Light lunch and refreshments provided
13:30 – 13:40	Welcome and framing	Terry Moran AC, Chair of CPD Peter Mares, Moderator
13:40 – 14:00	Question One: What is the bargain between government and Australians today?	<u>Speaker:</u> Dr Nikolas Kirby (Research Fellow and Departmental Lecturer in Philosophy and Public Policy, University of Oxford, and Director of the Building Integrity Program at the Blavatnik School of Government) <i>Nik Kirby, who directs BSG's program on building integrity in government and is leading work on the performance of democracies, will offer some opening reflections on how the bargain between government and the people has changed, and what this might mean for Australia's democracy.</i>
14:00 – 15:00	Question Two: What do Australians want from government?	<u>Lead Speakers:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Glenn Withers, Research School of Economics, ANU • Tony Douglas, Director, Essential Research <p><i>This session will probe new CPD data about public attitudes towards government and democracy. Glenn Withers and Tony Douglas will kickstart discussion about how well we understand the expectations and priorities of the public, and how well government responds to them.</i></p>
15:00 – 16:25	Question Three: What needs to change for Australia's democracy to be fit for purpose?	<u>Lead Speakers:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Heather Smith PSM, Secretary of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science • Terry Moran AC, Chair of CPD & former Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet <p><i>Terry Moran and Heather Smith will offer their perspectives on the challenges of delivering effective government in the present era. Discussion will focus on new ideas and reforms for Australian democracy and government to be fit for purpose.</i></p>
16:25 – 16:30	Conclusion	Closing remarks by Travers McLeod, CEO of CPD Drinks and canapés to follow.