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Introduction

Over the past decade, state and local governments throughout Australia have focused on how to improve community consultation. Government consultation processes, regulated with the best of intentions to involve the public, have come under heavy criticism as being DEAD (Decide, Educate, Announce and Defend). It has become apparent that the problem community consultation was supposed to fix – including the voice of the community in developing policy and plans – has remained problematic. Worse, the fix has often backfired. Rather than achieving community engagement, consultation has frequently resulted in the unintended consequence of community frustration and anger at tokenism and increased citizen disaffection. Traditional community consultation has become a "fix that failed", resulting in a "vicious cycle" of ever-decreasing social capital[1] (Hartz-Karp 2002). Ordinary citizens are less and less interested in participating, evidenced by the generally low turn-out at government community consultation initiatives. When the community does attend in larger numbers, it is most often because the issue has already sparked community outrage, inspiring those with local interests to attend and protest.

In their endeavour to change this situation, government agencies have created and disseminated 'how to' community consultation manuals, conducted conferences and run training sessions for staff. Issues of focus have included project planning, risk analysis, stakeholder mapping, economic analysis, value assurance, standardisation and so forth. Implementation models have illustrated a desired shift from informing, educating and gaining input from citizens, to collaboration, empowerment and delegated decision-making. Although new engagement techniques have been outlined, it has not been clarified how agencies can achieve such a radical change from eliciting community input to collaborative decision-making. Regardless, to reassure the public that improvements have been made, community consultation has been 're-badged' to 'community engagement'. A new vocabulary has developed around this nomenclature. However, the community has remained unconvinced that anything much has changed.

The question is: Why hasn't the community accepted these efforts with enthusiasm? The most optimistic response is that there will be a lag time between the announcement of improvements and actual improvements, and an even longer time lag between seeing the results and a resumption of the community's trust in government. The more pessimistic response (one that also has resonance with many public sector staff) is that in essence, not a lot has changed. The 're-badging' and management improvements have not resulted in the public feeling more engaged or empowered.

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[1] According to Robert Putnam, social capital is the collective value of social networks - their willingness to do things for each other. Thus, social capital is a key component to building and maintaining democracy.

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A New World View
It is the thesis of this paper that most improvements to date are not addressing the crux of the matter - citizen disaffection and reduced social capital. Nor are they tackling the critical question: Are we making better decisions that have the ownership of the people? If we are to seriously address these issues, it will require not just continuous improvement, but radical change in our way of thinking.

There is now a large body of thought proposing that we need a paradigm shift to 'systems thinking' if we are to tackle the really difficult decisions we face (Senge 1990, Capra 1996, Finnigan 2005, Portney 2005). This will entail a radical change in how we view reality. This shift in world view, hence how we behave and think, will involve new concepts, values and techniques. From this new paradigm, we will be able to understand that we are all integral elements of a "web of life", interrelated and interdependent (Capra 1996). This systems thinking world view will apply equally to engaging citizens in good governance (Finnigan 2005). Systems thinking will discourage individualistic attitudes and citizen alienation that work against achieving the common good. We will all need to understand diverse values and learn new ways of thinking and communicating together if we are to forge communitarian decisions, not only for us today but for future generations.

This fundamental change will need to take place on three inter-related fronts - within government, within the community and in the relationship between the two. Experience tells us that there is little point trying to fight the existing reality system between citizens and government. However, existing assumptions can be creatively destroyed if we open the space to test a new set of assumptions. We can do this by building and testing new models of collaboration between citizens, experts and decision-makers based on the new paradigm and assumptions. We can then assess whether they will result in bringing greater wisdom to governance.

New models of collaborative engagement will be dependent on developing our capacity to understand, integrate and find synergy between diverse viewpoints. To achieve this, we will need new ways of dialogue and deliberation, where we understand that there are more sides to an issue than the one we favour, and that by understanding others' viewpoints, and encouraging a free flow of ideas, valuing not only 'expert' opinion, but 'practical wisdom' (Booth 2006), we can creatively seek common ground that is in the highest public interest. Tom Atlee (2003) describes this capacity as "co-intelligence".

In 'The Tao of Democracy', Atlee describes co-intelligence as our capacity to think in terms of interconnected wholeness so the ideas we generate will be for the benefit of all. This intelligence incorporates diversity, creativity and power sharing. It evokes the best in us so we can reach creative consensus or common ground without the need to compromise. Atlee envisions moving towards a 'wisdom culture' where we address social problems though co-intelligent solutions and implementation plans, so increasing our organisational and community capacity to *be* co-intelligent.

As Atlee highlights, this radical shift will inevitably require deep changes not only in individual attitudes, but within organisations, and in this instance, especially within government agencies.

Experience has shown us that it is unrealistic to expect public servants to encourage diverse discourse, recognize ordinary citizens' 'practical wisdom', and empower 'outsiders' to make decisions when their hierarchical, technocratic institutions allow no such thing. We have seen the improbability of expecting public servants to create environments amenable to public dialogue and deliberation, when this behaviour is neither encouraged nor practiced within public sector agencies. For this to occur, they need a 'practice field' (Senge 1990) within their work organisations that would function like a learning laboratory, where staff can practice new skills in a safe environment.

For citizens to be willing to spend the time and energy co-creating viable solutions to complex issues, politicians will need to see the wisdom of enabling citizens to share in the decision-making on issues of importance to them. This will require Deliberative Democracy, a new idea that has grown from a very old one – direct or participatory democracy as it was practiced in the Athenian City States over 2,000 years ago. At that time, important societal decisions were made through the deliberations of ordinary citizens, chosen by ballot (though they did exclude slaves and women). However, the route most western democracies chose was Roman representative democracy, where the will of the people is expressed indirectly through voting for political parties and candidates. Deliberative Democracy as outlined here is not an alternative to representative democracy, but rather an aid to what many perceive to be "dysfunction" in our current political system (Marsh 1995, MacTiernan 2002).

Previously (Carson and Hartz-Karp 2006), we have suggested that Deliberative Democracy involves three basic tenets –

Representativeness. As in Athenian times, there is opportunity for ordinary citizens, representative of the population, to come together to deliberate on issues important to the society, but today, we include citizens regardless of gender, age, wealth, race, and so forth.

Deliberation. The second tenet is the opportunity for these disparate people to engage in egalitarian discourse on a public issue, taking into account multiple views and comprehensive, balanced information. The hope is that through respectful dialogue, people will creatively problem solve and find common ground that reflects the common good.

Influence. The third tenet is getting back to democratic basics – heeding the will of the people, particularly, the informed will of the people.

This paper proposes that Deliberative Democracy lies at the crux of models to improve decision-making and bring greater wisdom to governance. Moreover, it will be far more effective if we can develop our capacity for co-intelligence as individuals, organisations and communities.

The question is how do we start moving in that direction? According to Tom Atlee, co-intelligence is a capacity – so it is reasonable to suggest that we can create the conditions which are most likely to nurture its growth. From experience, it is unlikely to take root in the barren earth of our current world view where:
- only technocratic 'experts' are credited with knowing how to move forward; and

- hierarchical, managerial, public sector organisations preclude collaborative decision-making with ordinary citizens on issues that impact on their lives.

We now know this world view has resulted in disaffected citizens on the one hand, and powerful local lobby groups 'doing it for themselves' on the other. While the role and contribution of activist lobby groups is to be valued, in my view, it is not helpful to replace one inadequate world view - of hierarchical government control, with another - of local power groups. We need to integrate the two if we are to understand the complex, interconnected world in which we live.

Within such a world view, we will have a new set of assumptions including:

- Decisions in the highest public interest will result from informed deliberation among diverse citizens, representative of the population, encouraged to understand all viewpoints and seek common ground rather than compromise.

- 'Practical wisdom', acquired through local knowledge and experience is as important as 'expert' technological knowledge in decision-making.

- The role of activist lobby groups is to provide 'expert' knowledge to those deliberating rather than to participate as deliberators.

- Randomly selected participation is the best way to ensure that 'ordinary citizens' are fairly represented in the deliberations.

- 'Ordinary citizens' have the capability of sufficiently understanding complex technical issues to engage in rational deliberation and partner in decision-making.

- We all need to be prepared to have deep and meaningful discussions not only with others who agree with us, but with 'the enemy' whoever that may be, because if we are to create a sustainable future, the only way we will do it is by understanding that we are all on the same side, playing the same game.

In Western Australia, particularly in the Planning and Infrastructure portfolio under Hon. Alannah MacTiernan MLA, we have been pioneering this new set of assumptions. We make no claim that we know how to achieve co-intelligence and bring wisdom to governance. However, what we can claim is that we have started on the journey of creating opportunities for these to occur, and learning reflectively from our experience.

For over four and a half years, the author worked as a consultant out of the Office of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, and this work continues today, though the author is now based at Murdoch University. The starting point of this contractual arrangement was an agreement between the Minister and author that our current system of representative democracy was dysfunctional – "favouring polarised debate rather than collaborative problem solving…and 'infotainment' rather than reflective and informative deliberation" (MacTiernan 2002). The essence of the contract was to find ways to make our democracy work better. It was the author's task to find innovative ways to encourage diverse citizens to engage in informed deliberation and

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joint decision-making with government. It was the Minister's task to drive support for these initiatives within her Government and within her Agencies.

The initiatives carried out were based on deliberative techniques created in Europe and the USA, which were adopted, adapted and combined and in the process, new methods were created. Techniques included Citizens' Juries, Deliberative Polls/Surveys, 21st Century Town Meetings/Dialogues, Enquiry-By-Design Dialogues, Consensus Forums and Multi Criteria Analysis Conferences.

Each technique depended on getting a representative/inclusive group of participants to deliberate on an issue, taking into account all viewpoints, and for their deliberations to have influence on decision-makers. Over thirty deliberative, inclusive, influential processes were carried out over a five year period. Three examples are described that exemplify how such processes can enable co-intelligence and bring wisdom to governance.

- Dialogue with the City (extensive process culminating in a 21st Century Dialogue of 1,100 participants).
- Reid Highway Exit (Citizens' Jury).
- Three Deliberative Surveys in Three Portfolios.

Dialogue with the City (21st Century Dialogue)
'Dialogue with the City' was an extensive engagement process rather than a single event initiative. Tired of fighting NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) skirmishes, the Minister wanted the people to envision and make decisions about the sort of metropolis they wanted to live in. To do that, the engagement process needed to cast the net widely so the general population could be involved.

The community engagement began with a community survey sent to a random sample of 8,000 citizens to determine their key issues and concerns. The process then involved: an interactive web site; a series of feature articles on issues facing the city in the state newspaper; a commercial television program outlining various scenarios for the future that was broadcast in prime time; special listening sessions with Youth, Indigenous people and those from non English speaking backgrounds; and a schools competition for primary and secondary students to describe their vision for Perth in 2030. It culminated with a 21st Century Dialogue involving 1,100 participants seated at small facilitated tables with networked computers. Participants deliberated and prioritised their values and objectives, what they wanted to keep and what they wanted to change. To enable participants to understand the trade-offs required in planning, they participated in a regional planning game, based on real data, where they had to choose a planning option and then place the expected city growth of houses, industry, roads, etc on a map, while retaining the areas they wanted to protect. The participants' amalgamated maps formed the basis of the Plan. Over the following six months, more than 100 participants worked together to create a Community Plan known as 'Network City', which was submitted to Cabinet and accepted. Local Governments were then funded to run deliberations in their own communities to determine how the framework developed could be implemented at a local level (Hartz-Karp 2005).

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In a number of ways, 'Dialogue with the City' exemplified how we can do better at creating co-intelligence and wisdom in governance:

- Large numbers of diverse people were involved in creative thinking and problem solving. The Plan that participants created was innovative. Prior to the Dialogue, the Department had been promoting a different planning model. However, the Community Plan stacked up well in terms of social, economic and environmental sustainability. Moreover, it had more chance of being implemented since it was 'owned' by the people.
- The Planning and Infrastructure agencies played an integral role in the process in different ways than their usual 'expert' and mediating role. They provided neutral facilitators, scribes and support to the Dialogue and the subsequent teams, and endeavoured to keep themselves open and responsive to the outcomes of the process.
- The Government committed to taking the Community Plan seriously and they did so, discussing it in Cabinet and adopting it in principle.

One of the consequences of this effort, noted by the Premier Geoff Gallop during informal discussions with international deliberative democracy experts, was the increased social capital that resulted (2005). The people involved, of their own volition, worked to ensure this plan would become reality. As it happened, the Community Plan was released just prior to a State election and became enmeshed in the polemic media debates as an object of derision. However, the people involved 'fought back', responding with letters to newspaper editors, constant calls to talk-back radio, appearing in large numbers at demonstrations, and finding opportunities to speak on TV. As a result, it lost traction as an election issue, and is now accepted as the planning template for the Perth metropolis (Hartz-Karp 2005).

Reid Highway Exit (Citizens' Jury)
In WA, there had been a decade long feud between two suburbs about the exit to a new highway. No-one wanted it. We determined we would do our first Citizen's Jury with a random sample of 17 citizens, half from each suburb, who would listen to all the facts and the viewpoints, deliberate and make recommendations. In this instance, the Minister met with the jurors before the proceedings and told them if they could come to consensus, she would trial their recommendation providing it did not cost any more than $100,000 than the original plans, and that the conditions for the trial were set by the jury.

After hearing all the expert speakers and cross-examining them, the jury talked through the issues, devised some creative solutions, and to the surprise of both jurors and facilitators, came to a unanimous decision. Jurors then spent the rest of the afternoon determining how to spend the $100,000 they figured the Minister had allowed them to spend on the project. They wanted safety improvements. As a collective, they had reframed the problem from one of traffic flow to one of safety. Having done that, they were able to solve what had appeared to be an intractable problem with some creative ideas for safety.

Once again, this process had created opportunities for co-intelligence and wisdom in governance. As it happened, the exit option the jurors had chosen was the same as that originally suggested by Main Roads. As a consequence, Main Roads' first response was that the Citizen's Jury had all been a great waste of time and effort. It took them a while to realise that the complaints about the exit

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had stopped, there were no more letters to the Minister on the subject - the community had accepted the decision. This acceptance occurred for a number of reasons:

- By reframing the issue to a focus on safety rather than the problem the Department had elucidated, traffic flow, the Jury had addressed the concerns that were crucial to the community. When those concerns had been thoroughly addressed by those who would have to live with the decision, the community was prepared to accept the result. The Department had made a wise engineering decision, but with the co-intelligence of ordinary citizens, they were able to implement it with the good will of the people.
- The 'expert witness' lobby group representatives from both sides of the issue told the Jury that regardless of the outcome they would accept the decision because they thought it was a fair process.
- At the conclusion of the Jury proceedings, one of the Jury members apologised to her fellow Jury members, stating that she had hidden the fact that she had been a member of a lobby group, and that she wanted to let them know that she had the "right problem but the wrong solution". She later took it upon herself to inform her community of why the decision had been made.

The highway exit, including the safety changes, has now been built to the community's requirements.

Comparative Analysis (Three Deliberative Surveys in Three Portfolios)
A Deliberative Survey involves a large randomly selected group of participants (200 – 400) filling in a survey with 'top of the mind' responses, then deliberating for a day (or more) with experts from all viewpoints as well as colleagues, and finally, filling in the survey again at the conclusion of the deliberations, this time with more informed views. There is no attempt to reach consensus. The aim is to ascertain the extent to which attitudes change as a result of comprehensive information and opportunities for deliberation.

Because of government cost constraints, with inability to financially reimburse participants, combined with insufficient follow up to attain truly representative participation, there were varying levels in the representativeness of populations deliberating in Western Australian initiatives. To deal with this, an adaptation was developed. A survey was sent to a large random sample of the population with invitations to attend the deliberation. At the beginning of the day, the participant group was administered the survey for a second time to determine their demographic and attitudinal representativeness. By comparing the two samples, the statistical weighting necessary for the analysis was determined. At the close of the deliberations, the survey was again administered to determine any shifts in values and preferences. Early analysis of the findings[2] has shown that there is practical evidence to support key assumptions proposed earlier in this paper. A comparison of the results of three Deliberative Surveys conducted, one in health, one in water and one in roads has shown:

a) Participants who have been randomly selected from the general population have been quite capable of understanding fairly complex issues in a short period of time.

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[2] The detailed results of this analysis are the subject of another paper co-authored with David Bruce, soon to be completed for publication.

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b) The more representative the random sample participants are of the general population in terms of demographics and attitudes, the more likely they are to come to an outcome that represents broader, common interests.

c) The more the participants represent a one-sided attitudinal spread of the population, the more likely their viewpoints become even more polarised in that direction after listening to experts from a range of views and deliberating with other participants.

d) The more representative the random sample participants are of the general population, the more likely they are to value the deliberations and to be willing to participate in similar deliberative events in the future.

Similar conclusions have also been reached by analyses of Deliberative Polls/Surveys carried out internationally (Fishkin 2005). It is becoming progressively apparent that this new world view is not simply wishful thinking. There is an increasing body of evidence to support its viability.

Post Script

In our turbulent world, with ever-increasing divides between the rich and poor, cultures and religions, civilization and our environment, we are in dire need of co-intelligent communities, organisations and societies, given influence through Deliberative Democracy, so we have a coherent way of bringing more wisdom to governance.

The following is one vision for the future. From pre-school to university, the curriculum will be geared to building student and organisational capacity for co-intelligence. Like with juries, citizens will be called up for duty, but in this instance, to deliberate the critical issues of our society. Governments will be expected to respond to the outcomes, stating how they will or why they can not take on board the deliberative recommendations. Political parties will be judged at the election boxes on how well they listened to and enacted the co-intelligent will of the people.

This scenario is distant but not unattainable. In a number of western countries it is already possible to see moves in this direction. While this journey often seems such a struggle, creating the space for co-intelligence and better governance will be critical if we want to build a sustainable future.

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