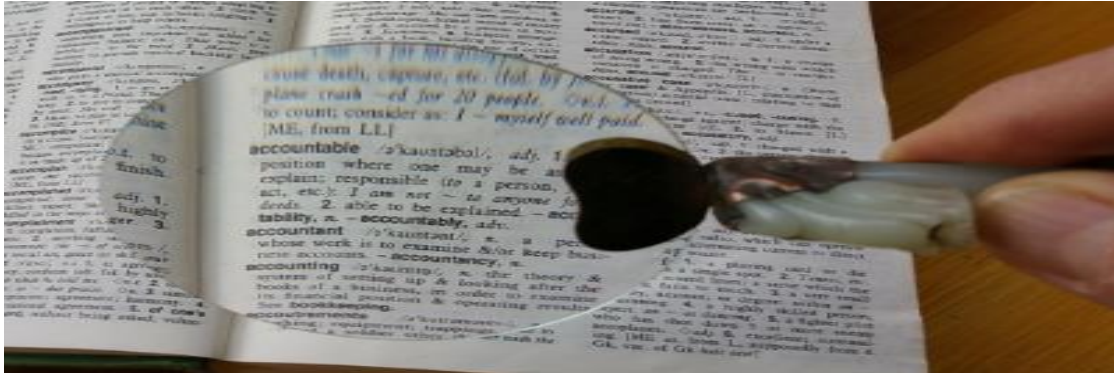


# Australian Citizens Against Corruption (ACAC)



## Submission to Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2 (2018-2020)

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018

The Australian Citizens Against Corruption (ACAC), was established in 2012 to engage members of the public in active, non-partisan support for the principle of public office, public trust, and advocate for a corruption-free government of integrity and accountability.

ACAC's establishment was motivated by an observed frustration in society regarding a dearth of trust in government together with supposed corruption and a lack of public accountability and integrity in current politics.

ACAC's objectives are to:

- Promote public and community interest in the issues of parliamentary responsibility and accountability
- Raise the profile of parliamentary responsibility and accountability as a topical issue and bring to bear greater general community pressure for reform.

ACAC obtains much information from the Accountability Round Table (ART) website, which enables greater understanding of government processes. For example, ART is concerned with issues such as changes in the reduction in funding for Freedom of Information (FOI), donations to political parties, trust and integrity in government.

**ACAC considers that the Open Government Partnership (OGP) should play a significant role in greatly increasing its distribution of information to civil society.**

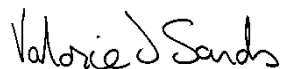
## Trust

If the OGP is about **building trust between government and civil society**, then this OGP process has not achieved its goal. ACAC contends that both the OGP process, and trust in government by individuals and civil society is sub-optimal.

For serious engagement with the public, **ACAC proposes that the OGP process requires the following to achieve its goals:**

1. **Adequate resources** to enable wide publicity to encourage civil society's participation eg information distributed in a range of media formats such as social media, television, radio and similar such as the public health campaigns focused on the Quit Campaign and the campaign highlighting the necessity for seat-belts.
2. It was difficult to respond to the OGP's request for civil society's participation. ACAC's knowledge of the OGP and opportunity to respond came from the ART website. In addition, we are aware of young people working together under the banner of *Designing Open Democracy* had no knowledge of the OGP. ACAC considers it likely that they and other members of civil society **would have participated if the OGP was more widely known**.
3. In 2017 the OECD found that when **governments** are not **trusted by civil society** it can lead to the distrust in institutions and outcomes such as higher voting for non-mainstream populist parties. Related to this, ACAC argues that **to promote integrity** – the flipside to corruption – that **behaviour in the public interest needs to be encouraged** over self-serving behaviour such as corrupt and unethical practices. ACAC suggests that lack of trust and not promoting behaviours that support the public interest distorts democracy. **ACAC's experience demonstrates that democracy requires trust between the governed and their government and that good governance requires active citizen participation.**

Thank you,



Dr Valarie Sands  
Chair, ACAC



Carmel Benjamin AM  
Founder, ACAC

[info@acacforum.org](mailto:info@acacforum.org) | [www.facebook.com/ACACorruption](https://www.facebook.com/ACACorruption)