

Expression of Interest – Open Government Forum

Matt Ryan – Fellow, The GovLab (New York) & Principal, Reforming Democracy

Motivation for joining

To use my unique South Australian Government experience and global networks to help the Open Government Forum demonstrate that better democracy is a worthy ideal and a practical objective to pursue - bringing improved human rights, economic opportunity, greater social cohesion and superior public problem solving.

Demonstrated support of OGP Mission & Strategy and Open Government Declaration

Key author of Reforming Democracy policy¹ (launched 2015) and preceding activities

Led work program as Deputy Chief of Staff to the SA Premier. Acknowledged as being "at the centre" of a "transformation"² in the way the South Australian Government interacted with citizens. The program included multiple citizens' juries (inc. Australia's largest), participatory budgeting, open innovation challenges, online engagement, and a major event hosting international speakers on democracy and innovation ([Open State](#)). Key indicator: Online portal (YourSAy) registrations up from 34,000 in Aug 2015 to more than 110,000 in 2018.³ Endorsement: "one of the most successful and extensive examples of democratic innovations in practice."⁴

Ongoing work and networks

As a Fellow of The GovLab at New York University I am working alongside [Professor Beth Noveck](#), a director of the White House Open Government Initiative under President Obama and senior adviser for Open Government to UK Prime Minister David Cameron. We are developing training for government on the use of emerging technologies to improve access to justice and public engagement in lawmaking, drawing on global best practices and our own experience. In Spain in 2017, I participated in the Regional Government of Gipuzkoa's *Etorbizuna Eraikiz* program, presenting on the South Australian case and meeting with the regional President, senior officials and civil society representatives to discuss open government practices. I maintain a strong national and global network that includes people working in academia, philanthropy, business and government. I have also established my own for-purpose entity directed at exploring democratic reforms.

Expertise relevant to Open Government Partnership; Demonstrated ability to engage broad and diverse community networks; Previous experience working with and influencing government

As a Director at The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) I co-authored a major report⁵ on public sector innovation, informing the development of a public sector 'lab' for the SA Government, and encouraging the use of human-centred design and 'agile' methods. In government I routinely assisted in the preparation of submissions for parliamentary committees and at TACSI I prepared policy submissions to the Productivity Commission and Federal Treasury. I retain an excellent network in the public sector at a State level, including through my membership of IPAA SA's Strategic Advisory Committee. In government I also worked with the international NGO, The Climate Group, in the lead up to the Paris Climate Summit to drive ambitious policy by 44 subnational governments. I am a skilled writer and presenter, with a number of published articles.

In more than 20 years of working in local government, tertiary education and State Government sectors I have engaged with a wide range of community groups and stakeholders in policy areas as diverse as water, agriculture, school and further education, environment, health, planning and development, and industry. Endorsement from regional stakeholder: "Matt was accessible, constructive and a great conduit for action."⁶

Balancing continuity and reaching new communities; reflecting emerging priorities

Often working at the interface of the Executive and Parliamentary arms of government, I gained unique insight into the tensions affecting the adoption of open government initiatives, including the roles played by Ministers, political parties, media, and policy stakeholders⁷. This insight, and my experience, aligns strongly with the Forum's current priorities related to the public sector, and expressed future ambitions for a parliamentary action plan and strengthened civil society and state government engagement, especially beyond eastern Australia.

1 <http://bettertogether.sa.gov.au/reforming-democracy>

2 Premier Jay Weatherill, July 2016.

3 Reforming Democracy policy document, p6 (see footnote 1) and current yoursay.sa.gov.au home page

4 C.Chwalisz, The Populist Signal: why politics and democracy need to change, p74 (a study of global cases)

5 <https://publicsector.sa.gov.au/culture/south-australian-public-sector-innovation-lab/>

6 [REDACTED]

7 See for example my commentary in C. Chwalisz, The People's Verdict: adding informed citizen voices to public decision-making, p57