

Tuesday 20 June 2017

The Selection Panel
Open Government Partnership—Australia

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Dear Selection Panel,

Expression of interest in appointment to Australia's **Open Government Forum**.

My suitability for the membership on the Open Government Forum is evidenced by my work in the Commonwealth government informing the response to the review of Indigenous higher education participation, the negotiation of the nationally consistent collection of students with disability data, and my outreach work during Census 2016.

I possess considerable experience working in the public and university sectors, developing knowledge and applied understanding of the systems and structures in place around data and information infrastructure at the Commonwealth and jurisdictional levels. Throughout my career I have demonstrated a commitment to transparency, accountability, public participation and innovation. And am driven by the ideals of social licence and informed citizenry for strong governance.

In my position with a Commonwealth department I managed a research project seeking to inform the formulation of the government's policy response to the review of higher education outcomes and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As part of this work I evaluated data capability related to education inequalities and Indigenous student outcomes and transitions through school. I acquired a breadth of insight into the inconsistent and incomplete nature of data holdings of national interest for policy formulation. I also came to realise the limitations of information sharing between funders and recipients of government expenditure, and valued the myriad barriers constraining data custodians.

While developing a nationally consistent collection of students with disability data I established and initiated relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders in a politically charged environment. I actively liaised with schools and other stakeholders to understand technical issues relating to the collection of data items (providers' capacity to report), ethics, privacy and confidentiality. I developed resource materials clearly setting out the reporting requirements and definitions of data items so staff reporting within schools experienced least burden, without compromising submissions.

Leading up to the census collection in August last year I worked to dispel the misinformation in the public domain about the data collection and retention. I took action, displaying strong leadership, as I was concerned about the public's perception regarding the nature of the national survey. Using social media, I engaged with the public and recruited like-minded people to challenge misinformation.

I drew on my deep insight about the national survey and Commonwealth data practices and policy to inform the public of the importance of census data for public provision and policy. I challenged incorrect media reports by using my established networks with journalists and media connections. I did a number of interviews for television, radio and print media. I also wrote numerous media pieces translating technical details for non-technical audiences.

I would be delighted to apply my skills and expertise to the Open Government Forum, providing leadership into an exciting aspect of our future governance landscape.

Yours sincerely

Dr Liz Allen
Demographer
ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods