CHAPTER EIGHT

ADAPTING AND COMBINING DELIBERATIVE DESIGNS

Juries, Polls, and Forums

Lyn Carson, Janette Hartz-Karp

I was a facilitator for a massive consultation called Dialogue with the City *in Perth, Western Australia, in September 2003. The event was like no other I'd experienced. I'd been at Australia's first deliberative poll in 1999, where 350 people wandered around Old Parliament House in Canberra, and I considered that to be an impressively large consultation. But this Dialogue with the City event drew 1,100 people into a single room—a huge, cavernous passenger terminal at the Fremantle port. The minister for planning and infrastructure stayed involved during the entire day, reiterating that the outcomes of this dialogue process would guide the future planning of Perth and result in "action on the ground."*

I was part of one small group linked, like all the other groups, to a central computer via individual laptops. I recall at one stage the collective frustration and excitement of our table of eight people, who had come from such disparate backgrounds, each with their strong views. They were standing over a one-meter-by-two-meter colored map of Perth and its environs. In their hands, each person held rectangular and square stickers representing different urban forms, housing densities, commercial and industrial centers. Together, they had to address the challenge of finding a place for the 750,000 new people, 370,000 new homes, and employment opportunities that will be needed over the next twenty years. They had to place future residents somewhere and get their fellow team members to go along with it. So, for example, they couldn't oppose medium density in one area without finding a place elsewhere for these people to live. They had to deal with the consequences of each of their decisions in terms of urban form, potential loss of green space, and transport. It was a fabulous real-world puzzle with real-world consequences.

STUART WHITE[1]

This vignette from a volunteer moderator involved with Perth's Dialogue in the City encapsulates our story. We both have been driven by a desire to strengthen democracy—to include the missing voices, to improve the commu-

nicative competence of citizens, and to ensure that the recommendations they make are sound and influential. We have separately experimented with deliberative democratic processes for the past fifteen years and, in doing so, have made many mistakes and experienced many successes. We crossed paths several years ago and have been influencing each other ever since. Coauthoring this chapter gives us an opportunity to compare experiences and make sense of our learning.

In the pages that follow, we explore the origins of deliberative processes in Australia. We then describe three deliberative processes that typify our experience. We believe that the Australian experience provides an example of one country's unique response to experiments that have occurred elsewhere. Australia has imported many deliberative methods, but practitioners also have recognized that these methods can be adapted and combined to suit the issues facing us. We evaluate the extent to which these adaptations have been effective, using a set of criteria that underpin deliberative theory and our own practice. Finally, we draw conclusions about adaptation and the need to constantly address the challenge of maximizing inclusion, deliberation, and influence.

Arriving at Criteria for Public Deliberation

Lyn Carson's path along the deliberative highway began when she was elected to local government in 1991. She was a frustrated councillor with democratic ideals who was obstructed by a wall of constraints. She decided to complete a doctoral degree to help unravel the contradictions she encountered and to enable her to experiment with alternative forms of decision making. She was influenced by the writings of John Burnheim and Fred Emery, two Australians who were tackling the problems of a democratic deficit in very different ways.[2] With Brian Martin, she later synthesized the ideas of Burnheim and Emery with the practices of Ted Mack (a passionate Australian politician), Ned Crosby[3] (the originator of the Citizens Jury and coauthor of Chapter Seven), Peter Dienel[4] (the originator of planning cells, described in Chapter Six), and others.[5]

Carson noted the council's nonparticipatory style and hungered for change. She experimented with deliberative, inclusive processes to give voice to the voiceless, hoping that their views could be heard effectively. She became wary of the incensed and the articulate, the people who routinely participated in public meetings or advisory committees. Carson also advocated a combination of techniques to ensure that the weaknesses of one would be overcome by the strengths of another. After her period in office, this idea found expression in 2001 in a process that combined a citizens' jury with a televote.[6]

Janette Hartz-Karp's journey into deliberative democracy started as an academic and later as a change agent consultant. It became clear to her that in order for real change to happen, all those involved needed to be engaged in a different way. For her, it was all about building people's capacity to deliberate and then having their voices heard in decisions that would affect them. When the Australian Labor Party came to power in Western Australia in 2001, Hartz-Karp was asked by Alannah MacTiernan, the new Labor minister for planning and infrastructure, to work as a consultant to find innovative ways to engage citizens in joint decision making with government. It was the minister's view that Australian government was becoming increasingly dysfunctional, partly as a result of its endemic cynicism and a media focused on infotainment.[7] It was time to reverse the trend.

In an interesting practitioner-politician partnership, Hartz-Karp and Mac-Tiernan have been working together since 2001 to engage citizens in joint decision making with government. Techniques such as citizens' juries, consensus conferences, consensus forums, multicriteria analysis conferences, deliberative polls, and 21st Century Town Meetings have been adapted and combined in order to deal with complex, often contentious issues. Citizens have been engaged with experts, industry, and government from the inception of each process through its implementation, often taking several years. Some of these processes have changed the face of Perth, Western Australia's capital city.

What we have in common, clearly, is a history of adapting, inventing, and combining different deliberative processes such as those described in the other chapters of this book. Our varied experiences with these mixed designs have clarified for us the essential elements of an effective deliberative process. These can be thought of as three criteria for a fully democratic deliberative process:

1. *Influence:* The process should have the ability to influence policy and decision making.
2. *Inclusion:* The process should be representative of the population and inclusive of diverse viewpoints and values, providing equal opportunity for all to participate.
3. *Deliberation:* The process should provide open dialogue, access to information, respect, space to understand and reframe issues, and movement toward consensus.

All consultation methods attempt to meet these three criteria, albeit to varying degrees, and we believe that performance on these three criteria indicates a method's success as a democratic process.[8] Each is a necessary criterion for success, and only the combination of all three is sufficient for an event to be fully democratic. For example, a referendum or a deliberative poll could be extremely *influential* (if mandated by a nation's constitution or commissioned by a decision

maker) and highly representative or *inclusive* (especially if voting is compulsory or if random selection is used), but it might be flawed by its inability to allow participants to wrestle with the issue's complexity due to limited opportunities for moderated, in-depth dialogue and reflection. So it would be deficient in terms of its dialogic potential or *deliberative* capacity.[9]

Similarly, a community-initiated citizens' jury might be highly *inclusive* if steps have been taken to select randomly (usually via a stratified sample that matches a demographic profile), and it might be deeply *deliberative* because its skilled, neutral moderator fosters dialogue and positive group processes. Nonetheless, it could be seriously flawed in terms of its ability to *influence* decision makers.

Further, these three criteria are interdependent and interrelated. For example, without an evident pathway from consultation to *influence,* it is difficult to attract a highly *inclusive* sample to engage in *deliberation.* Without a very *inclusive* sample, the process will lack credibility amongst those who should be *influenced,* and so on. Failure to meet any of these three criteria typically causes the process to founder, and it can have a compounding, negative effect on the other criteria.

This does not mean that suboptimal practices are always a waste of time. Indeed, depending on the question being considered, a deliberative poll might not need more than a limited amount of dialogue, or a citizens' jury that has inclusive opportunities for dialogue but not much influence with decision makers might nonetheless change the lives of its participants. Progress and change are still possible and probable. What is important for us, as practitioners, is maintaining awareness of a process's performance in relation to these criteria and measuring that performance against realistic standards, given the circumstances.

Having clarified the criteria by which we evaluate public meetings, we will briefly examine three attempts to create the best possible public discussion process. For each case study, we describe the purpose of the discussion and how different methods were combined to meet that purpose. In each case, an attempt was made to compensate for the weakness of one process by pairing it with another that had a complementary strength. In the final section of the chapter, we will evaluate the extent to which inclusiveness, deliberation, and influence were achieved in these cases.

Container Deposit Legislation in New South Wales: Televote and Citizens Jury

Conveners

In 2000, Lyn Carson designed Australia's first combined televote and citizens' jury in collaboration with the Institute for Sustainable Futures. The minister for the environment in New South Wales (NSW) commissioned Stuart White from the Institute for Sustainable Futures to undertake an independent review of container

deposit legislation (also called a *bottle bill*) as part of a statutory requirement to review the Waste Act in New South Wales. The policy environment was hostile,[10] with packaging and beverage industries pitted against local government and environmental groups because of the absence of container deposit legislation in New South Wales. Such legislation would unequivocally place responsibility for container collection in the hands of producers: the beverage and packaging industry.

Meeting Design

Extensive analytical work was undertaken, supported by extensive social research. The combined televote and citizens' jury represented an important part of the social research, which consisted of a "combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of stakeholder consultation and public participations,"[11] including a call for written public comment and interviews with stakeholders. White, the reviewer, wanted to test some deliberative innovations to ensure that the citizens who offered opinions were highly informed. All of the earlier opinion polls that had been conducted—some of them by the industries that opposed container deposit legislation—showed overwhelming support for the legislation. This consumer support, however, was often dismissed as being uninformed.[12]

Had only a citizens' jury been convened, the findings would have been dismissed as being too small a sample. Had only a televote been conducted, the findings would have been dismissed as being too uninformed, even though a televote overcomes some of the weaknesses of standard opinion polling.[13] It was hoped that the weakness of the citizens' jury (its small number of just eleven participants) would be overcome by the strength of the televote (which employed a statistically representative sample of four hundred people. We also believed that the deeply deliberative nature of the citizens' jury (intensive, discussion-based inquiry over three days) would compensate for the unfocused deliberation of the televote (see Table 8.1).[14]

TABLE 8.1. COMPARATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY CHARACTERISTICS OF TELEVOTE AND CITIZENS JURY ON CONTAINER DEPOSIT LEGISLATION

Televote	Citizens Jury
Randomly selected	Randomly selected (The time commitment required may have resulted in greater self-selection than in the televote.)
Contacted by telephone	Contacted by mail
Representative	Diverse group reflecting a cross section of the New South Wales community

TABLE 8.1. COMPARATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY CHARACTERISTICS OF TELEVOTE AND CITIZENS JURY ON CONTAINER DEPOSIT LEGISLATION, Cont'd.

Televote	Citizens Jury
n = 400 citizens of rural and urban New South Wales	*n* = 11 citizens of rural and urban New South Wales
Large number of people involved (directly and indirectly) means that potential for raising community awareness of an issue is significant.	Limited number of people involved but can generate media interest and thus stimulate community learning and awareness
Cost: $15,500-$39,000 (U.S. dollars) for 400 people	Cost: $8,000-12,000 (U.S. dollars) for 11 people
Quantitative output; sample size is sufficient to yield statistically significant results.	Qualitative output; recommendations in the form of a report prepared by the panel
Process may be perceived to have greater legitimacy due to the number of people involved.	Process may be perceived by key decision makers as illegitimate because it only involves a handful of people and because the deliberative component is not quantifiable.
More informed than an opinion survey	Highly informed
Individual deliberation, though participants were encouraged to discuss the issue with friends, family, and colleagues	Group deliberation: face-to-face questioning of experts, facilitated discussion, exposure to a variety of opinions and arguments, opportunities for experiential learning and social interaction (for example, could involve field trips)
Access to summarized, printed information avoids persuasive power of experts but allows some exposure to opinions of others. (The process could have incorporated computers, which would have enabled more interactivity and greater access to information.)	Initial access to summarized, printed information, then more detailed, printed information and other media (for example, videos, slides) throughout the process. Exposure to the persuasion, motivations, and characteristics of those who dominate the debate; in this way, participants can sense the values inherent in "facts" and can use their own judgment to separate fact from rhetoric.
Decision based on self-interest, modified through discussion with others	Deliberation tends to steer people toward outcomes in the interest of the community. Dialogue and exposure to other positions and opinions allows for learning and consensus building.

Source: Carson, L., White, S., Hendriks, C., and Palmer, J. (2002, July). "Community Consultation in Environmental Policy Making." *The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs, 3*(1).
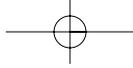
The topic of container deposit legislation was predetermined by the terms for the independent review of container deposit legislation. Therefore, the Institute for Sustainable Futures determined the citizens' jury charge and the televote questions. A stakeholder group of disparate parties vetted the briefing document and agreed on the accuracy and fairness of its contents before it was distributed to all televote and citizens' jury participants.

Setting

The televote included a random sample of telephone users that had been selected via random-digit dialing. The citizens' jury participants had responded to an invitation sent to two thousand New South Wales households that had been selected from an electronic telephone directory; 143 people had expressed interest in participating without knowing the topic; these citizens came from across the state. The residential citizens' jury took place at the Women's College at the University of Sydney on February 9–11, 2001. The televote took place in January 2001.[15]

Facilitation

The citizens' jury was facilitated by two professional facilitators. One was designated chair of proceedings; the other, facilitator for the jury. This distinction became irrelevant when the expert presenters from the beverage and packaging industry withdrew at the eleventh hour in what the organizers perceived as an orchestrated attempt to undermine the process. The citizens' jury went ahead without expert presenters from local government or environmental groups. Instead, public officials and academics presented the information, to avoid the accusation of bias. The potential accusation of bias was also addressed by having an independent evaluation of the citizens' jury.

Participants

Thanks to random selection, participants in both the televote and the citizens' jury were extremely diverse. There was no attempt to stratify the televote sample because of its large size, and it conformed well to census data in New South Wales.[16] By contrast, the citizens' jury was carefully stratified to guarantee a diverse mix of participants in relation to the sociodemographic differences that influence beverage use and waste collection (for example, age, location, household structure).

Information and Activities

The televote participants were asked to complete a survey, then asked if they would complete another survey after receiving information about container
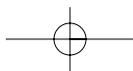
deposit legislation and discussing that information with family or friends. Those who agreed were phoned back one week later and surveyed again. On the key question of whether container deposit legislation should be introduced, the original survey yielded a result of 71 percent support, while the follow-up survey yielded a result of only 59 percent support. This did not mean that 12 percent dropped their support; the televote results indicated that there was considerable movement in attitudes both away from and toward support for container deposit legislation. However, the largest proportion shifted from yes to no or from don't know to no.

The eleven citizens' jury participants received the same information as the televote participants. Then, over the weekend of the citizens' jury, they heard presentations and had access to a substantial library and Web sites on the subject of container deposit legislation. They worked mostly as one group and were encouraged to investigate and discuss the topic using a variety of group processes, which occasionally involved working more intensively in small subgroups. Deliberating intensively, the citizens' jury slowly shifted from seven supporters (with four unsure) to unanimous support for the legislation.

We concluded that the more people learned about this topic, the more they supported the introduction of container deposit legislation. The televote provided further evidence for this conclusion: those who discussed the subject with household members or others between the first and the second televote were more likely by a factor of two to support container deposit legislation than not. Those who did not discuss it had views on the legislation that were consistent with the original views of the sample as a whole.[17]

Sustainability

There was no attempt to sustain deliberation after the project, since the aim was to discover what citizens thought when given access to comprehensive information on a reasonably complex topic. A contract was signed with citizens' jury participants, guaranteeing that its recommendations would be given to the minister without any interference from the Institute for Sustainable Futures, and this occurred. We believe that the strength of the citizens' jury was its in-depth discussion, which led to unanimity, while the televote demonstrated majority support without having the benefit of such deliberation. The televote had strengths that the jury lacked—for example, its statistically representative sample. The televote had the advantage of briefing documents that had been agreed to by all parties, while the jury experienced a stakeholder boycott (although this was not communicated to the jury). Other comparisons can be found in Table 8.2. We concluded that overall, the combination of the two events improved the credibility of the findings.

**TABLE 8.2. INCLUSION, DELIBERATION,
AND INFLUENCE OF DELIBERATIVE PROCESSES**

Consultation Method	Inclusion	Deliberation	Influence
Combined citizens jury and televote	3, 3	5, 2	1
Dialogue with the City	4	4	4
Citizens jury alone	5	4	5
Multi Criteria Analysis Conference	3	4	4
Consensus forum and deliberative survey	4, 4	4, 3	4, 3

Note: 0 = not at all/none; 1 = a little; 2 = some/more than a little; 3 = adequate; 4 = more than adequate; 5 = exemplary. When two methods have been combined, each method was evaluated separately, resulting in two numbers.

Source: Adapted from Coote, A., and Lenaghan, J. (1997). *Citizens' Juries: Theory into Practice.* London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 11.

Freight Network Review: Consensus Forum, Multicriteria Analysis Conference, Deliberative Poll, and Stakeholder Implementation

As in most capital cities, the transport of freight around metropolitan Perth has become critical, not just to the economics of the state but to its quality of life. The aim of the Freight Network Review, which was designed, coordinated and facilitated by Janette Hartz-Karp, was to bring the community, industry, and state and local government into the heart of the freight planning process. This was important for the development of a mutually acceptable and sustainable freight network plan (involving transport via road, rail, sea, and air) and key strategies to achieve it.

Conveners

The state minister for planning and infrastructure of the state of Western Australia convened the Freight Network Review, with the assistance of her departmental chief executive officers (CEOs). A series of techniques were used to maximize the three key elements of inclusiveness, deliberation, and influence.

To maximize inclusiveness, considerable effort was made to ensure that all voices were heard, including those without specific interests. At each consensus

forum, experts, public officials, interested parties, and a random sample of the community sat together at tables to deliberate and seek common ground. A random-sample survey and a deliberative poll[18] were incorporated in order to ensure broad community input. A community advisory group oversaw the process from inception to conclusion, to increase transparency.

Effective deliberation depends on access to comprehensive information and opportunities for dialogue. In phase 1, stakeholder working groups developed the forum briefing papers. A telephone survey of a random sample of one thousand people (five hundred metropolitan residents and five hundred who lived on freight routes that caused community concern) was conducted in order to determine public attitudes and issues, providing input to the process. The first two-day forum, with 130 participants, was designed to maximize opportunities for deliberation on the broad policy directions needed and a methodology for designating freight routes.

Phase 2 aimed at incorporating the outcomes of the forum in actionable solutions. An implementation policy team of community, industry, and state and local government representatives developed a comprehensive policy for freight planning that was based on the outcomes of the first forum. After the policy framework had been set, six working groups were convened to develop the plan to put the policy into effect. The working groups involved all stakeholders, and each was chaired by an agency CEO. Two of the working groups conducted separate community engagement exercises: a deliberative poll, to determine the limits on growth of the Fremantle harbor, and a multicriteria analysis conference, to determine the best east-west freight link. The final forum, which brought together 120 of the original participants, reviewed the outcomes of the working groups, determined the level of support, the gaps that still needed to be addressed, and the priorities.

In phase 3, a comprehensive six-point plan was developed by the implementation policy team, based on the second forum's priorities. An agency CEO is now responsible for each point, and a quarterly report, disseminated to all forum participants, outlines progress toward the targets set. The agency CEOs have regular meetings with the minister to ensure that the process is on track and on time. This implementation process has aimed to maximize the influence of the consensus forums on the decision-making process

Participants

There were approximately 130 participants at the first forum: one-third came from a broad range of invited stakeholder groups from the community, industry, and state and local government; one-third were respondents to advertisements in

statewide and local newspapers and professional journals; and the remaining third came from a random sample of residents, stratified by area. (The sample represented approximately a 12 percent response rate to the invitation.)

Forum representatives formed the implementation policy team and the working groups. All forum participants were invited to the two-day multicriteria analysis conference, and 80 attended. They were invited again to the final one-day forum, and 120 attended.

Information

Briefing papers were disseminated to participants more than a week before the first forum, along with a request to read them carefully prior to the event. The information reflected different viewpoints, was comprehensive, and was easy to read. The papers were developed by key issues work groups that consisted of representatives from government agencies, industry, and community groups. Participants also received the report summarizing the findings of the initial survey, and these were discussed during the forum proceedings. Within two weeks of the first forum, the outcomes were disseminated.

Prior to the final forum, the working group papers were sent to all participants and then were discussed during the forum. Following the final forum, the outcomes were disseminated to all participants. Quarterly progress reports of implementation have been submitted to the minister and sent to participants.

Setting

The first and final forums were held at the same venue—a large passenger terminal. Participants were seated at round tables in groups of ten. For all other events, participants were seated purposefully, to ensure a mix at each table of random-sample, industry, community, and local and state government participants.

Facilitation

A lead facilitator orchestrated each of the forums. Each table was facilitated either by a member of parliament or a member of the executive group from each of the government departments. All facilitators received a two-hour training session prior to the forums and took part in a two-hour debriefing session afterward. Each table recorded its findings on a flipchart. The implementation team and working groups were facilitated, to maximize group interaction. They were chaired by agency CEOs or directors, to ensure agency backup and cooperation.

Activities

The first two-day forum included a half day of presentations of papers, questioning, and exploration of key issues through an expert panel. The remaining day and a half was spent in interactive small-group sessions. Deliberation focused on finding common ground—a vision for an ideal freight system and the elements, "drivers," and key strategies needed to realize it. Techniques included empathetic listening, to encourage each person to understand the others' points of view; mind mapping,[19] to capture the visions and key strategies; a series of affinity diagrams,[20] to ensure that every person's ideas were captured and included; and a multicriteria analysis prioritization matrix,[21] to highlight the key issues.

Six working groups were created, comprising community, industry, and government representatives, to develop an implementation plan for each of the key areas. One working group held a deliberative poll to find out what an informed public thought about limits on growth of the Fremantle Port. A random sample of 1,600 residents of the port catchment area was sent surveys, together with balanced background information developed by the disparate stakeholders. Respondents were asked to read the papers, ring a toll-free number if they needed additional information, and discuss the issues with colleagues and family before filling out the survey and returning it. There was a 31 percent response rate,[22] and the survey findings were used by the working group to develop their recommendations.

A multicriteria analysis conference was held to determine the best east-west freight route. An initial community conference of eighty participants developed the options and the social, economic, and environmental criteria against which the options would be measured. An expert panel of ten then assessed each option against each criterion, using quantitative and qualitative data. Results were fed into a computer. The community group reassembled at a second conference to weight the criteria by attaching a measure of importance to each. This information was fed into the computer and in front of the community, the program ranked the alternatives based on how well they satisfied the criteria. The working group used the rankings to support their recommendations.

The final Freight Network Review forum was held in 2002, with 120 of the original 130 forum participants. The reports of each of the working groups were sent to participants beforehand and then presented briefly at the forum. Issues were explored, using a panel of representatives from each working group. During the interactive session, groups discussed gaps, verified how well the reports addressed the first forum outcomes, and then focused on the prioritization and timing of the implementation.

The stakeholder implementation team was charged with developing the recommendations from the forum and submitting them to the minister. They were accepted in total, and new teams were formed to oversee their implementation.

Sustainability

Both in terms of content and process, the Freight Network Review focused on sustainability. In terms of content, the six-point plan adopted by the government in response to the consensus forum aims to make the current freight system more sustainable. In terms of process, the aim of engaging the community in joint decision making was achieved. By focusing on optimizing inclusion, deliberation, and influence, community participation and trust was enhanced. Participant feedback highlighted the willingness of the great majority to participate in community engagement such as this in the future. The Freight Network Review built on the learning of a prior community engagement—the Road Train Summit, and opened the way to broader deliberation—the Dialogue with the City—which we will now discuss.

Dialogue with the City: 21st Century Town Meeting, Regional Planning Game, Interactive Web Site, Multimedia Involvement, and Stakeholder Implementation

Since the early 1990s, the Perth metropolitan area had been spreading in an unsustainable way. Although a minority of residents were involved in local planning disputes and localized lobbying groups were proliferating, there was little public understanding of the broader issues. Media coverage, focusing on infotainment, only exacerbated the lack of understanding and community ownership of the issues.

Conveners

Dialogue with the City was convened by the minister for planning and infrastructure of the state of Western Australia, together with the Western Australia Planning Commission and her departmental CEOs of road, rail, ports, land development, redevelopment authorities, and planning and infrastructure. In addition, strategic partnerships—for example, with a commercial television station, the major newspaper, several computer companies, and a key mining company—were sought, in order to broaden ownership and lessen the financial burden on the state.

Design, Participation, Setting, Facilitation, and Activities

Like the Freight Network Review, Dialogue with the City was not an event but a process. The process, which was designed, facilitated, and coordinated by Janette Hartz-Karp, began by focusing on what could be learned from the Freight Network Review. As a result, additional effort was placed on optimizing inclusiveness, deliberation, and influence. The design attempted to engage the whole community; thus, it included a survey of eight thousand residents, an interactive Web site, a one-hour television broadcast, a series of full-page stories about planning issues in the major newspaper, art and essay competitions in schools on the future of the city, and additional listening sessions for those who are frequently not heard—youth, Indigenous people, and those from a non-English-speaking background.

The process culminated in a 21st Century Town Meeting of 1,100 participants, held in September 2003. One-third of the attendees were stakeholder invitees, one-third were respondents to advertisements, and one-third were respondents to a mail invitation that was sent to a random sample of the population. Opportunities for deliberation were provided in innovative ways. The forum combined interactive computer technology, designed to determine key themes, with a planning game that enabled each participant to take the role of a planner and determine where and how the future growth of the city would occur. Participants were purposefully seated at tables of ten to maximize the mix of expertise and views. A lead facilitator moderated, and there was a volunteer facilitator and a scribe at each table. In all, there were 250 volunteers that day, all of whom had undergone a full day's training prior to the event. At the close of the forum, all participants received a preliminary report of the key outcomes. The outcomes of the forum highlighted the key themes that participants had developed and prioritized through polling. Themes included the key hopes for the future, what participants wanted to keep and change, their preferred model for the city, and specifically how that model could be achieved.

Over the next eight months, one hundred participants from the Dialogue with the City forum were involved with developing the plan for the metropolis. At each critical stage, the plan was reviewed by all 1,100 Dialogue with the City participants. Additional community members were also invited to offer comments. The end result, a new planning strategy for metropolitan Perth, was accepted by the Western Australia government.

Sustainability

The aim of the Dialogue with the City was to create the world's most livable city by 2030. It was clear that broad community support was needed if a new direction

was to be successfully implemented. The new planning strategy for Perth is not only a change of planning direction that has sustainability at its core but a change in how we plan, a change that has deliberative democracy at its center.

The feedback from the forum was overwhelmingly positive, with 98 percent stating they were willing to participate in a similar community engagement in the future. Over a third stated that they changed or significantly broadened their views as a result of the dialogue.

Many participants requested local dialogues to determine how the plans could be implemented at a local level. In response, the minister for planning and infrastructure has announced a half-million-dollar package this year that will allow local governments to run local dialogues that are representative, deliberative, and influential, to be followed by one million dollars next year to fund the initiatives that emanate from the dialogues.

Reflections

Our experience has not been one of repeating single deliberative techniques, and we have wondered whether this is unique to Australia. We have found ourselves engaged in experimentation, combining and adapting techniques to maximize the possibilities for inclusion, deliberation, and influence in order to best serve the purpose at hand. In the Western Australian planning and infrastructure portfolio, an initiative is currently under way to institutionalize deliberative democracy within planning processes. Commitment has been weaker in other states.

The impact of these deliberative processes has varied according to the extent to which they were inclusive, deliberative, and influential. When all three characteristics have been present and intertwined, the impact has been significant. Not only have the deliberative events affected the community's engagement and support of a particular initiative, but they have increased the community's willingness to participate in addressing other issues in the future.
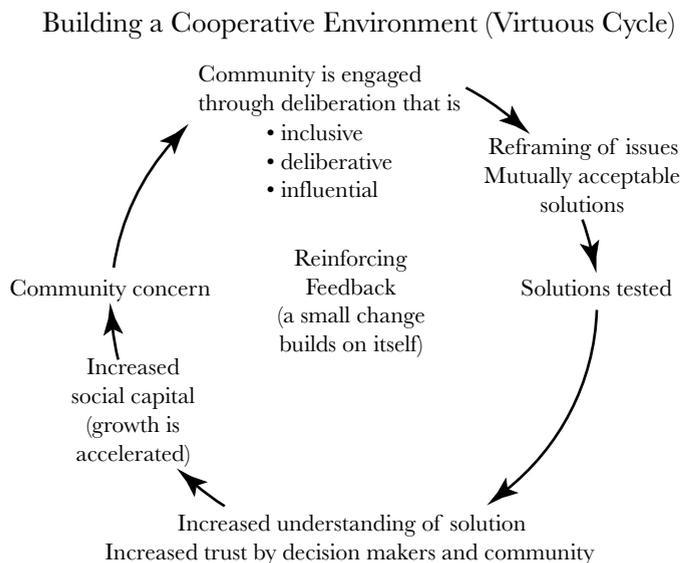
From our frame of reference, inclusion, deliberation, and influence are the key challenges of democratic process and hence the critical performance indicators. In Table 8.2, we have measured the performance of some of our processes against these indicators. Despite our focus on optimizing each element, this has been extremely difficult to achieve. It is clear to us that when performance has been exemplary or more than adequate on all indicators, we have made the most profound impacts. When *all* three performance criteria have been satisfied at a high level, the impact has been exponential, far more than the sum of the parts. The result has been that decision makers have felt more comfortable that they

have the mandate to act. Participants have been able to reframe the issues, en-abling them to find common ground, and consequently, they have felt ownership of the end results. As a result, agreed-on outcomes have been implemented, and community capacity and trust have been increased.

In terms of systems thinking, the interaction of the three elements acts as a "virtuous cycle,"[23] in which the reinforcing feedback loop ensures that a small change builds on itself, increasing trust and hence social capital (see Figure 8.1).[24] Such a virtuous cycle builds a cooperative civic environment for citizen engage-ment and policy change. In terms of building sustainable processes, it will not be until we have reversed the trend toward community disengagement that we will able to enlist sufficient social capital for deliberative democracy to thrive.

We do not believe that achieving this dynamic is possible through any one formula or technique; it will require constant innovation, constant combining, adapting, and creating ways to improve what we do. Indeed, it is only after years of experience that we have come to understand how difficult it is to maximize each element. Issues that previously were of peripheral concern are now our focal points. These include engaging the disinterested,[25] creating designs that provide

FIGURE 8.1. VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Building a Cooperative Environment (Virtuous Cycle)

Community is engaged through deliberation that is
• inclusive
• deliberative
• influential

Reframing of issues
Mutually acceptable solutions

Solutions tested

Reinforcing Feedback
(a small change builds on itself)

Community concern

Increased social capital (growth is accelerated)

Increased understanding of solution
Increased trust by decision makers and community

opportunities and build capacities to engage in real dialogue, and creating processes to broaden and strengthen community engagement in any implementation of outcomes.

Community consultation in Australia has been institutionalized through legislation, regulation, policy, and accepted practice; however, less-than-effective implementation has resulted in the unintended consequences of increasing cynicism and reducing trust in both communities and government agencies. With the growing momentum toward community engagement and deliberative democracy, there are already signs that some are repackaging traditional community consultation techniques to incorporate the language but none of the practices of deliberative, inclusive processes. This is a worrying trend that could easily undermine trust in the nascent movement.

In our view, the key challenge is to use contentious and complex issues as opportunities to use (and adapt and combine) deliberative, inclusive processes. If we are to reverse the trend of civic disengagement, it will require a paradigm shift–a fundamental change in the way policymakers and policy experts consult with citizens. And making that change will involve continually innovating to find ways to optimize the degree of inclusiveness, deliberation, and influence in our processes.

Notes

1. Professor Stuart White from the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney, was interviewed a month after the event took place.
2. Burnheim, J. (1985). *Is Democracy Possible? The Alternative to Electoral Politics.* Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press; Emery, F. E. (1989). *Toward Real Democracy and Toward Real Democracy: Further Problems.* Toronto, Canada: Ontario Ministry for Labour.
3. Crosby, N. (2003). *Healthy Democracy: Empowering a Clear and Informed Voice of the People.* Edina, Minn.: Beaver's Pond Press.
4. Dienel, P., and Renn, O. (1995). "Planning Cells: A Gate to 'Fractal' Mediation." In O. Renn, T. Webler, and P. Wiedemann (eds.), *Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation: Evaluating Models for Environmental Discourse.* Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer.
5. Carson, L., and Martin, B. (1999). *Random Selection in Politics.* Westport, Conn.: Praeger.
6. Carson, L., White, S., Hendriks, C., and Palmer, J. (2002, July). "Community Consultation in Environmental Policy Making." *The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs, 3*(1), 1–13.
7. Australian cultural commentator Catharine Lumby (1999) describes "infotainment" as products that blur the "boundaries between information and entertainment" in *Gotcha: Life in a Tabloid World.* St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 50. Australia is following in the footsteps of the United States and has a dumbed-down media that would be familiar to American author Neil Postman (1985). *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business.* New York: Viking.

8. These terms were coined by Carolyn Hendriks (2002) in "The Ambiguous Role of Civil Society in Deliberative Democracy" (Paper presented at the Jubilee Conference of the Australasian Political Studies Association, Australian National University, Canberra. [http://arts.anu.edu.au/sss/apsa/default.htm]), following the concepts of John S. Dryzek's (2000) discursive designs in *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations.* Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.

9. Blaug, R. (1999). *Democracy, Real and Ideal: Discourse Ethics and Radical Politics.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

10. Carolyn Hendriks, in her doctoral research, notes one Australian television journalist's claim that this thirty-year-old dispute is "a toxic mix of spin, rubbish and a great deal of money" (Ticky Fullerton [2003, Sept. 8], "The Waste Club," a segment on "Four Corners." Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation).

11. White, S. (2001, Nov.). *Independent Review of Container Deposit Legislation in New South Wales.* Report prepared for Bob Debus, Australian minister for the environment. Vol. 3. Sydney: Institute for Sustainable Futures, 2. [http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/publications/white.html]. Accessed May 16, 2004.

12. One of the polls was conducted in South Australia, where container deposit legislation has been in force since 1976. The respondents were, arguably, highly informed because container deposit legislation is part of their daily lives, and 95 percent of those surveyed supported it. However, there is also truth to the claim that citizens' preferences can be unreliable. The beverage industry has demonstrated this via its "litter spies" approach, which uncovers the gap between espoused and demonstrated behavior. See Beverage Industry Environment Council. (2001). "A New Method for Measuring Littering Behaviour in Australia." [http://www.biec.com.au/litterspies.html]. Accessed Jan. 28, 2005.

13. Becker, T., and Slaton, C. (2000). *The Future of Teledemocracy.* Westport, Conn.: Praeger.

14. Precise details of the two consultation methods can be found in Volume 3 of the report that followed the review (White [2001], *Independent Review of Container Deposit Legislation*), and abbreviated information can be found on the Institute for Sustainable Futures' Web site at http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/CDL_Report/.

15. Full details of this case study can be found on the Institute for Sustainable Futures' Web site, in Volume 3 of the final report to the minister at http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/CDL_Report.

16. White 2001, *Independent Review of Container Deposit Legislation,* vol. 3, 23.

17. White 2001, *Independent Review of Container Deposit Legislation,* vol. 3, 26.

18. The term *deliberative survey* rather than *deliberative poll* was used in Western Australia to avoid connotations of a single-solution poll and to emphasize the complexity of the issues under deliberation.

19. See, for example, http://cmap.coginst.uwf.edu/info/ and http://www.columbia.k12.mo.us/she/cncptmap.html for links to concept-mapping resources. A mind map or concept map is a device that allows its creator to make sense of concepts by linking them or relating them in a spatial or hierarchical manner.

20. Brassard, M. (1989). *The Memory Jogger Plus: Featuring the Seven Management and Planning Tools.* Methuen, Mass.: Goal QPC. An affinity diagram is a method used to organize large amounts of data that have been generated; it is a collaborative, usually silent activity that enables the group to match similar ideas.

21. Brassard (1989), *The Memory Jogger Plus.* Multicriteria analysis is a method of integrating different criteria that are relevant to a decision, in which each criterion is assigned a different relative importance; a matrix is used in the process of prioritizing.
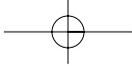
22. This response rate was higher than that of other surveys conducted by Hartz-Karp, which typically had a 15–20 percent response rate.

23. Senge, P. M. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization.* New York: Doubleday.

24. Hartz-Karp, J. "Harmonising Divergent Voices: Sharing the Challenge of Decision Making." (2004, May 14). Keynote address at the New South Wales State Conference of the Institute of Public Administration Australia. [http://www.nsw.ipaa.org.au/07_publications/2004_conf_papers.htm]. Accessed Jan. 31, 2005.

25. Ralston Saul, J. (1997). *The Unconscious Civilization.* Maryborough, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books.