

Nomination: Civil Society Member, Open Government Forum Australia, Keith Owen.

- **Some Highlights** to career: **Community participation** and **consultation** on issues related to disability, Indigenous health, family relationships, mental health, and transparency issues for Commonwealth Government Departments:
- **Developed** 1st dedicated counselling service in a culturally diverse area for crisis family counselling.
 - **Managed** 1st truly wheelchair accessible playground with accessible equipment in Australia.
 - **Submission** to the Senate regarding **Judiciary Amendment (Commonwealth Model Litigant Obligations) Bill 2017** representing a large group of Australian Citizens.
 - **Founded, and Facilitates** 3 large support groups with representative samples of **several thousand Ordinary Australians** engaging with Commonwealth Government Departments: focus on natural justice, accountability and corruption/official misconduct, education using a human rights platform.
 - **35 years** employment in the **social services** sector, dealing with family relationships, drug/alcohol, mental health, disability, legal, Indigenous health, domestic violence, child safety, men's health.
 - Prior **consultant** for Parents Place (Commonwealth Government Initiative).
 - Prior **consultant** for a large **Indigenous** Organisation on Domestic Violence and Child Safety policy development (remote communities).
 - Worked in **remote Indigenous Communities**, and urban Indigenous Communities.

Motivated, around natural justice, rule of law, transparency in Government decision making/policy/procedures. the notion of a **fair go for all**, **reasonableness** and **common sense** in legislative and Government administrative processes, and **human rights**.

- **Currently a case manager working for an Indigenous community controlled health organisation, drug and alcohol/mental health/social health/men's health issues.**
- **Educated** to Masters level but tempered with **real life experience**.

Real hands on experience as a counsellor and case manager working the front line over diverse areas - provides direct feedback on what affects ordinary Australians - importantly how issues of Governance affect real people on issues of transparency and conduct. Provides insight into **what** needs to change and **how** - and the type of information ordinary Australians need to best advocate for themselves from practical perspectives. **Reasonableness and Common Sense** – cannot be legislated for. These concepts affect the perceptions of ordinary Australians about issues of transparency and conduct in Governance, where processes born from legislation affecting ordinary Australians require interpretation and behaviour at a grass roots level that often is **not what Parliament intended**. **Transparency** is one thing, just **how** that transparency is conducted is quite another to cater for the vast majority mediated by their own backgrounds including culture, disability, gender, education, knowledge, power, privilege and connections.

One of my **strengths** is being able to identify problems/issues - how people perceive them, offering information and guidance to fill gaps in **knowledge/understanding** to empower on a very large scale. It is not enough to identify and describe how something is happening, what is required is effective engagement, providing information in an **effective/relevant** format tailored to individuals - able to be understood and used - motivating to action using that knowledge in a positive way. As a **facilitator** for some very large groups, something that happens is that not everyone is able to grasp core issues, and as a facilitator part of my role is to communicate in ways where these core issues are understood by finding common ground. Issues in Governance, particularly around **transparency** and **official misconduct** are greatly affected by **perceptions**. Managing those perceptions is a complex but highly satisfying part of my role(s). This involves looking at the legislation, internal procedures/policy of Government - matching them with real examples of Government Employee behaviour - identifying issues/patterns that are not congruent with the spirit of the legislation and policy/procedures of the Department involved. As a person who identifies as an Indigenous Australian but with a fair complexion, I offer a unique perspective of justice, accountability, transparency and the notion of open Government. Most of all, Open Government should be for all Australian Citizens.