

City of Greater Geraldton

Deliberative Democracy 2019 Project Brief

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Deliberative Democracy Project Brief

Background/Context

The City of Greater Geraldton and the Greater Geraldton community have been working together for nine years in strengthening and deepening democracy. Involving the community in the Budget has been a crucial step in furthering this commitment to collaborative problem solving and decision-making, which continues build trust between the Council and community.

The Deliberative Democracy Project involves engaging with the community in a Participatory Budgeting (PB) process utilising two Citizen Juries of randomly sampled residents who will deliberate, over a series of workshops, the allocation of a portion of the Local Government budget. Their task is to understand the issues involved in the budgetary process, explore and develop options and then submit their recommendations to Council who will have publicly committed to the extent of influence the Citizen Jury findings will have prior to process begin.

PB processes are not new to the City and Council. In the past six years, the City has implemented four PB processes: 10 Year Capital Works Community Panel in 2013, Range and Level of Services Community Panel in 2014, the Community Summit in 2015 and the Mullewa Services Summit in 2016.

One of the recommendations of both Community Panels was for the City and Council to repeat a randomly selected PB Citizen's Jury every two to four years to review services and Capital Works.

Since these PB processes took place, there have been a number of changes in the City and with Council. The 2019 Local Government Election was the first following the former Council's abolishment of the ward system of representation. Further changes included a reduction in the number of Councillors from 14 to 12 and it was also a Mayoral election year. The City also underwent two organisational restructures, ceased or dramatically reduced more than 20% of non-mandatory services and reduced the staff by 20%. The City also recently achieved an operational surplus despite a downturn in the local economy.

Therefore, to ensure the current range and level of services and the existing 10 Year Capital Works Plan still align with Council's objectives, are providing good value for money and continue to reflect the community's wants and needs along with their willingness to pay for them, a major review of a portion of the City's budget is required. The PB process will enable new and returning Councillors the opportunity to engage with the community at the beginning of their four-year term on the things that matter most, namely, how the money is spent.

Description

PB is a democratic, decision-making process that entrusts citizens to deliberate and negotiate over the distribution of public resources to enrich and inform Council decision-making.

It involves a set of principles and uses different tools to enable and empower ordinary people to deliberate amongst themselves and with government officials over the allocation of public resources. This requires a robust understanding of how Local Government operates including the budget, the projects, programs, services and capital works the City provides and how these activities are funded.

With this information, the Juries then deliberate what they have heard and over several days develop carefully considered recommendations for Council. Council will then consider and implement recommendations where possible. Where it is not immediately possible for a recommendation to be implemented, Council will communicate the reasons why and put in place a process to work collaboratively with the Juries to understand the intent behind the recommendation.

The Process

The process will involve two randomly sampled, demographically stratified Citizen Juries (of 25-30 each) who will collaborate in an intensive deliberative process to provide Council with carefully considered recommendations regarding a range and level of forward facing City's services and a priority list of capital works projects for inclusion in the 10 Year Capital Works Plan. The workshop process requires approximately three sessions of one day each to review the range and level of services and approximately three sessions of one day each to prioritise Capital Works. The deliberations will involve the following phases:

- Learning about Local Government and the CGG budget process.
- Developing guidelines/ground rules regarding their own operations.
- Reviewing the existing assessment criteria developed by the Community Panels.
- Investigating challenges and opportunities regarding the range and level of services and potential capital works projects.
- Developing recommendations.
- Writing a report and presenting it to Council and the public.

To ensure legitimacy, accountability and transparency, the Council will publicly commit to the extent of influence the Juries' findings will have at the outset of the process. A Governance Committee will be established, chaired by the Mayor, with representatives from the Council, City, business and community to develop and oversee the overall PB 'rules of engagement'; there will be a strong partnership with the media and use of social media; and the process will be independently evaluated, with a final report documenting the process, outcomes and evaluation.

Objectives

PBs enhance democratic decision-making by ensuring:

- Improved civic participation in decision-making.
- Enhanced transparency and accountability of local government decisions.
- Increased public legitimacy of decisions made.
- A more even playing field: so the customary lobby/interest groups do not have undue influence; so those often excluded have improved opportunities to be heard; so community groups are encouraged to work together to achieve common objectives; and so all who participate feel greater responsibility to the whole community.
- A shared responsibility of facing cuts/financial constraints.
- Improved alignment of programs, projects and services with the needs of the community.
- More realistic community expectations.
- Enhanced 'ownership' and maintenance of public spaces; improved articulation of programs with the needs of citizens; and provision of opportunities to incorporate social justice (e.g. providing more public works in poor areas).
- Increased public understanding and collaboration in the development and delivery of council services, programs and projects.

Council's Commitment to the Process

The commitment sought from Council is that they will:

- Seriously consider all recommendations made by the Citizen Juries.
- Implement recommendations wherever possible.
- Where a recommendation or recommendations cannot be implemented, Council will clearly communicate the reasons to the Citizen Juries.

- Where a recommendation, or recommendations, cannot be implemented, Council will seek to understand the intent of the recommendation/s and work with the Citizen Juries to find other ways to fulfil the intent.
- Council will retain the power to veto any or all recommendations made by the Citizen Juries.

Citizen Jury - Overview of Methodologies and Objectives

A Citizen Jury involves the wider community in the decision-making process. A Citizen Jury is a representative sample of community members, selected in a random or stratified manner, who are briefed in detail on the background and current thinking relating to a particular issue and asked to discuss possible approaches. Formal alignment or allegiances play no part in the selection process. Community members are asked to become members of the Jury and make a judgement in the form of a report. The issues they are asked to consider will be those that have an effect across the broader community and where a representative and democratic decision-making process is required.

Citizen Juries can be used to broker a conflict or to provide a transparent and non-aligned viewpoint.

Citizen Juries bring with them an intrinsic worth in the good sense and wisdom borne of their own knowledge and personal experience. Jurors have the opportunity to add to that knowledge and to exchange ideas with their fellow community members. The result is a collective one, in which each Juror has a valuable contribution to make.

Objectives

A Citizen Jury aims to draw members of the community into participative processes where the community is distanced from the decision-making process or a process is not seen as being democratic.

Outcomes

A Citizen Jury will deliver a considered report with recommendations for future actions or directions.

Uses/Strengths

- Can be used to draw members of the community into participative processes where the community is distanced from the decision-making process or a process is not seen as being democratic.
- Strives to improve representation in participative processes by engaging a cross section of the community on the Jury.
- Can be used to moderate divergence and provide a transparent process for decision-making.
- Provides a transparent participatory process, which can be seen to be independent and credible.
- Provides a public democracy mechanism.
- Provides community members with an opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the issue.
- Involves ordinary community members.
- Pinpoints fatal flaws or gauges public reaction and opinion.

Special Considerations/Weaknesses

- Jurors need to be representative of the community in consideration.
- Everyone involved needs to be clear about the results and how they will be used. Ahead of the event, time needs to be allowed to select the Jurors, hire a facilitator, put together briefing or background papers and contact 'experts'.
- Allow a minimum of three days for the Jury to deliberate its decision.
- The commissioning body must follow recommendations or explain why.

Resources Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue • Catering • Staffing • Facilitator • Data projectors • Projection screen • Online software • Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.) • Juror fees 	Can be used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage community • Develop community capacity • Develop an action plan • Communicate an issue
	Number of people required to help organise: Medium (2-12 people)
	Audience size/Participants: Medium (20-40)
	Time required: 6 weeks - 6 months
	Skill level/support required: High
	Cost: High (> AUD\$40,000)
Innovation level: High (innovative)	Participation level: High (empower)

Method:

1. Select a broadly representative group of approximately 20-30 people. Determine a series of questions important to the issues being considered or develop a series of options for the Jury to consider.
2. Brief Jurors on the rules of the proceedings, and allow them three days to come to a recommendation.
3. Provide access to ongoing iterative processes via expert witnesses, information and administrative support. The Jury can then seek clarification, cross-examination and further advice to assist deliberation.
4. Engage independent moderator/facilitator to assist the process of deliberation.
5. At the agreed time, arrange a presentation from the Jury and/or collect the Jury's report, which should outline their recommendations.
6. Publish the report and recommendations (normally done by the commissioning body: City).
7. If the recommendations of the Citizen Jury are not followed up, publish the reasons for not following up (normally be done by the commissioning body: City).

Governance

The Role of Council

The elected Council forms the highest form of governance for Local Government. Council is ultimately responsible for policy, strategy, delegations and setting the Budget. Council can choose the level of input it will seek from the community to assist and inform their decision-making. According to the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Council values an open and trusting relationship between the community, local government and other decision makers. The PB process honours this commitment and offers a robust and transparent mechanism for the Council to understand community aspirations and priorities, while maintaining Council's power to veto any or all recommendations made by the community.

The Role of the External Governance Group

The key to the PB's success will be building 'mutual trust' between the community and the City (Council and Administration). The Governance Committee (with trusted community reps) will put the building blocks of trust in place; and make sure they stay in place. The Governance Committee will not only lend legitimacy to the process; but transparency and accountability. The City cannot achieve this alone.

A good process is critical to achieving good results. The beginning of a PB process is the most difficult; the stronger and better the start-up is, the more it will gain and continue momentum. Contributions to the process from stakeholders external to the City will only add value to the process. It is envisaged that they will then work alongside the decision-makers to ensure the best possible process that is completely transparent and unbiased and of the highest possible quality.

The Governance Committee will also act as the 'champions' of the process with all sectors of Greater Geraldton. Without a Governance Committee the City could be subject to criticisms that the process was corrupt, biased, prejudiced, and only achieved what the City wanted anyway. It is important to put in place a system of good governance so the City can objectively counteract these criticisms.

The Governance Committee Terms of Reference will outline the key responsibility for the Committee to advise on the process only and not become involved in the delivery of the project or to determine or influence the outcomes. The role of the Committee will be to:

- Oversee the Process;
- Ensure the process is not (and cannot be seen to be) biased or unfair;
- Ensure the Citizen Juries are representative and that the Juries get the information they need, in a format they understand, to enable their deliberations;
- Ensure the Juries are given the time, information and support they need to problem solve;
- Champion the process in the Community;
- Keep the City advised of potential and actual questions that are being asked in the community and develop possible responses;
- Determine who and how the Committee will work with and respond to the Media; and
- Play an Ombudsman role – as first point of contact for any Jury member if any issues arise. All contact with Governance Committee members will remain confidential.

The Governance Committee will not be involved in the deliberations of the Citizen Juries regarding the Range and Level of Services nor in prioritising capital works for the 10 Year Capital Works Plan.

The Governance Committee will not amend or adjust the work of the Citizen Juries. One Committee member will be required to meet with the Jury at the conclusion of each session.

The Governance Committee will be comprised of the following members:

- Mayor
- Deputy Mayor
- Former Community Panel Member
- Former Community Panel Member
- Former Community Panel Member

Internal Project Management

- Project Sponsor: CEO
- Project Control Group: EMT

Range and Level of Services Review	Prioritisation 10 Year Capital Works Plan
Project Director: Paul Radalj	Project Director: Chris Lee
Project Manager: Janell Kopplhuber	Project Manager: Janell Kopplhuber

Project Outcomes/Impacts

- Equitable representation of community interests and needs in decision-making processes regarding range and level of service delivery and capital works prioritisation.
- Ensure dominating lobby/interest groups do not have undue influence.
- Including marginalised and vulnerable community groups in decision making processes, resulting in more equitable distribution of resources.
- Encouragement of community groups to work together to achieve common objectives.
- Fostering of a mutual sense of responsibility toward the whole of the community.
- More realistic community expectations.
- More sustainable and implementable programs and services.
- Enhancement of 'ownership' and maintenance of public spaces and assets by the community.

Outputs/Deliverables

- Milestone reports provided by the project team to the project control group.
- An updated assessment criterion for assessing programs and services.
- A final report from the Citizen Jury recommending the range and level of services delivered to the community by the Council.
- An updated assessment criterion for assessing capital works projects.
- A priority list of capital projects for inclusion in the 10 Year Capital Works Plan.
- A review of the applicability and implications of the Citizen Jury recommendations presented by the project control group to the Council for consideration.

Measuring Project Success

Participant Performance indicators

- The Citizen Juries agree upon a set of recommendations.
- Satisfaction by the Citizen Juries and the Governance Committee that these were fair, transparent and comprehensive processes.
- Satisfaction by the Citizen Juries and the Governance Committee with the sets of recommendations.
- Satisfaction by the Citizen Juries and the Governance Committee with the Council's response to and acceptance of the Juries' recommendations.

Broad Community Performance Indicators

- Greater acceptance by the community of Council's budget decisions:
 - Minimally there will be reduced community outrage.
 - Maximally there will be positive community feedback.
- Improved community understanding of the complexity of responsible budget management.
- Satisfaction by the community that this was a fair and transparent process.
- Council upholds the recommendations of the Citizen Juries:
 - Short-term recommendations are implemented by the City in the 2020/2021 budget.
 - Strategies are developed to deliver long-term recommendations.

Reporting Requirements

A Recommendations Reports from each Citizen Jury is to be furnished to the Council for consideration in regard to the range and level of services the City provides and the 10 years Capital Works Plan.

One Review and Analysis of Recommendations and Process Report to be coordinated by Project Control Group and furnished to Council for consideration.

Resources

The resources required to deliver both workshop series will be funded through existing Budget allocations.

Stakeholders Analysis

A detailed stakeholder analysis will be conducted at the outset of the project taking into account collaborative, conflicting, interested and powerful stakeholders and a suitable level of engagement and communication will be developed for each group. A stakeholder communications strategy will then be developed to ensure all stakeholders are kept abreast of the progress the project.

Related Projects

- Range and Level of Services Community Panel
- 10 Year Capital Works Plan Community Panel
- Community Summit
- Mullewa Services Summit

Related Polices and Strategies

- *City of Greater Geraldton Community Strategic Plan 2017 – 2027*
- *City of Greater Geraldton Community Engagement Policy*
- *City of Greater Geraldton Towards Sustainable Decisions Policy*
- *City of Greater Geraldton Disability Access and Inclusion Policy*
- *City of Greater Geraldton Access and Inclusion Plan*
- *City of Greater Geraldton Reconciliation Action Plan*
- *City of Greater Geraldton Youth Policy*
- *City of Greater Geraldton Integrated Strategic Planning Framework*

Evaluation

The success of the project will be evaluated in accordance with measurable outcomes. Citizen Jury members will also be surveyed before and at the conclusion of the process to determine whether outcomes were achieved.

Project Key Milestones

Range and Level of Services	
Project Management Team Kick Off Meeting	4 July 2019
Draft list R&LS descriptions approved by EMT	November 2019
Project Framework endorsed by Council	26 November 2019
Launch the PB Project with the broader community	27 November 2019
Broader Community Engagement begins	December 2019
Appointments of statistician and facilitator	December 2019
Formation of the Governance Committee	December 2019
Citizen Jury recruitment	January 2020
Citizen Jury Membership Finalised	30 January 2020
Introductory Workshop (operations, budget, constraints, progress to date)	13 February 2020
Deliberations of range and level of services begins (3 workshops)	15 February 2020
Deliberations of range and level of services ends	7 March 2020
Jury report presented to Council and the community	April 2020
Jury Recommendations and Project Evaluation submitted by EMT to Council	April 2020

10 Year Capital Works Plan	
Project Framework endorsed by Council	26 November 2019
Project Management Team Kick Off Meeting	January 2020
Appointments of statistician and facilitator	April 2020
Draft list of Capital Works and their descriptions approved by EMT	April 2020
Formation of the Governance Committee	May 2020
Launch the PB Project with the broader community	June 2020
Citizen Jury recruitment	June/July 2020
Citizen Jury membership finalised	30 July 2020
Introductory Workshop (operations, budget, constraints, progress to date)	6 August 2020
Deliberations of 10 Year Capital Works Projects begins (3 workshops)	8 August 2020
Deliberations of 10 Year Capital Works Projects ends	22 August 2020
Jury report is presented to Council and the community	September 2020
Project evaluation submitted to EMT for review	October 2020

Communications and Marketing

Stakeholder	Method	Message	Time
City Staff	Meeting CEO Newsletter	What is PB is and why we are doing it. How the outcomes will affect Staff.	Following Council endorsement of project
	Newsletter	Ongoing updates on Jury progress	Following key workshop milestones
Media	Meeting	PB is coming. What it is. Why we are doing it.	Following Council endorsement of project
Broader Community Sporting groups, Community groups, Schools, Rotary, Lions, etc...	Advertisements Media releases	Submit your capital work for inclusion in deliberations.	Following Council endorsement of project
	Social media posts Website	PB is coming. You may be selected as a citizen juror.	Two weeks before random jury selection begins
		PB begin.	One week before workshops begin
	Social media	Workshop progress/outputs or activities.	Daily
	Media release Social media	Juries present reports to Council	Week before presentation
Rate Payers Demand Change	Email/letter	What PB is, why we are doing it and Council's commitment to the outcomes.	Two weeks before random jury selection begins
City Partner Organisations	Email/letter	What PB is, why we are doing it and Council's commitment to the outcomes.	Two weeks before random jury selection begins
Councillors	Briefing Notes	Ongoing up-date on workshop outcomes.	Week following every workshop

Risk Assessment

Risk Identification	Consequence Category	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating	Existing Control Rating	Risk Treatment Options
Unable to attract participants for the Citizen Juries	Reputation	Major	Unlikely	Moderate	Adequate	Intensive marketing campaign Make it attractive and include info such as sitting fees, childcare, travel cost reimbursement, no knowledge/experience required.
A suitable workshop facilitator cannot be found	Reputation	Catastrophic	Possible	High	Adequate	Develop scoping brief early and advertise widely. Seek recommendations from IAP2.
Community unrest due to inability to participate in process	Reputation	Minor	Likely	Moderate	Adequate	Implement a non-face-2-face process (survey) for the broader community.
Unrealistic timelines to implement project	Reputation	Catastrophic	Possible	High	Adequate	Ensure scoping briefs/RFQs are ready for issue following Council endorsement. All documents, especially project descriptions and service fact sheets are approved by EMT before project begin.
Unknowledgeable table facilitators	Reputation	Major	Likely	High	Adequate	Ensure all table facilitators receive all relevant documents well in advance of the workshops. Run training sessions so facilitators know what they must do during workshops.
Jurors become difficult to deal with	Reputation	Major	Likely	High	Adequate	Ensure table facilitators have the skills to deal with difficult people. Implement a 'help' system for facilitators to ask for assistance from senior staff.
Council does not agree to implement recommendations	Reputation	Major	Possible	High	Adequate	Develop Councillor understanding & support for PB, elicit Councillor champion(s), and ensure commitment to extent of influence at outset.
Juries makes unrealistic recommendations	Reputation	Major	Unlikely	Moderate	Adequate	High quality information, different viewpoints heard, carefully considered agenda, and good facilitation of PB.
Support software fails in its function	Reputation	Major	Possible	High	Adequate	Identify and trial software in the lead up to the workshop series. Have dedicated IT staff present to sort issues.
Juries unable to reach a unified voice (or Council making a demand for unanimous recommendations)	Reputation	Major	Unlikely	Moderate	Adequate	Ensure Council has realistic expectations; provide useful guidelines from the Governance Committee; enable Panel to discuss and decide how they will decide; provide Panel agenda / process/ expert facilitation to maximise likelihood of Panel reaching a coherent voice.

Negative media	Reputation	Major	Unlikely	Moderate	Adequate	Media partnership and strong media/comms strategy in place.
Lack of internal / staff 'buy in'	Reputation	Major	Possible	High	Adequate	EMT leadership and support Keep staff involved
Inadequate amount of time between workshops for Jurors to read information	Reputation	Major	Likely	High	Adequate	Provide project and service descriptions to Jurors before their deliberations begin.
Information presentation not varied suitable for Jurors	Reputation	Major	Possible	High	Adequate	Provide Jurors with either online or hardcopy options for information they must read.
Citizen Jury recommendations unacceptable to staff	Reputation	Major	Possible	High	Adequate	Iterative process so staff are able to get good understanding of impact of recommendations.
Citizen Jury recommendations unacceptable to the broader community	Reputation	Major	Possible	High	Adequate	Keep the community informed and present their report with clarification of process and decisions.
Timelines to enact recommendations unrealistic	Reputation	Major	Likely	High	Adequate	Recommendations are framed in terms of short, medium and long-term achievements.
Pressure on Jurors members by lobby/political interest groups	Reputation Health and Safety	Major	Unlikely	Moderate	Adequate	Keep community, key interest groups and power brokers in the community informed throughout. Provide a role for key interest group reps as 'expert witnesses' Governance Committee establish rules of conduct for Jurors and inform Jurors accordingly.
Lobby/political interest groups hijack debate	Reputation	Major	Possible	High	Adequate	Provide Panel process and expert facilitation to ensure this does not happen. Work in partnership with media to ensure the process is evenly reported throughout. Keep community, key interest groups and power brokers in the community informed throughout the process.
Internal resourcing requirements underestimated	Reputation	Major	Unlikely	High	Adequate	Endorsement and understanding of all process stages by EMT and Council. Detailed estimated resourcing implications endorsed by EMT and Council at project inception. Review and Evaluation Reports at Milestones.