



information
and privacy
commission
new south wales

A graphic of several stylized hands in various colors (pink, blue, yellow, orange, green, brown) raised in the air, set against a light grey background. The hands are of different sizes and are positioned behind a blue horizontal band.

SUMMIT ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & AGENCY INFORMATION GUIDES

26 MAY 2017

List of resources included, p8



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DELIVERING BETTER POLICY AND SERVICE OUTCOMES.

The NSW Information Commissioner and Open Data Advocate, **Elizabeth Tydd**, hosted a half-day Summit for senior public sector executives on Public Participation and Agency Information Guides on 26 May 2017 in Sydney.

Following a message of welcome by the NSW Attorney General, the **Hon Mark Speakman SC MP**, an opening address was delivered by the NSW Public Service Commissioner, **Graeme Head**, and a keynote presentation by social researcher and author **Dr Rebecca Huntley**.

After an opportunity was provided for questions, a panel discussion was facilitated by strategic thinker and organisational consultant **Martin Stewart-Weeks**. Panellists included the Publisher of The Mandarin, **Tom Burton**, the Executive Director of the newDemocracy Foundation, **Iain Walker**, and **Elizabeth Tydd**.



WELCOME MESSAGE **THE HON MARK SPEAKMAN SC MP** NSW ATTORNEY GENERAL

Voicing strong support for the IPC's focus on public participation and the worthy aims of the Summit, the Attorney confirmed the right of every NSW citizen to engage with government to make informed and better decisions.

The Attorney referenced the tone set by the Obama Administration in 2009 with the President's inaugural address that called for greater transparency, participation and collaboration from American citizens.

The Attorney also cited the call by the NSW Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP, for broader community engagement as part of her vision of leading a reformist government. The Premier has spoken of wanting the government's approach to involve the citizen in the political

process and of a new era of engagement between community and government to create stronger communities together.

In her address to the National Press Club on 3 May 2017, the Premier also spoke of the collaborative sharing of resources and expertise between government and the private and not-for-profit sectors, and the importance of recognising that Macquarie Street is not the sole repository of enterprise, innovation and capital in NSW.

The Attorney echoed the Premier's desire that the government remain citizen-centric, meeting the challenge of maintaining faith with the community and ensuring – through collaboration – that the community helps the government identify both opportunities and solutions.



OPENING ADDRESS **GRAEME HEAD** NSW PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Head's address served to highlight the importance of public participatory initiatives by government, coupled with practical insights from his career.

The Commissioner opened by paraphrasing a comment by English philosopher Baroness Onora O'Neil about the nexus between trust and the collaborative role for government. Trust is not built by those seeking it, but given by those responding to the trustworthiness of the institutions they deal with.

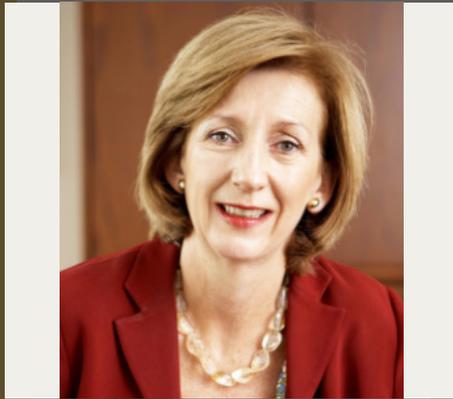
The Commissioner confirmed the commitment to engage with citizens and industry in delivering public services.

The Commissioner noted that public participation is a vehicle, not just for the way the public service does things, but also for the way it brings people's ideas into policy processes. It can, however, be a challenge to put public participation into practice, especially when we are asking people to work in fundamentally

new ways.

Referencing a range of public participatory initiatives from his many years in the public service, Commissioner Head drew the audience's particular attention to the Public Service Commission (PSC) Advisory Board's 2013 blueprint – *Collaboration between sectors to improve customer outcomes for citizens of NSW*. This document examines how agencies in government go about their participative and collaborative approaches. A forthcoming report regarding collaboration with a focus on case studies will demonstrate the translation of that blueprint into action.

Commissioner Head urged agencies to use the plethora of tools available that can be of assistance for public participation efforts. For example, the PSC's People Matter Employee Survey, Service NSW's Customer Satisfaction Survey, and the PSC's Workforce Profile.



WELCOME AND PANELLIST **ELIZABETH TYDD** NSW INFORMATION COMMISSIONER & OPEN DATA ADVOCATE



Commissioner Tydd's presentation stated the compelling case for public participation and a multitude of tools, but noted that there is not one size that fits all.

How then, she asked, can citizens obtain the information they need to continue meaningful engagement from a position of knowledge if we are struggling with our own duties?

The Commissioner's contention was that the *Government Information (Public Access) Act* (GIPA Act) is a key tool that can serve as a platform for innovation in the public participatory space.

Agency Information Guides (AIGs) in particular

are key. A requirement under the GIPA Act, they must be provided by agencies and describe the mechanism for public participation in gaining access to and being informed of the work government agencies are undertaking.

Commissioner Tydd urged agencies to start from a consistent basis so there is certainty for the citizens we serve. In applying consistent mechanisms through which citizens can obtain information we are able to create opportunities for citizens to participate in using policy formulation and service delivery.

Commissioner Tydd reminded participants that the work they do every day can promote a fairer, more participatory version of democracy.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS
DR REBECCA HUNTLEY
SOCIAL RESEARCHER AND AUTHOR

Dr Huntley's presentation offered a first-hand insight into a large-scale public participation exercise undertaken by the South Australian Government, providing lessons for other agencies looking to engage with citizens.

As a member of the advisory board for the consultation process that followed the report by the South Australian Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission, Dr Huntley outlined the quantitative and qualitative methods undertaken. These encompassed community forums; school forums; engagements at shopping centres, town halls and in remote communities; industry workshops; social media; and citizen's juries.

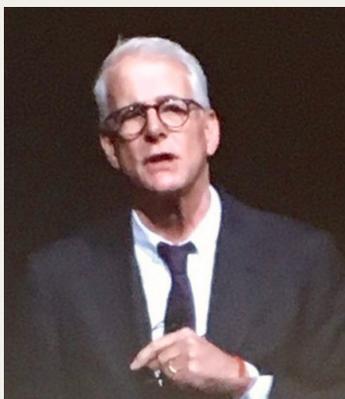
There were two citizen juries: The first had 52 members; their role was to come up with a document that would frame the discussion. The second jury had over 300 people. The definitive

decision was to say no to any further exploration of high level nuclear storage in SA.

Dr Huntley noted that a major challenge was how to engage the indigenous communities, particularly given the British nuclear tests at Maralinga in the 1950s and the ensuing damage to Aboriginal communities.

Dr Huntley was a strong advocate of citizen juries and the deliberative democracy process. She contended that it is imperative to rely on trust in citizens to get things right.

An important question she posed to agencies engaging in complex community consultation with different kinds of ways for community feedback was for agencies to consider how they are going to evaluate the process as an entire body of work.



Facilitated by Martin Stewart-Weeks, the panel discussion with Commissioner Tydd, Iain Walker of newDemocracy, and Tom Burton of The Mandarin, spanned a range of issues, including:

- Representative sampling
- Segmentation, rather than a broad-brush approach
- Problem-sharing and solution-seeking, rather than selling an answer
- Trust-building and embedding public participation in government processes
- Allocating time at the outset for consultation
- Continuing vs. one-off engagement
- Factors for a successful citizen jury: time, authority, information access, and opportunity to ask questions
- Branding – should convey authority and a position of objectivity
- The role of trust, transparency and talent

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[IPC Agency Information Guide](#)

[IPC AIG guidance material](#)

[Baroness O'Neill's Ted Talk on Trust](#)

[Collaboration Blueprint](#)

[NSW Whole of Government Customer Satisfaction Measurement Survey](#)

[Workforce Profile](#)

[People Matter Employee Survey 2016](#)

[Reports from the Advisory Board for the SA Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission Consultation and Response Agency](#)

[Integrating Citizen Deliberation into National Decisions: Ireland's Prime Minister's Office](#)

[Book by Beth Noveck, Smart Citizens, Smarter State](#)

VIDEOS FROM THE SUMMIT



[The Hon. Mark Speakman](#)



[Graeme Head](#)



[Rebecca Huntley](#)



[Panel discussion](#)