



DOES DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

*PARTICIPANT SURVEY
RESEARCH REPORT*

2022



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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS REPORT

MosaicLab conducted a six-year, longitudinal study across 23 deliberative engagement projects that surveyed 741¹ deliberative participants and sought to answer the question:

**'DOES DELIBERATIVE
DEMOCRACY MAKE A
DIFFERENCE?'**

The research used benchmarking to measure changes in deliberative participants' views and perceptions over time (before and after deliberating).

Five areas of impact were considered, and changes in participants were measured in relation to:

- ◆ level of previous and future intended **civic involvement**
- ◆ confidence that community input would **influence** decision-making
- ◆ **trust** in and views on the accountability of the sponsoring organisation
- ◆ views on how **authentic, collaborative, genuine** and worthwhile the deliberative process was
- ◆ quality of **information** provided to participants.

This report details the findings of this research as at September 2022.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research was to:

- ◆ support **continuous learning and advancement** in the practice and understand where adaptations and evolutions are needed
- ◆ understand the impact of a deliberative experience on participants and **measure change** in their perspectives and attitudes
- ◆ create an **evidence base** around the value of deliberative engagement – to support advocacy for meaningful, high-influence engagement on issues of importance
- ◆ collect data and information that can be used to **enhance the design and delivery** of deliberative processes.

¹ The total number of respondents that participated in any part of the survey process or responded to at least one question.



DRIVING DELIBERATION FORWARD

MosaicLab has facilitated 40 deliberative engagement processes since 2014². We consistently see and hear anecdotal evidence of the powerful, transformative effect of deliberative processes.

However, we were unaware of any studies that measured the impact of deliberative processes in a quantitative way that considered a large pool of subjects drawn from multiple deliberative processes over time. We saw a need for a study that captured and reflected a robust and statistically significant field of data.

Deliberative engagement processes can be perceived as a high-risk, high-cost investment by decision-makers. For deliberative engagement to have positive outcomes and make a difference to decision-making, it must be built on a set of key principles. These principles include elements such as random, stratified selection of participants, the offer of high influence (i.e. at a minimum reaching 'Involve' and preferably 'Collaborate' or even 'Empower' on the [IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum](#)) and the provision of adequate time and information. Adherence to these principles requires a serious commitment from the host organisation and decision-makers.

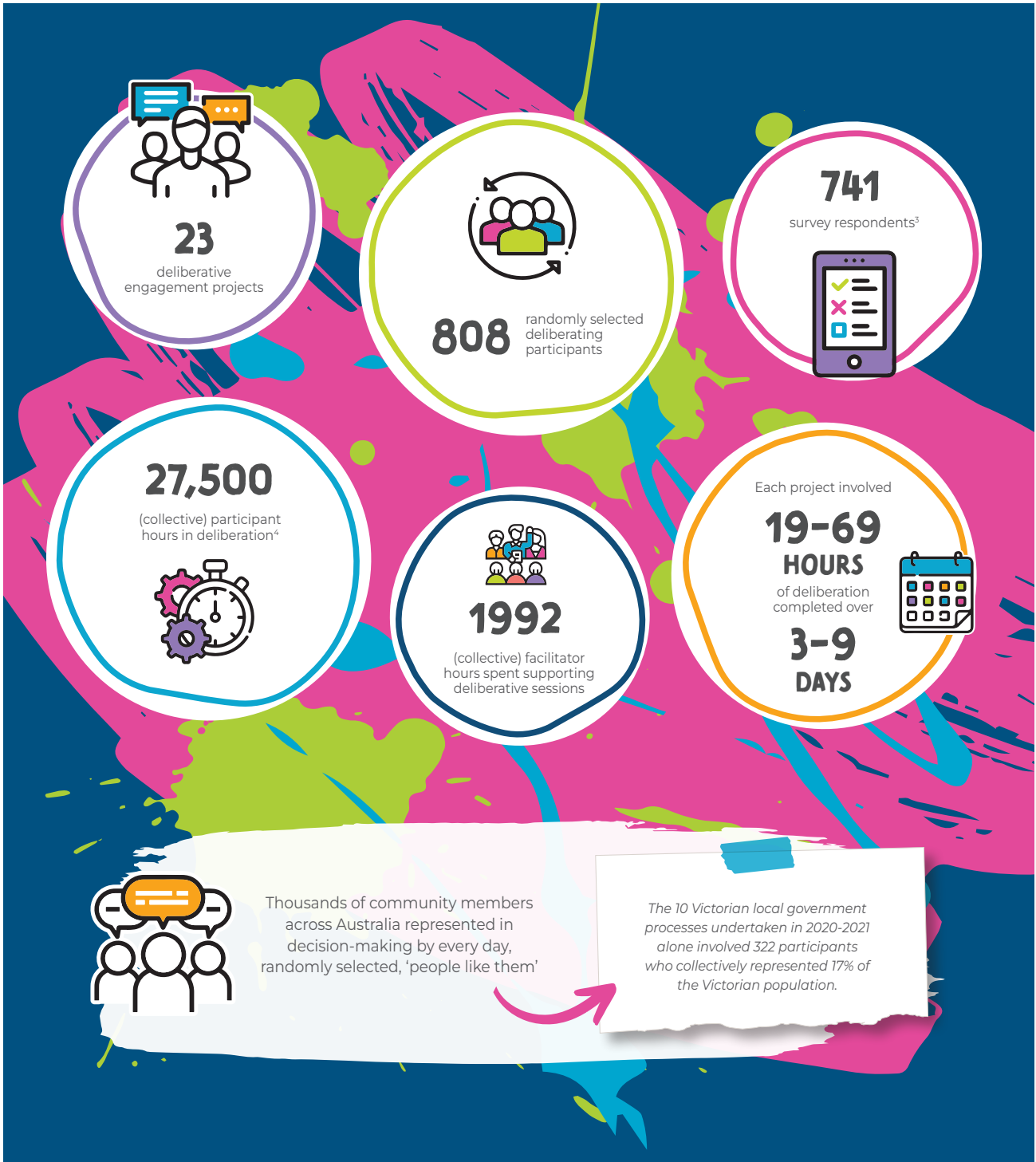
Additionally, deliberative engagement is a practice that we view as constantly evolving. For deliberative processes to be effective, impactful, relevant and meaningful, they need to adapt and change while staying true to their core principles. This research helps to provide data that can underpin and support our work to continue enhancing deliberative practice.

The findings of this research can be used to support advocacy, education and capacity building and be used as a platform for conversations with decision-makers, encouraging them to take what may feel like a difficult leap into deliberation.



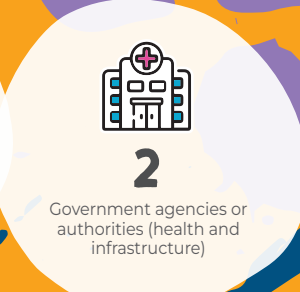
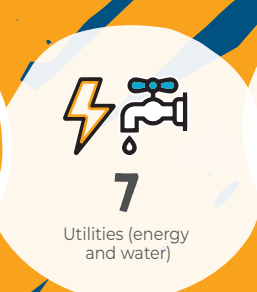
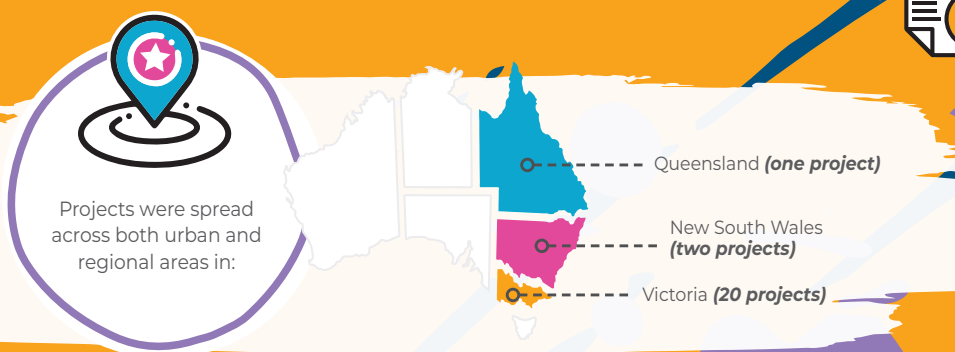
² Current as of September 2022.

FAST FACTS



3 The total number of respondents that participated in any part of the survey process or responded to at least one question.

4 This figure does not include work or discussions undertaken by participants between formal sessions.



Water pricing



Community visions



Council planning



Infrastructure and transport



Land use planning



End-of-life services and care



Parking

⁵ All outputs were published in reports written by the participants and achieved 'supermajority' support - support from at least 80% of the deliberating group.

KEY RESULTS SNAPSHOT

The findings of the pre and post deliberation surveys showed that deliberative processes significantly increase trust in organisations and democratic institutions, build supported decisions, encourage involvement in civic affairs and offer everyday people real influence over the issues that affect them.

INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS



249%
GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they would be 'involved' or 'highly' involved in civic affairs.

PRE 21% to POST 74%

21% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had been 'involved' or highly involved' in civic affairs in the past, compared to 74% of respondents who said they would get 'involved' or 'highly involved' in the post-deliberation survey.

CONFIDENCE IN INFLUENCE OVER DECISION MAKING



212%
GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they felt 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would influence decision-making.

PRE 19% to POST 61%

19% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had previously been 'confident' or 'very confident' that community input would influence the sponsoring organisation's decisions in the past. 61% of post-deliberation respondents said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would be implemented on the current issue.

CONFIDENCE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS



51%
GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they felt 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would be implemented.

PRE 41% to POST 61%

41% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' their recommendations would be implemented by the sponsoring organisation on the current issue, compared to 61% of respondents who said this in the post-deliberation survey.

TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF HOST ORGANISATION



66%
GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they believed the sponsoring organisation was 'fairly' or 'very' trustworthy and accountable.

PRE 50% to POST 83%

50% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they believed the organisation was 'fairly' or 'very trustworthy and accountable', compared to 83% of respondents who said this in the post-deliberation survey.

PROCESS AUTHENTICITY AND COLLABORATION



185%
GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they believed the process was 'fairly' or 'very' collaborative, genuine and worthwhile.

PRE 31% to POST 86%

31% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they believed past engagement activities run by the sponsoring organisation had been 'fairly' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile', compared to 86% of respondents who said this about the deliberative process they participated in, in the post-deliberation survey.

CLARITY, USEFULNESS AND BALANCE OF INFORMATION

85%
OF PARTICIPANTS

said they felt that information provided during the deliberative process was 'clear, useful and balanced' or 'very clear, useful and balanced'.

This question was a post-deliberation survey question (no comparable question asked in the pre-deliberation survey).



ABOUT MOSAICLAB

WHO WE ARE

MosaicLab is an experienced [team of facilitators and engagement practitioners](#) specialising in high influence and deliberative engagement.

COLLECTIVELY, WE HAVE MORE THAN 200 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD.



WHAT WE OFFER

We deliver fit-for-purpose engagement processes and training experiences of all sizes in both online and face-to-face formats. Our work is evidence-based and we continually refine our practice through the integration of research and innovation.

SINCE 2016, WE'VE DELIVERED MORE THAN 450 PROJECTS, INCLUDING 40 DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES.

WHO WE WORK WITH

Working with [every sector across Australia and beyond](#), we help organisations that want to:

- ♦ engage with their stakeholders and communities in a meaningful way
- ♦ invest in high-quality, high-influence, best-practice engagement
- ♦ build their internal engagement capacity
- ♦ improve their decision-making processes
- ♦ work with conflict, emotion or outrage
- ♦ achieve tangible outcomes from their engagement efforts.

HOW WE HELP

We support you to define and share the problem, partner with your community to tackle big issues, navigate (sometimes difficult) conversations and achieve agreed outcomes.

WE HELP PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE TO HAVE BETTER CONVERSATIONS AND CONTRIBUTE TO TRUSTED DECISIONS THAT 'STICK'.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

We're a family-owned, values-based organisation and we aim to prioritise people, [principles](#) and process over profit. We bring independence to every project and are known for providing honest, genuine advice.

We share our knowledge and learnings by providing [free resources](#) and we reinvest in the field through advocacy, research and pro-bono work.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

We are [deliberative engagement](#) specialists. We seek to lead where deliberation is going and we participate in international, industry networks. We're committed to strengthening deliberative practice across the world and supporting others to embed deliberation into decision-making.



ABOUT DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Deliberative engagement involves a group of randomly selected people that come together as representatives of the broader community generally chosen by age, gender and location to weigh up issues of a complex nature and come up with recommendations that go to decision makers.

Deliberation means:

'A long and careful consideration or discussion.'

When used with the term 'democracy', deliberation is about placing people closer to the affairs of government - at the centre of the issue or decision that affects them.



Deliberation done right is **powerful**. It can lead to new solutions for the most challenging problems we face (sometimes known as 'wicked' problems), improve policy outcomes and engender trust between citizens and government.

These processes build **shared responsibility**, meaning that outcomes are more likely to 'stick'. They are less adversarial than many traditional engagement approaches, and can result in number of long-term, **transformative** benefits for both organisations and participants.

Deliberative processes are built around a number of key principles, including:

-  1 The group responds to a **clear remit** - a plain English question that goes to the heart of the dilemma being shared.
-  2 Participants will have access to the **information** they need to have an in-depth conversation and information will be neutral, balanced and from a range of different sources.
-  3 The process is **representative**. Participants are selected randomly via a stratified selection process.
-  4 Participants are given the time they need to **deliberate**, which allows them to consider complex information, grapple with trade-offs and impacts and weigh up options and ideas.
-  5 The deliberative group is given a high level of **influence** over outcomes or decisions.
-  6 The group starts with a **'blank page' report** - detailing their own thinking and developing their recommendations 'from scratch'.

Deliberative processes are varied in nature, and can come in a number of forms, including community panels and citizens' juries.



[Read MosaicLab's full guide to deliberative democracy.](#)

ABOUT THE PROJECTS INVOLVED

MosaicLab conducted research measuring shifts in participant perceptions and attitudes across 23 deliberative engagement processes which took place across Australia (VIC, NSW and QLD).

808 participants took part in the deliberative processes. All participants were selected to take part in each process via a random, stratified selection process (in accordance with deliberative principles). Each group was descriptively representative of the community impacted by the decision based on key demographics such as age, gender, socioeconomic status and place of work or residence.

Below is a list of the projects that were involved in the study and the number of participants that took part in each deliberating group⁶.

SPONSORING ORGANISATION	NAME OF PROJECT / DELIBERATIVE GROUP	YEAR COMPLETE	REMIT	NUMBER OF DELIBERATIVE PARTICIPANTS ^{7*}
Nillumbik Shire Council	Green Wedge Management Plan Community Panel	2018	<i>What is the best way for us to manage Nillumbik's green wedge, now and into the future?</i>	40
North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network	Dying Well Community Panel	2018	<i>What does dying well look like and how can we help people achieve this?</i>	27
Fraser Coast Regional Council	Hervey Bay Esplanade Community Panel	2019	<i>What is your vision for the Esplanade and how do we balance the differing needs now and for the next 20 years?</i>	36
Infrastructure Victoria	Transport Network Pricing Community Panel	2019	Infrastructure Victoria is looking at a different way of charging for roads and public transport that is more efficient and fair. <i>Under what conditions, if any, would the community accept a change to the way they pay for roads and public transport?</i>	38
Western Water	Tariff Structure Review Panel	2019	<i>The way we charge needs to be fair for everyone. What can we do to achieve this?</i>	35

⁶ During the development of this report, MosaicLab was facilitating a large-scale deliberative process due to be completed in early 2022. Even though this report will be published after this process is finished, participant data from this process has not been included due to timing.

⁷ The number deliberative participants involved can change throughout a deliberative process. It is usual to experience a slight 'drop-off' in participants over the course of deliberative sessions due to unforeseen issues such as illness, work commitments or changes in circumstances. The number of participants recorded for the purposes of this report was based on the number of people that took part in at least one session (number taken from first deliberative session in the process). These numbers do not necessarily reflect the total number of people who were recruited to each group initially and confirmed their intention to participate.

SPONSORING ORGANISATION	NAME OF PROJECT / DELIBERATIVE GROUP	YEAR COMPLETE	REMIT	NUMBER OF DELIBERATIVE PARTICIPANTS 7*
City of Glen Eira	Glen Eira 2040 Community Vision Deliberative Citizens' Panel	2020	What is our vision for the future of Glen Eira and how can we reflect the aspirations of our diverse and growing community?	37
Bayside City Council	Bayside 2050 Community Panel	2020	The world is changing, and life in Bayside will be very different in 30 years' time. What's our vision for Bayside in 2050 and what do we need to prioritise in order to get there?	31
Baw Baw Shire Council	Warragul Parking Study Community Panel	2020	Warragul is expanding and Baw Baw Shire Council is undertaking a thorough review of car parking in Warragul. How can we make the most of our current parking and plan for future parking needs?	23
Bayside City Council	Bayside City Council Community Panel (Council Plan 2021 - 2025 and Financial Plan)	2021	Considering the Bayside 2050 Community Vision, how comfortable are we with the directions Council has proposed and what (if anything) do we need to alter to increase our satisfaction level?	31
Greater Dandenong Council	Change Today, Shape Tomorrow – Greater Dandenong People's Panel	2021	What is our future vision for the City of Greater Dandenong and how can we balance the community's diverse needs?	40
Greater Shepparton City Council	Shaping Greater Shepparton – Community Panel for input into the Community Vision & 2021-2025 Council Plan	2021	What is our future vision for Greater Shepparton and what does Council need to focus on for the next four years?	29
Kingston City Council	Your Kingston, Your Future Community Panel	2021	Our diverse and changing community has many different interests and needs. To ensure Kingston is the best possible place for everyone in the future, we need to make choices about where we focus our efforts. What is our future vision for Kingston and how do we balance our differing needs now and in the future?	23
Lane Cove Council	Lane Cove Golf Course Community Panel	2021	What is the best use of the outdoor areas on the site to meet our community needs now and in the future?	34

SPONSORING ORGANISATION	NAME OF PROJECT / DELIBERATIVE GROUP	YEAR COMPLETE	REMIT	NUMBER OF DELIBERATIVE PARTICIPANTS 7*
Melton City Council	City of Melton Community Panel 2021	2021	What are our aspirations for the growing City of Melton in 2041 and how should we prioritise and resource in order to get there?	42
Mornington Peninsula Shire	Imagine Peninsula 2040 – Citizens' Panel	2021	We have the chance to shape the future of the Mornington Peninsula to understand the present and maintain what is special to guide the kind of place we want to live, create, work and learn in. What are your aspirations for the Peninsula through to 2040 and what do we need to do to get there?	43
South-East Water	2023-2026 Price Submission Community Panel	2021	How should we balance the different needs of our customers and community while making sure the cost of our services work for everyone, now and into the future?	34
Melbourne Metro Urban Water Authorities (Greater Western Water, Melbourne Water, South East Water and Yarra Valley Water)	Water for Life Community Panel	2021	Greater Melbourne is growing and our climate is changing. Given this changing future, we need to act now to find long term water solutions. How do we confidently meet our diverse water needs for the next 50 years?	40
Stonnington City Council	Shaping Stonnington People's Panel	2021	Imagine Stonnington in 2040. Consider what may have changed that makes you feel proud, inspired and connected to your community. With this in mind, what is our vision for Stonnington to be the best place to live, work, study and play for all in 2040?	35
Surf Coast Shire Council	People Place Future Community Panel	2021	From our traditional owners to our newest arrival, and from our youngest resident to our furthest-travelled visitor, we value the Surf Coast Shire as a special place. Our diverse community has many different needs and interests. To ensure that Surf Coast Shire is a great place to live, work and play for everyone, we need to make choices about where we focus our efforts. What is our future vision for our community, and how do we balance our differing interests and needs over the next four years?	35

SPONSORING ORGANISATION	NAME OF PROJECT / DELIBERATIVE GROUP	YEAR COMPLETE	REMIT	NUMBER OF DELIBERATIVE PARTICIPANTS 7*
Coliban Water	Pricing Submission 2023 Community Panel	2022	<p>Our region is facing a critical point in its water supply and demand. Our built structures are ageing, and our climate is getting drier. We need to prepare for this changing future. We want your help in deciding how to balance these priorities and set water prices for the next five years.</p> <p><i>How does Coliban Water prepare for tomorrow while being fair to customers today?</i></p>	42
Yarra Valley Water	Price Submission 2023-2028 Citizens' Jury	2022	<p>With the challenges of climate change and population growth in mind, the quality and reliability of water supply and sewerage services are critical needs. Clear communication and transparency are essential to empower and inform users to access resources in a respectful, equitable and sustainable way.</p> <p><i>How can water and the environment be protected and respected, for and by, present and future generations?</i></p>	38
Barwon Water	Water for Our Future Community Panel	2022	<p>With less rain and a hotter climate, it's time to think differently about how we use water and where it comes from.</p> <p><i>How can we create a new water future that balances all our needs?</i></p>	30
Ausgrid	Ausgrid Regulatory Reset 2024-2029: Voice of the Community Panel	2022	<p>Ausgrid manages the poles and wires in your community. The energy industry is at a critical point, with a growing focus on a low carbon future and more extreme weather impacting the grid. Alongside that, customer needs and aspirations are rapidly changing. How we understand and respond to these issues has important implications for electricity bills and the reliability of electricity supply.</p> <p><i>How should Ausgrid look to the future while being fair to customers today?</i></p>	45

Each process involved participants deliberating for at least 19 hours and up to 69 hours (depending on process length and complexity). In each case, these hours were completed over three to nine days which were spread out over a period of several months (varying for each project).

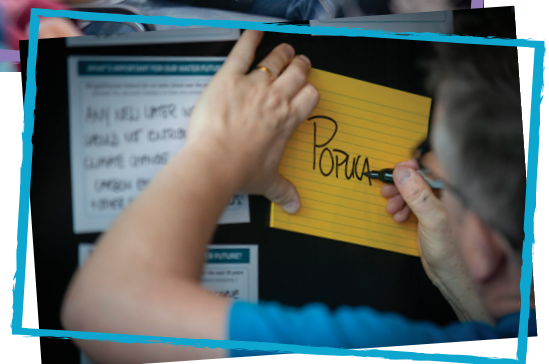
METHODOLOGY

MosaicLab conducted a six-year, longitudinal study to: understand the impact of the deliberative experience on participants; support continuous learning and advancement in the field; and create an evidence base around the value of investing in deliberative engagement processes. The research used benchmarking to measure change in deliberative process participants.

741 of the 808 deliberating participants involved across the 23 processes chose to take part in the pre-deliberation and post-deliberation survey MosaicLab conducted into their perspectives and attitudes.

The research compared participants' opinions before and after experiencing a deliberative process. Participants were invited to complete the surveys at two points in their journey:

1. When the process commenced, at the start of their first deliberative session (usually the 'meet and greet').
2. When the process was completed, after participants had finalised their report and presented it to decision-makers.



ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

741 participants responded to the initial, pre-deliberation survey, and 572 participants responded to the final, post-deliberation survey (which is reflective of the small, expected 'drop-off' of participants during deliberative processes). Drop-off in response rates is also a common experience with two-part surveys and is accounted for in our analysis.

Every deliberating group was selected using a random, stratified selection process. Selection was conducted independently of the sponsoring organisations, and the groups were selected to be descriptively representative of the community they represented based on broad demographic criteria such as age, gender, geography and home ownership. These criteria varied for each project, as appropriate to the community and issue being considered, although age and gender were used as criteria for every recruitment process.

This recruitment method results in a group that is more descriptively representative of the wider community than a self-selected group of participants would be. People on the groups come from a diverse range of backgrounds, and often include people who don't usually participate in community engagement or other civic activities.

Participants ranged in age from 15-70+ years. Males made up 49% of the cohort, females 51% and people who selected 'other' or 'prefer not to say' were less than 1% of the total participants.

Because the criteria for every recruitment process was different, and because the categories within each criteria (i.e. age-range criteria) differed, information about the participants was not directly comparable when looking across all 23 projects. Data on participants' backgrounds was not collected consistently for every project, so total numbers can't be accurately collated. However, groups represented included:

- ◆ people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ◆ LGBTIQ+ community members
- ◆ business owners
- ◆ homeowners, tenants, people living in public housing
- ◆ aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ◆ people identifying as having a disability
- ◆ people born overseas



The below table provides a breakdown of how many respondents were involved in the survey process across each project.

SPONSORING ORGANISATION	PROJECT NAME	YEAR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS RESPONDING TO PRE-DELIBERATION SURVEY ⁸	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS THAT RESPONDED TO THE POST-DELIBERATION SURVEY ⁹
Nillumbik Shire Council	Green Wedge Management Plan Community Panel	2018	36	21
North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network	Dying Well Community Panel	2018	20	14
Fraser Coast Regional Council	Hervey Bay Esplanade Community Panel	2019	31	16
Infrastructure Victoria	Transport Network Pricing Community Panel	2019	36	21
Western Water	Tariff Structure Review Panel	2019	31	35
City of Glen Eira	Glen Eira 2040 Community Vision Deliberative Citizens' Panel	2020	39	25
Bayside City Council	Bayside 2050 Community Panel	2020	19	23
Baw Baw Shire Council	Warragul Parking Study Community Panel	2020	25	19
Bayside City Council	Bayside City Council Community Panel (Council Plan 2021 - 2025 and Financial Plan)	2021	31	34
Greater Dandenong Council	Change Today, Shape Tomorrow – Greater Dandenong People's Panel	2021	29	26
Greater Shepparton City Council	Shaping Greater Shepparton – Community Panel for input into the Community Vision & 2021-2025 Council Plan	2021	31	30
Kingston City Council	Your Kingston, Your Future Community Panel	2021	27	28

⁸ Reflects the total number of participants who responded to at least one question in the pre-deliberation survey. Response rates varied very slightly between questions.

⁹ Reflects the total number of participants who responded to at least one question in the post-deliberation survey. Response rates varied very slightly between questions.

SPONSORING ORGANISATION	PROJECT NAME	YEAR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS RESPONDING TO PRE-DELIBERATION SURVEY ⁸	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS THAT RESPONDED TO THE POST-DELIBERATION SURVEY ⁹
Lane Cove Council	Lane Cove Golf Course Community Panel	2021	37	21
Melton City Council	City of Melton Community Panel 2021	2021	38	27
Mornington Peninsula Shire	Imagine Peninsula 2040 – Citizens' Panel	2021	39	25
South-East Water	2023-2026 Price Submission Community Panel	2021	33	17
Melbourne Metro Urban Water Authorities (Greater Western Water, Melbourne Water, South East Water and Yarra Valley Water)	Water for Life Community Panel	2021	33	10
Stonnington City Council	Shaping Stonnington People's Panel	2021	30	33
Surf Coast Shire Council	People Place Future Community Panel	2021	40	25
Coliban Water	Pricing Submission 2023 Community Panel	2022	33	30
Yarra Valley Water	Price Submission 2023-2028 Citizens' Jury	2022	20	24
Barwon Water	Water for Our Future Community Panel	2020-2022	34	26
Ausgrid	Ausgrid Regulatory Reset 2024-2029: Voice of the Community Panel		49	42
TOTALS			741	572



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Respondents were asked questions relating to five areas (see table below). Responses were anonymous.

#	ATTITUDE OR PERCEPTION BEING MEASURED	PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION/S	POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION	SCALE OF 1-5
1	Level of involvement in civic affairs in the past compared to intentions for the future.	<i>How involved are you currently in government decisions that affect you?</i>	<i>Now you have had this experience, how involved will you be when it comes to government decisions that affect you?</i>	1=not involved at all 5=highly involved
2	Level of confidence that their input would influence the host/ sponsoring organisation's decision and that their recommendations would be implemented compared before and after deliberation.	<i>A) In the past, how confident have you been that community input will influence the sponsoring organisation's decisions? B) How confident are you that your recommendations on this current issue will be implemented?</i>	<i>How confident are you that your report/ recommendations on this issue will be implemented?</i>	1 = Very doubtful 5 = Very confident
3	View on how trustworthy and accountable they believe the host/ sponsoring organisation to be before and after deliberation.	<i>In your view, how accountable and trustworthy do you think the sponsoring organisation is?</i>	<i>How accountable or trustworthy do you think the sponsoring organisation is now you have been through this process?</i>	1 = Not trustworthy or accountable at all 5 = Very trustworthy and accountable
4	Perception of how collaborative, genuine and worthwhile the process was compared to past experiences.	<i>In your view, how collaborative, genuine or worthwhile have the sponsoring organisations' past engagement activities been?</i>	<i>How collaborative, genuine and worthwhile do you feel this process has been?</i>	1 = Not collaborative, genuine and worthwhile at all 5 = Very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile
5	Quality and usefulness of the information provided to support participation ¹⁰ .	<i>n/a</i>	<i>How clear, useful and balanced was the information provided to you during this process? (i.e. to what extent was it helpful in supporting you to respond to your remit)</i>	1 = (not clear, useful or balanced at all) 5 = (very clear, useful, and balanced)

¹⁰ Question 5 was a post-deliberation survey question only (no comparable question asked in the pre-deliberation survey). This question was added to the survey mid-way through the research and was asked of participants in 17 of the 23 deliberative processes. 400 participants responded to this question).

FINDINGS

INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS

**249%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they would be 'involved' or 'highly' involved in civic affairs.

The respondents indicated that they were much more likely to participate in civic activities (i.e. get involved in government decisions that affect them) after experiencing a deliberative process.

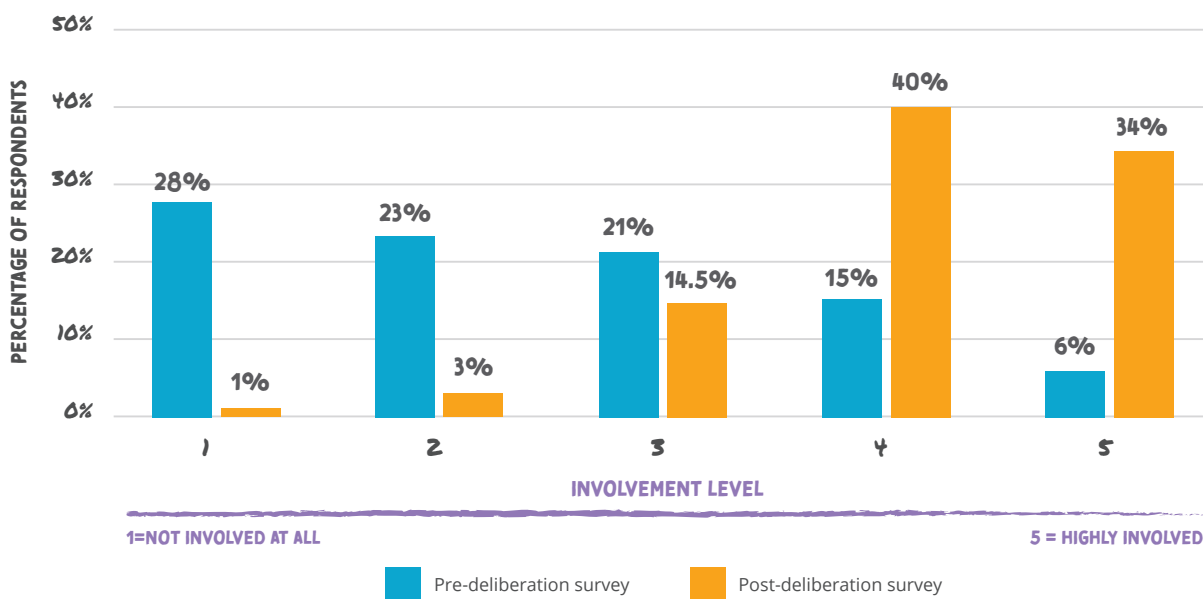
Only 21% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had been 'involved' or highly involved' in civic affairs in the past and 28% said they had not been involved in any government issue or decision that affected them previously.

In the post-deliberation survey, 74% of respondents said they intended to be 'involved' or 'highly involved' in the post-deliberation survey in future, only 1% said they would not be involved again at all.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION How involved are you currently in government decisions that affect you?

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION Now you have had this experience, how involved will you be when it comes to government decisions that affect you?

SCALE/MEASURE 1=not involved at all and 5=highly involved



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Bayside 2050 Community Panel

**673%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they would be 'involved' or 'highly' involved in civic affairs in future compared to the number of participants who said they had been 'involved' or 'highly involved' before being part of the deliberative process.

Only 10% of participants said they had previously been 'involved' or 'highly' involved in civic affairs, and 48% said they had never been involved in civic affairs prior to the deliberative process.

In the post-deliberation survey, 80% of participants said they would be 'involved' or 'highly involved' in the future.

“Being the youngest, I knew I'd learn a lot. I've come out of it with a different appreciation for Bayside, I think differently about things like development and heritage sites.”

– Bayside 2050 Community Panellist

“I've really enjoyed the different lenses that people have brought into this process and their different experiences”

– Bayside 2050 Community Panellist



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Your Kingston Your Future Community Panel

**592%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they would be 'involved' or 'highly' involved in civic affairs in future compared to the number of participants who said they had been 'involved' or 'highly involved' before being part of the deliberative process.

44% of participants who responded to the pre-deliberation survey said they had never been involved before in civic affairs and only 14% said they had been 'involved' or 'highly involved' in the past.

In the post-deliberation survey, 96% of respondents said they would be 'involved' or 'highly' involved in civic affairs in future

“We've all been able to bottle into one common thread, and we're all thankful for what we can provide for our community and about the opportunity to do this.”

– Your Kingston Your Future Community Panellist

“What I loved about it was people's big ideas, the big picture stuff. No-one got bogged down in any little personal agenda... it was about the whole community, what makes a great community, what's going to make a better community.”

– Your Kingston Your Future Community Panellist



INFLUENCE AND IMPACT

**212%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they felt 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would influence decision-making (when compared to confidence in the past that community input would influence public decisions).

**51%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they felt 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would be implemented on the issue they were deliberating on.

Participants were asked two questions in the pre-deliberation survey. First, they shared how confident they had felt in the past about the community's ability to influence the sponsoring organisation's decisions in general. They were also asked to indicate how confident they felt that the sponsoring organisation would implement their recommendations on the issue they were about to deliberate on. Results of both of these questions were then compared to the results of one post-deliberation question.

Responses indicated an increase in levels of confidence by the end of the deliberative process, particularly when compared to participants' views on the general level of influence they felt the community had had over decisions made by the sponsoring organisation in the past.

In the pre-deliberation survey:

- ◆ 46% of pre-deliberation respondents (responding to question 2A) said they had previously been 'doubtful' or 'very doubtful' that community input would have any influence over public decisions. Only 19% of participants said they had previously been 'confident' or 'very confident'.
- ◆ 41% of pre-deliberation survey respondents (responding to question 2B) said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' their recommendations would be implemented by the sponsoring organisation. 16% were 'doubtful' or 'very doubtful' and 44% felt uncertain or neutral, selecting (3) on the scale.

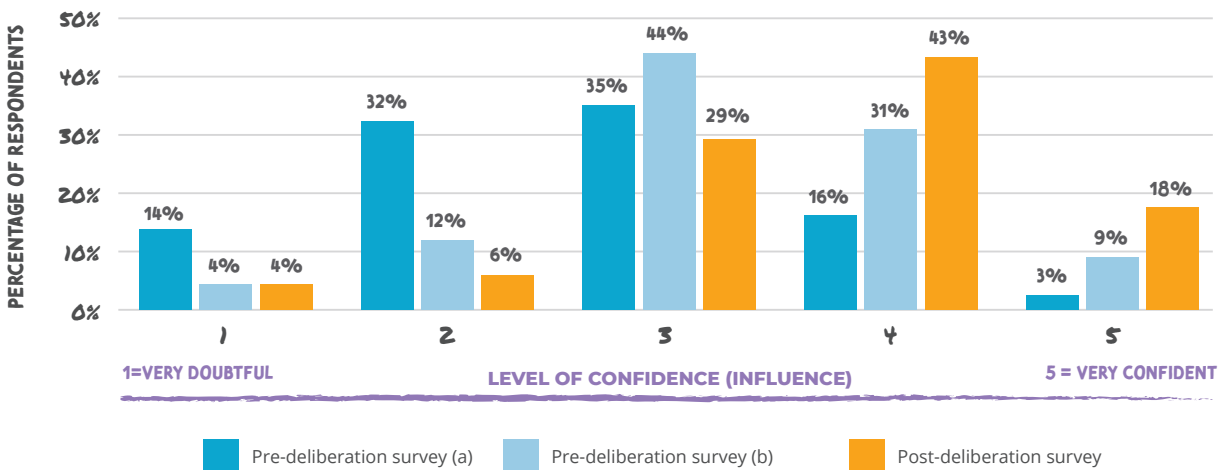
The post-deliberation survey revealed a growth in confidence when compared to both pre-deliberation questions. 61% of respondents said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' their recommendations would be implemented by the sponsoring organisation hosting the deliberative process they were involved in.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION A In the past, how confident have you been that community input will influence this organisation's decisions?

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION B How confident are you that your recommendations on this current issue will be implemented by Ausgrid?

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION Now that you have been through the process, how confident are you that your recommendations will be implemented by Ausgrid?

SCALE/MEASURE 1=very doubtful at all and 5=very confident



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Imagine Peninsula 2040 – Citizens' Panel (Mornington Peninsula Shire)

**2571%
GROWTH**

In the number of participants who said they felt 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would influence decision-making.

70% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had previously been 'doubtful' or 'very doubtful' that community input would influence public decisions (i.e. made by governments or authorities) in the past. Only 3% said they had been 'confident' or 'very confident'.

Following the deliberative process, 81% of respondents said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would be implemented by the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

“This has been one of the most amazing experiences of my adult life. I genuinely believe our broader society would benefit from more of this and that it's a solution to many of the ailments and disagreements and troubles that we face.”

– Imagine Peninsula 2040 Citizens' Panellist

“To be involved with this process and have my faith in democracy reinstated has been revolutionary. The democratic process is normally very polarising but I feel that this has brought us all together and I'm feeling very positive and hopeful for the future.”

– Imagine Peninsula 2040 Citizens' Panellist



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Water for Life Community Panel (Melbourne Metro Urban Water Authorities)

**284%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they felt 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would be implemented on the issue they were deliberating on.

Only 15% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations on the issue would be implemented by Melbourne Metro Urban Water Authorities. 30% said they were 'doubtful' or 'very doubtful'.

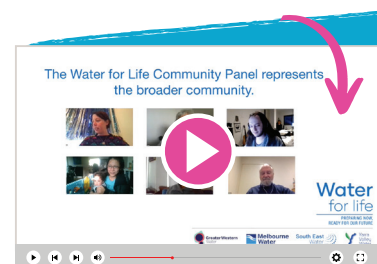
Following the deliberative process, this grew to 58% of respondents who said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' that their recommendations would be implemented. Only 6% remained 'doubtful' or 'very doubtful'.

“The knowledge that I've gained about our water, this simple thing called water, has been phenomenal.”

– Water for Life Community Panellist

“It was great to be representing, essentially, five million people in Melbourne. That's a great honour.”

– Water for Life Community Panellist



TRUST

**66%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they believed the sponsoring organisation was 'fairly' or 'very' trustworthy and accountable.

Overall, participant trust in the sponsoring organisations grew as a result of the deliberative experience.

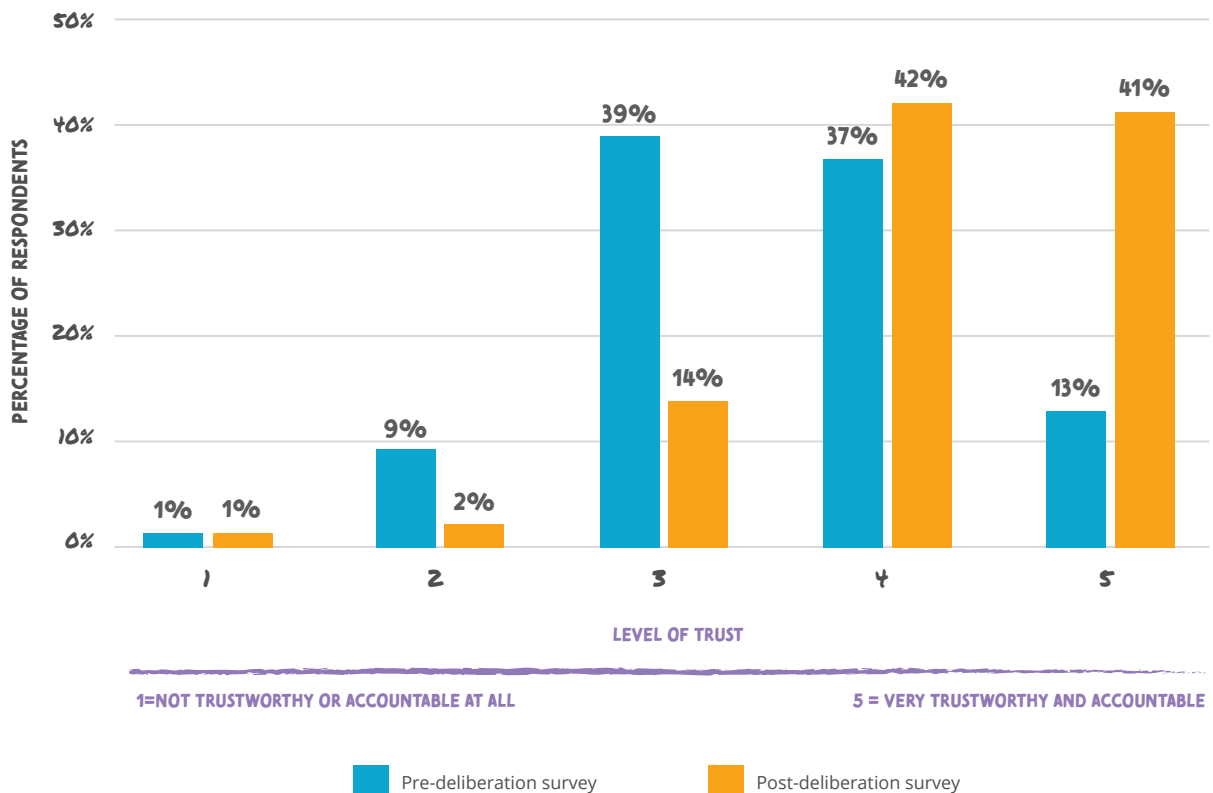
Before the deliberative process started, 50% of the participants who responded felt their sponsoring organisation was 'trustworthy and accountable' or 'very trustworthy and accountable'. 10% of respondents said they thought the sponsoring organisation hosting their process was 'not very trustworthy or accountable' or 'not trustworthy and accountable at all' and 39% were uncertain or neutral (selecting '3' on the scale).

Following the deliberative process, 83% of respondents said their sponsoring organisation was 'trustworthy and accountable' or 'very trustworthy and accountable', only 3% felt they were 'not very trustworthy or accountable' or 'not trustworthy and accountable at all'.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION In your view, how accountable or trustworthy do you think Ausgrid is?

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION How accountable or trustworthy do you think Ausgrid is now that you have been through this experience?

SCALE/MEASURE 1=not trustworthy or accountable at all and 5=very trustworthy and accountable



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

People, Place, Future Community Panel (Surf Coast Shire)



**238%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they believed the sponsoring organisation was 'fairly' or 'very' trustworthy and accountable.

Following deliberation, 90% of panellists that responded to the post-deliberation survey said they felt that the Surf Coast Shire was felt their sponsoring organisation was 'trustworthy and accountable' or 'very trustworthy and accountable'. This was a significant jump from the pre-deliberation survey, where only 27% of panellists selected this rating.

“The process shows that if you can get a group of people who don't know each other together, quite randomly, and work with them over a period of time, you have the opportunity for people to voice possibilities and visions.”

– People, Place, Future Community Panellist

“If you're in this community you have a voice, and you have a voice that can be heard.”

– People, Place, Future Community Panellist



PROCESS AUTHENTICITY AND COLLABORATION

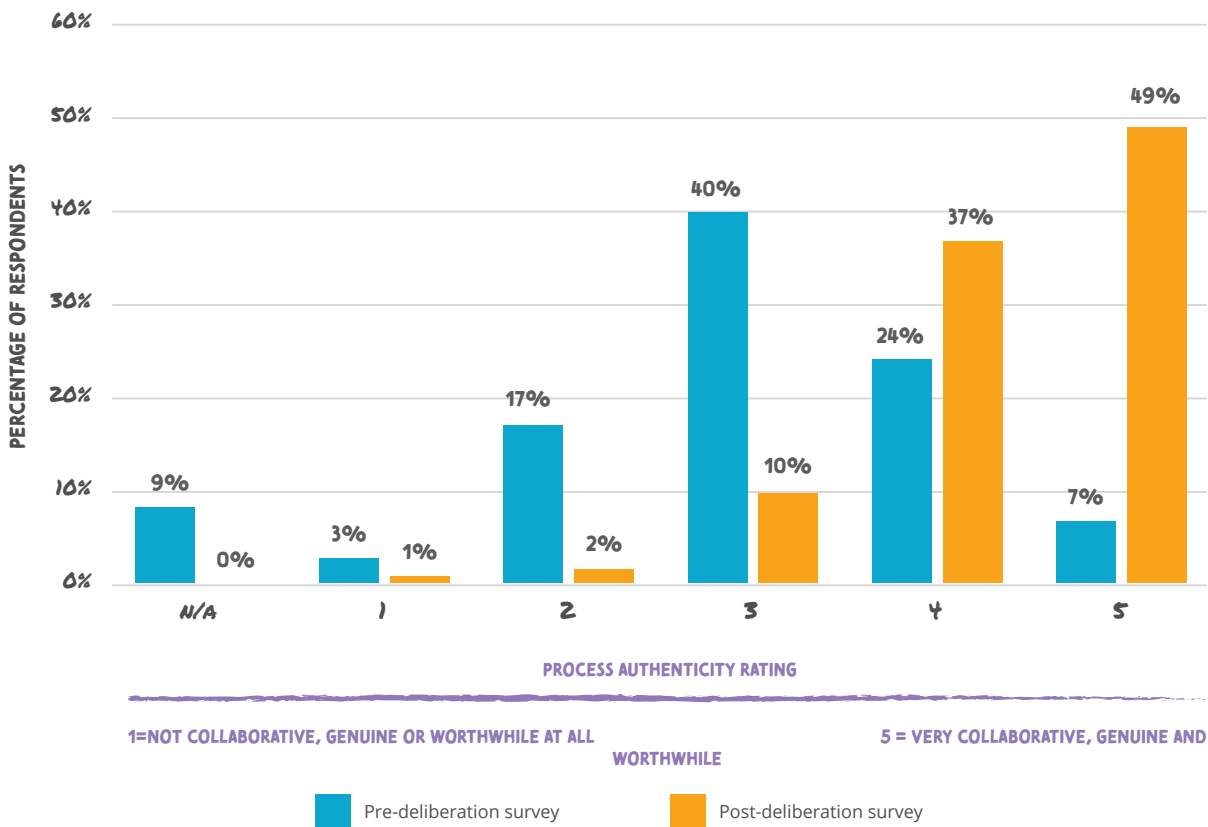
**185%
GROWTH**

in the number of participants who said they believed the process was 'fairly' or 'very' collaborative, genuine and worthwhile when compared to their views of past community engagement activities hosted by the sponsoring organisation.

Before deliberations commenced, participants were asked to indicate how collaborative, genuine and worthwhile they felt each sponsoring organisation's community engagement activities had been in the past. Most respondents felt either neutral (40%) or that these activities hadn't been collaborative, genuine or worthwhile (20%). Only 31% of respondents reported a positive view of these past activities, selecting (4) or (5) on the scale.

In the post-deliberation survey, 86% of respondents said they felt the deliberative process has been 'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile, representing a large increase when compared to views expressed in the pre-deliberation survey.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION	How collaborative, genuine and worthwhile do you think Ausgrid's community engagement activities have been in the past?
POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION	How collaborative, genuine and worthwhile do you think Ausgrid's engagement activities have been through this experience?
SCALE/MEASURE	1=not collaborative, genuine or worthwhile at all and 5=very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

NWMPHN Dying Well Community Panel

540%
GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they believed the process was 'fairly' or 'very' collaborative, genuine and worthwhile when compared with their view of the sponsoring organisation's past community engagement activities.

Just 17% of panellists said that they felt the NWMPHN's community engagement activities were 'fairly' or 'very' collaborative, genuine and worthwhile and 45% said they felt neutral, selecting (3) on the scale. However, after deliberating, the majority (96%) of the panellists selected (4) or (5) on the scale and said they felt the deliberative process had been 'fairly' or 'very' collaborative, genuine and worthwhile.

“Really positive experience. I feel I have accomplished something. I feel I have played a part in something bigger.”

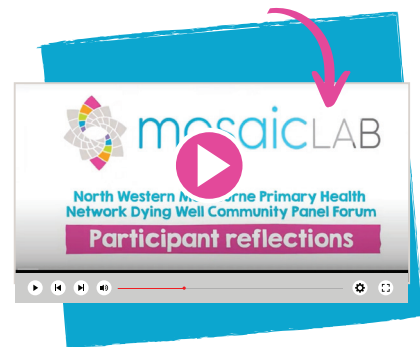
– NWMPHN Dying Well Community Panellist

“I am staggered at the volume of work undertaken by the large number of participants.”

– NWMPHN Dying Well Community Panellist

“Good process - like the structure, necessary to arrive at an acceptable outcome. I thought the whole process was very well run.”

– NWMPHN Dying Well Community Panellist



QUALITY OF INFORMATION

**85%
GROWTH**

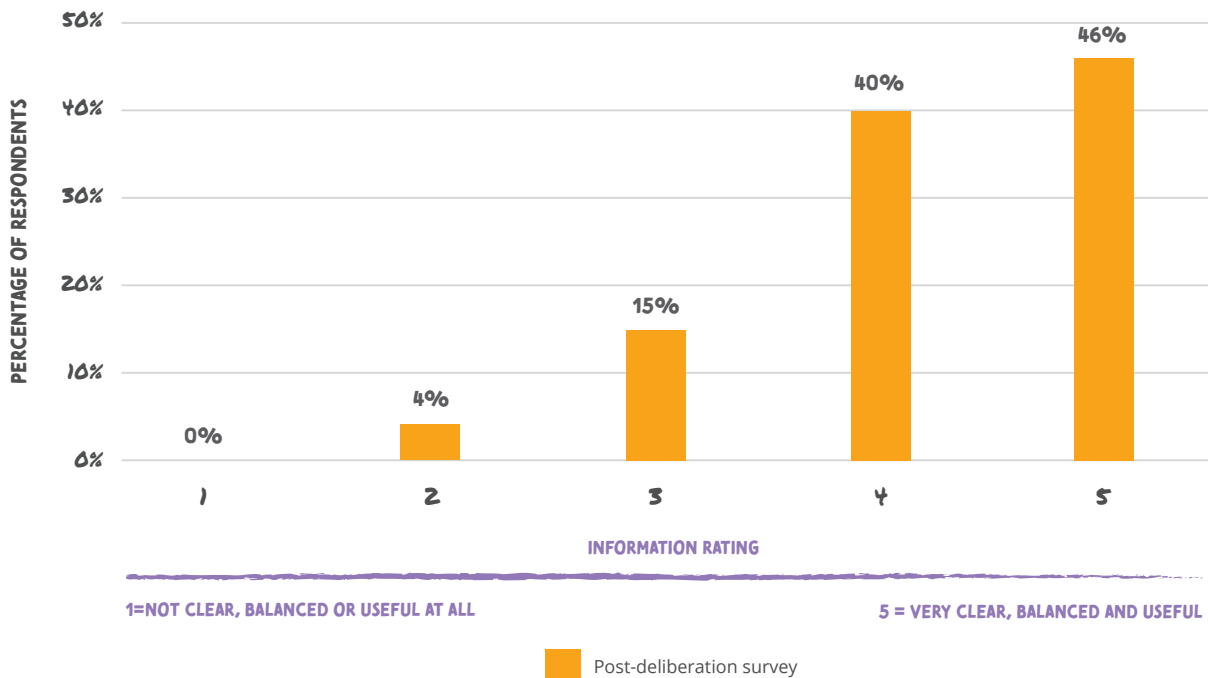
said they felt that information provided during the deliberative process was clear, useful and balanced or 'very' clear, useful and balanced.

This question was a post-deliberation survey question only (no comparable question asked in the pre-deliberation survey). This question was introduced mid-way through the study period, so not all participant groups were surveyed. Participants from 17 of the projects responded to this question, a total of 400 respondents.

The respondents were asked to consider this question in the context of how useful the information provided was in helping them respond to their remit. No respondents selected (1) on the scale (indicating they felt information provided was 'not clear, useful and balanced' at all) and only 4% selected (2).

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION How clear, useful and balanced was the information provided to you during this process? (i.e. to what extent was it helpful in supporting you to respond to your remit).

SCALE/MEASURE 1=not clear, useful or balanced and 5=very clear, useful and balanced



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Barwon Water – Water for our Future Community Panel

100%

OF PARTICIPANTS

said they felt that information provided during the deliberative process was clear, useful and balanced or 'very' clear, useful and balanced.

The Water for our Future Community Panel was a multi-phased process and this survey result has been drawn from the responses collected following the third phase of panel deliberations in November 2021.

“The online process has been fantastic. The diversity of information that we have got access to is amazing.”

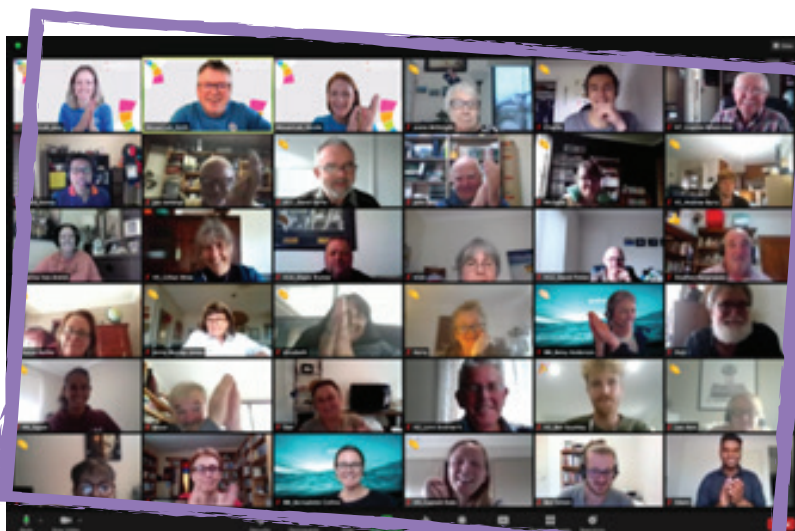
– Water for our Future Community Panellist

“Honestly, this is as good as it gets. I'm loving the opportunity for other people to say what they think.”

– Water for our Future Community Panellist

“I don't think I have ever had such a big expansion of knowledge in such a short amount of time.”

– Water for our Future Community Panellist



CONCLUSION

Civic engagement, confidence in local governments, trust in decision-makers and belief in democratic processes are all enhanced as a result of participating in high-influence engagement that meets key deliberative principles.

We acknowledge the effort and hard work committed to these projects by the 23 organisations who invested in them and the participants who dedicated their time to grappling with an array of challenging and important issues. It was an honour working with each of you to do democracy differently and build better public decisions.

MosaicLab is a values-based organisation that exists to 'bring conversation and democracy alive'. While we are a private company, we believe in principles, process and people over profit. We are committed to:

- ♦ actively supporting the conversations about big public dilemmas that need to happen
- ♦ inspiring and transforming the way decisions are made
- ♦ enhancing deliberative practice through innovation, research and continuous improvement
- ♦ advocating for quality engagement to be embedded in decisions that impact people
- ♦ generously sharing information, knowledge and learning and helping to build capacity in others.

This research supports these commitments. We believe that many of our most 'wicked problems' – the most critical, difficult issues of our time – can be addressed through better decision-making that puts the people affected by the issue at the centre of the conversation. For us to inspire decision-makers to tackle these big issues and transform the way they make decisions, we need to be able to find ways to demonstrate the return on investment of high-influence engagement.


We are sharing this research so that any engagement professional, organisation, practitioner or researcher can use the results as a basis for positive advocacy. We want to support everyone who is seeking to educate others about the benefits of meaningful, quality public participation that offers real influence to the people impacted by important issues.

We will work to continually enhance and refine this research and build a body of data that gives insights into deliberative processes. We are working on developing several new studies, and developing research to measure decision-maker views, the impact of deliberative processes on the broader communities represented by deliberating groups, and the long-term outcomes of deliberative processes (in terms of implementation and impact).

We are increasingly contributing to international conversations to support the continuous improvement of deliberative practice and we work with others to advocate for democracy (and hence public participation), done differently. We also continually work to share resources. This report forms part of a ['package' of free resources and materials](#) that others can use as a foundation for discussion, learning and capacity building.

We hope that the results of this study help to highlight the transformative, powerful impact that deliberative engagement can have when applied in a principled way and integrated into public decision making.





MosaicLab is a Victorian-based consultancy that specialises in community and stakeholder engagement, facilitation, negotiation, strategic planning and coaching.



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