



# The Voice

## The People Talk - Casey

May 2023

democracyCo

# In this document

<b>INTRODUCTION/ OVERVIEW</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE RESULTS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>REFLECTIONS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>FEEDBACK ON THE EVENT / PROCESS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>PROCESS</b>	<b>14</b>



# Introduction and Summary

On Sunday 28 May 59 people randomly selected from across the electorate of Casey came together to talk about the proposed Voice to Parliament for Indigenous Australians.

They heard from Aunty Jill Gallagher AO and Warren Mundine AO from the “yes” and “no” perspectives (respectively) about The Voice and through a facilitated process they talked to each other about the proposal.

When they arrived, they were surveyed about their views and then again when they left. This survey was analysed by independent engagement company democracyCo and this report presents the results of that analysis.

When participants arrived, a greater proportion was in support of the “no” case and there was a considerable number who were unsure (almost 30%). Hearing from the speakers and talking to each other resulted in a substantial change in views – increasing the proportion who supported the “yes” case and substantially reducing the number of people who were unsure. When they left the group were polarised – with equal numbers supporting the “yes” case and “no” case and only 11% remaining unsure. Why people support either case reveals some interesting reflections on what equity means and whose voices need to be heard.

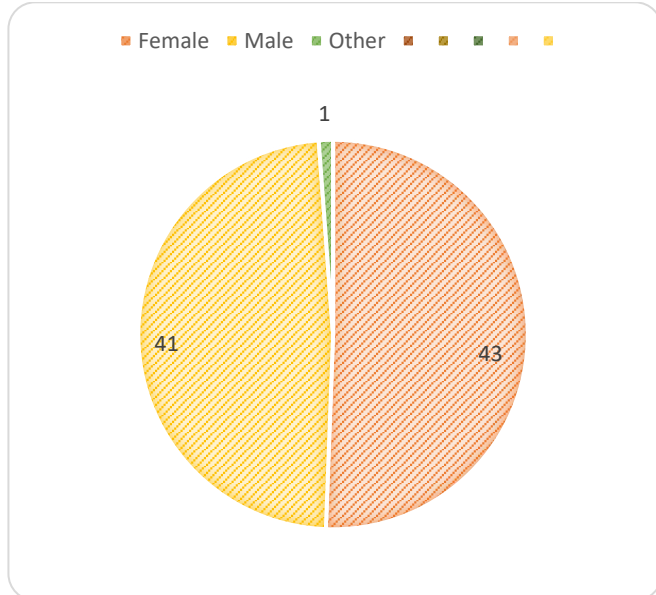
Details about the process can be found in Appendix A.



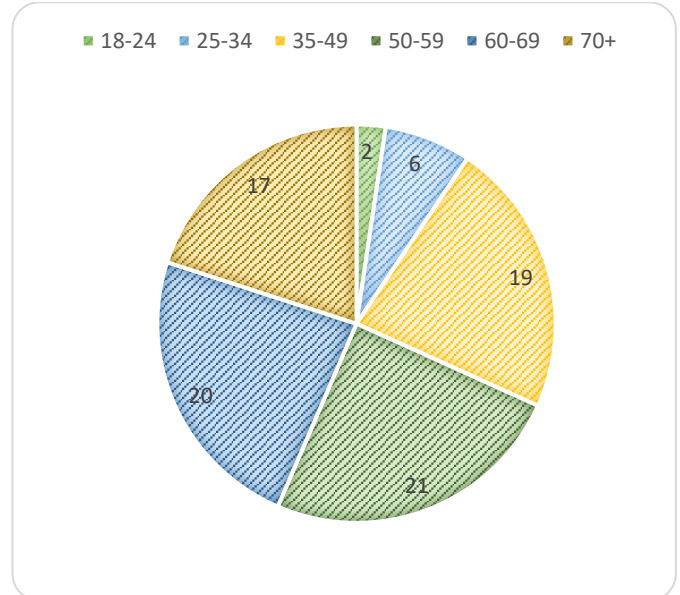
# Attendees

The attendees represented the diversity of the Casey electorate with respect to gender, age, heritage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, educational attainment, voting behaviour and location.

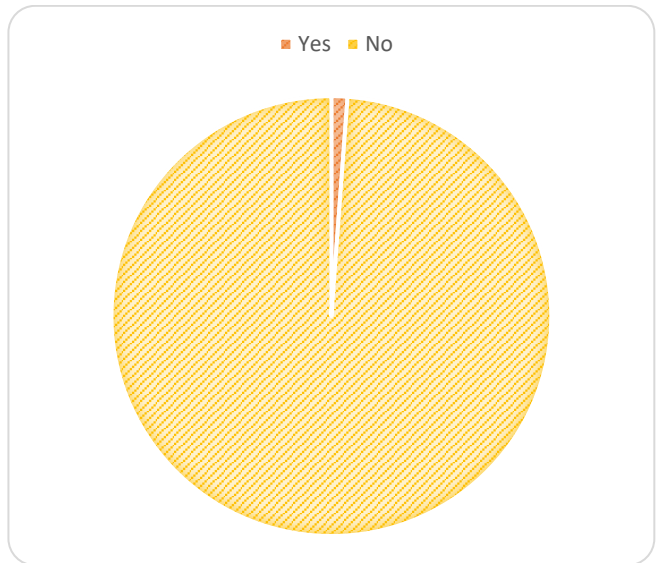
## Gender



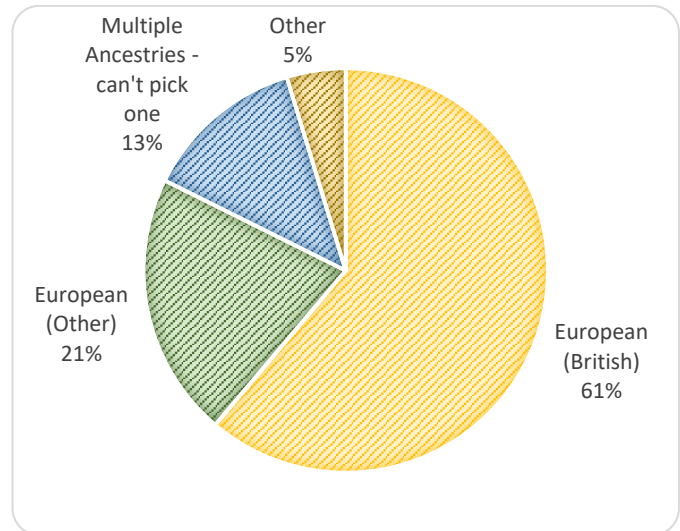
## Age



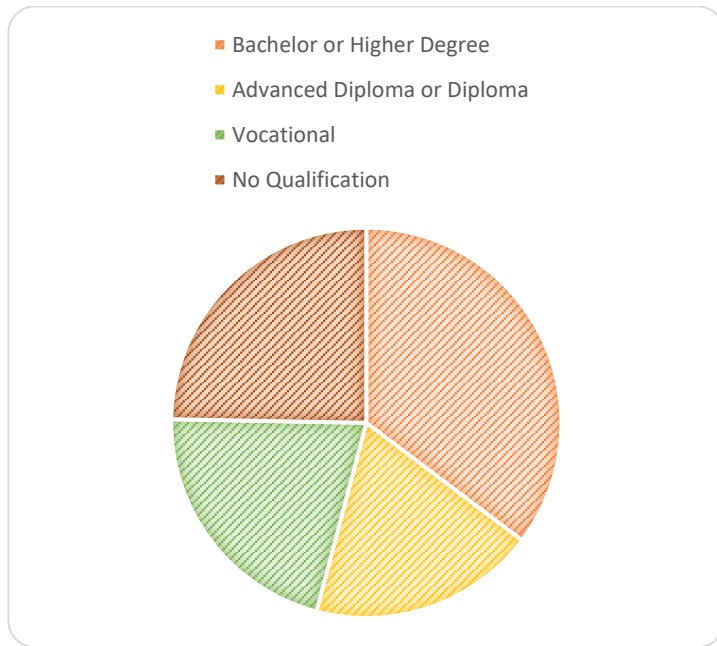
## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



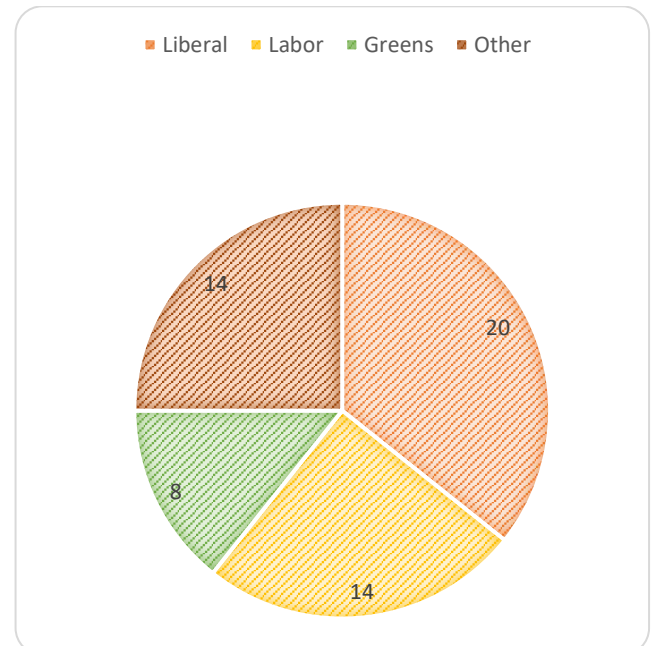
## Ancestry



## Qualifications



## Voting Behaviour



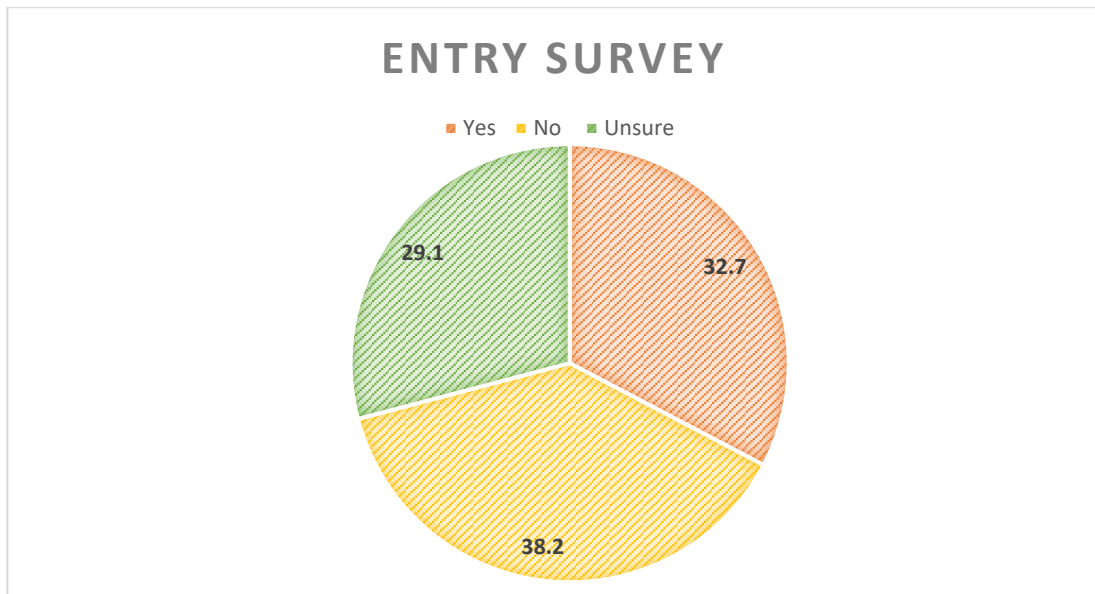
# The Results

Not all attendees filled out the surveys at the beginning and end of the event. 55 people responded to the pre survey and 47 people responded to the post survey. Every attendee had a unique identifier which was not linked to them, enabling democracyCo to look at who changed their views and how they changed their views and why, whilst maintaining individuals' anonymity.

## Entry survey

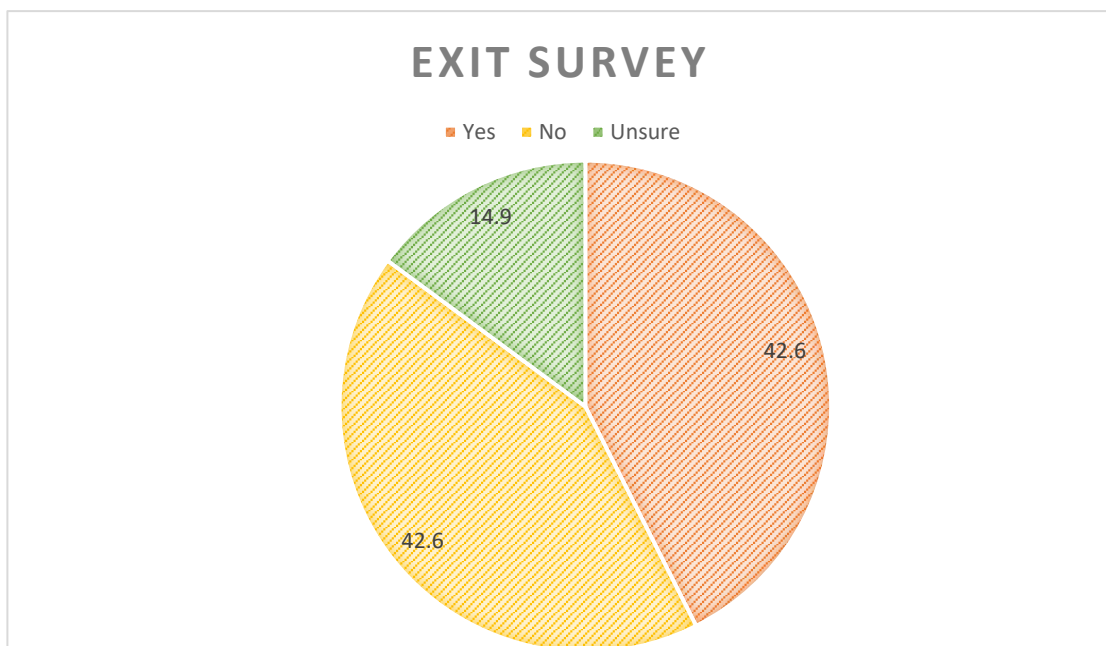
On arrival attendees were asked – *“What is your view on the Proposed Law to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice?”*

*If you had to vote today, how would you vote? Yes / No / Unsure”.* 55 responded as follows –



## Exit Survey

At the end of the session attendees were polled again on the same question, 47 responded as follows –

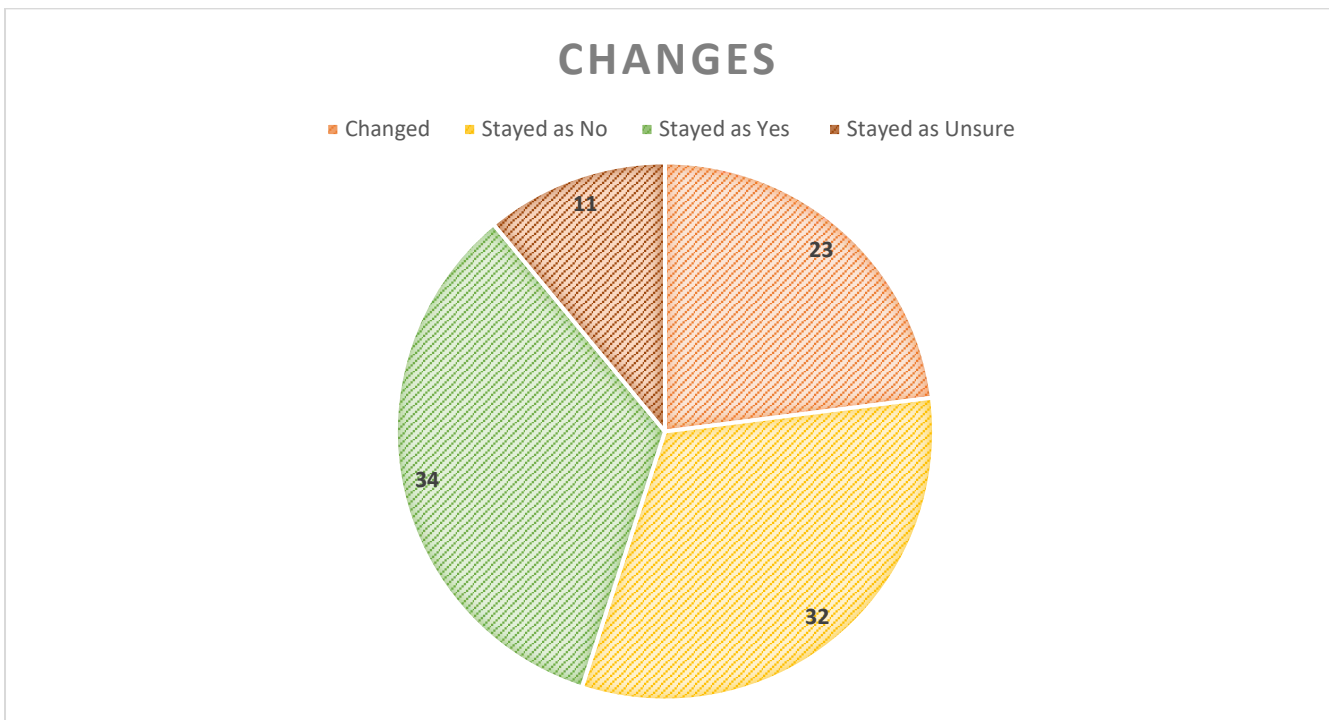


## Changes

There was considerable movement in people's views because of the conversation and information that they received with 23% of attendees changing their views. However, there was also a significant number whose firm views remained unchanged.

The people who changed their view to "no" indicated that they changed due to the lack of information or detail available about how The Voice will be structured / implemented. The people who changed their view to "yes" said that they did this because it became clear to them in the session that The Voice won't impact on non-Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people and because they understood that something needs to change to improve outcomes for Australia's first nations' people.

*"I'm more sympathetic to the injustices Aboriginal people suffered in the past but I don't really see how changing the Constitution is going to relieve the generational trauma they suffered."*  
**Participant**





## Why?

In addition to asking what people's views were, the survey asked people to indicate "Why" they answered the way they did.

This was an open question so people could explain their views in their own words.

We have analysed their answers to identify themes.

Attendees who indicated that they would vote yes, identified a range of reasons why, with the main reason being that they expect it will result in improved outcomes for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. The reasons why participants indicated that they would vote yes can be summarised as follows:

*I understand better the cry of Indigenous people for all aspects of their lives and communities to improve.*  
Participant

Reasons why "Yes"	Number of mentions
<b>Improved Aboriginal policy/ they get to have a voice on the issues that impact on them</b>	<b>6</b>
It is a Human right	4
Its fair/ equitable	3
Its time	2
Something needs to change	2
Redress past wrongs	2

Of those who indicated that they would vote “no” – the main reason given was ‘because it is unfair’. They questioned why Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people should have a more powerful voice than anyone else.

Why people would vote no	
<b>Why should they have a more powerful voice than anyone else?/ Unfair</b>	<b>6</b>
Not enough information	<b>3</b>
Don't want to change the Constitution	<b>3</b>
Won't solve the problems Aboriginal people face	<b>2</b>
Don't want race in the Constitution	<b>2</b>
Risk of corruption/ issues of transparency and accountability	<b>2</b>



# Reflections

During the session participants were invited to share their reflections on The Voice – their hopes, aspirations, insights, realities, and concerns. The contributions reflect the same themes people shared in the survey regarding their motivations to support or not support The Voice.

*I now have two sides, can discuss and debate with some confidence. The process and discussion was good and we allowed each other to have our opinions*

**Participant**

Their reflections in full were as follows -

## Hopes

- That we can elevate the health and lives of indigenous Australians and close the gap.
- I hope we can eventually get a financially responsible government without corruption.
- I would like to see Australia be fair – equal and reconciled with our indigenous community (heart emoji).
- Take a walk in their shoes. My hope is that all Australians can take time to understand why some first nations are not 'able to get on with it' and therefore need the voice of those who understand what is needed – the voice of indigenous people on indigenous issues. What has been done to date has not worked. We need to do better, different. We need to listen!
- We need a voice. Aboriginal people need to be heard because they are suffering. Breaks my heart what is happening to the Wurundjeri community. They should not be racism. Breaks my heart how the world is turning out to be one person and a voice can change the world.

## Aspirations – the future we want.

- That we can confidently be 'brand Australia' – generous, welcoming, mateship, innovation and celebrate our full history internationally.
- Its time to current the injustices of the past. Give them a voice to Parliament. Respect! Love! (insert heart emoji)

## Realities

- A lot of confusion between constitutional and legislative change. High degree of cynicism regarding politicians ability to make real change.
- What are the core issues at a granular level
  - Development path forward?
  - Issues below the headline
- How will the voice assist? Doing a root cause analysis (5 why's) ...life expectancy... education, ...???

## Concerns

- How are those on the committee to keep political neutrality (not associate with one party) to represent needs of community and their real needs.
- A lot of people fear that they have to give up land and personal things – this myth needs to be dispelled.
- Using the real estate analogy (which Emily did to demonstrate critical thinking..). You're selling me a house that does not exist, and you want me to choose yes or no as to whether I'll buy it...there's not even a plan.

## Feedback on the Event / Process

Attendees were asked for their feedback on the event. In summary, the event was enjoyed and viewed very positively with people appreciating the opportunity and learning a lot from it.

- 62.5% provided very positive feedback.
- 15% provided negative feedback.
- 7.5% were neutral and provided some ideas for how to improve the process next time.
- 15% provided a combination of positive feedback and negative feedback.

Examples of feedback that was reflective of the broad sentiments provided can be found in the following table:

Very Positive	Negative
<i>"Good to debate opinions across a range of people of different views"</i>	<i>"I found it confronting to be in a minority and the outspokenness of all the "No" people at my table."</i>
<i>"Good to hear Warren speak - good to see a positive view as opposed to negative. Venue was nice. People opened up."</i>	<i>"Too long"</i>
<i>"I appreciated the opportunity to hear the various passionate viewpoints whether or not they were consistent with mine."</i>	
<i>"I thought today was great and I am really grateful for being given the opportunity to attend and hear the opinions from both sides. Thanks, Aaron, for organizing."</i>	
<i>"I was well supported by Democracy &amp; Co and Aaron in light of my lived experience."</i>	

### Neutral with ideas

*"I would have preferred the tables to be pre allocated because I felt like minded people gravitated toward each other and sat together."*

### Combination

*"Didn't really leave us with any facts, but the discussion has been thought provoking. Definitely should hold more of these."*

*"Even though I support the No decision, I thought Warren Mundine did not articulate his reasons for supporting No. Jill Gallagher did in her comments supporting Yes."*

*"Not enough time to discuss issues in our tables too much shifting round. I thought the speakers were helpful and appreciate Aaron asking for constituents to express their views."*

# Attachment A

## Process

### What is The Voice Casey?

The event was called “**The Voice - Casey**” and was a **mini deliberative Forum** on The Voice to Parliament. This is a new way for politicians to represent their communities and it provides local community members with a genuine opportunity to participate in their democracy.

Aaron, together with leading deliberative engagement group Democracy Co, hosted a group of randomly selected citizens from across the Casey electorate to participate in a 3hour session where they:

- heard from experts from the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ sides of the issue,
- talked to or hear from local Aboriginal people about their views and needs,
- spent time in small groups talking about what they heard and share their views before and after the session.

The event was deliberative providing local community members with time, information, the opportunity for meaningful conversation and a genuine opportunity to be heard by their local MP.

Organisers had wanted to involve more local Aboriginal voices so that attendees could hear their views of local Aboriginal people. Organisers contacted Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Group, Mullum Mullum and OONAH, however leaders spoken to about the process raised some concerns about possible safety issues with attending. Therefore, the attendees at the event couldn’t hear the views of local Aboriginal people to the extent intended and desired.

### Why the event was held.

Aaron was seeking to gain a deeper understanding of his constituent’s position on The Voice.

Aaron is committed to hearing from the people of Casey, and to sharing the learnings and outcomes of this event with the people of Casey, and all Australian’s when he speaks in parliament on The Voice in the coming months. He wants to make sure the people in his electorate are heard and he wants to assist the process of building mutual understanding and improve knowledge of the facts on this issue.



## What is deliberative engagement?

Deliberative democracy is a way of bringing community voices together to make sense of complex issues and create solutions or recommendations that almost everyone can live with. It enables diverse groups of people, an opportunity to come together and spend the time they need to build critical understanding of the context and differing perspectives on an issue, to weigh up alternative trade-offs and solutions, reconcile disparate views and come to consensus on the way forward.

Deliberative process involves learning from experts (facts and information), as well as learning about the views and needs of others. You can learn more about deliberative democracy here – <https://www.democracyco.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ANZSOG-Six-Elements-of-Deliberative-Democracy-4-Nov-19.pdf>

## About the organisers

The event was organised by a number of organisations who volunteered their time to support Aaron.

DemocracyCo is a leader in deliberative democracy in Australia. DemocracyCo know that governments cannot achieve change alone. They are experts in engaging and mobilising communities through deliberative democracy processes like this event. DemocracyCo is non-partisan and supports MP's of different political persuasions to connect with their communities.

To ensure the participants at the event were a randomised group reflective of the Casey electorate, Democracy Co engaged the talents of the **Sortition Foundation**, world experts in stratification...and they're doing it because they love democracy too.

Local communications and engagement company **Hatrick & Co** have supported the team on the ground with strategy, communications and facilitation work.

All three organisations involved – Democracy Co, Sortition Foundation and Hatrick & Co - are committed to improving how the voices of people are heard within our system of government and undertook this work for Aaron and the people of Casey pro bono.

All organisations are independent and nonpartisan.

You can learn more about these organisations on the following links -

DemocracyCo - [www.democracyco.com.au](http://www.democracyco.com.au)

The Sortition Foundation - <https://www.sortitionfoundation.org/>

Hatrick & Co - <https://hatrickandco.com.au/>

All organisations are keen to support Members of Parliament of different political persuasions through similar trials in different electorates.





