

I wish to nominate myself for one of the positions on the next Open Government Forum (OGF) panel.

My motivation stems from a strong personal interest in transparency and its role promoting a fair and open society for all Australians. However, it has also been strongly informed by my professional experience working in the area of employment policy.

I recently resigned from my role as a policy officer working for the NFP peak body, Jobs Australia, after a period of 13 years.

In that role I had considerable experience and opportunity to both observe and seek to influence government policy development and implementation through submissions and as an industry representative on various advisory departmental panels (Department of Jobs & Small Business). This role also gave me first-hand experience and observation of current commonwealth consultation processes. The latter have led me to think that even with the best will and intention processes that appear on paper to provide opportunities for consultation and feedback are all too often nullified in practice.

This has made me increasingly interested and concerned about the gap between what, as a society, we say and think about the level and nature of transparency and accountability in Australian society today, and in what may actually occur in practice and in what many people actually experience.

It could be argued that gaps such as this are as corrosive of public trust and people's sense that they can genuinely influence important issues in their society as will occur in societies which don't have some of the governance structures Australia prides itself on.

While I believe that there is some excellent work being done both by government and by dedicated civil society organisations such as TIA and ART, I think that there is a substantial disconnect between what might be described as a professionalisation of these issues and the day-to-day experience of a citizen unfamiliar with the structures that frame accountability who then, for whatever reason or need, seeks out information affecting that person's life.

The enormous social complexity and rapid growth of Australian society only add to the challenges of finding ways to engage and enable all Australians to understand the critical importance transparency and accountability have for them as individuals.

I consider that I have the commitment, energy and openness to work towards ways of promoting discussion and engagement across the community about the Open Government Forum's goals and priorities. As an informed but not specialised contributor I think my voice, perspective and life experience would be valuable for the forum's work.

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