

Nomination by Pera Wells for a Civil Society position on the Open Government Forum

As someone who has been employed in the Australian Government, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, office of the Governor-General, the Commonwealth Secretariat, London and at the United Nations as well as in business and various community groups, I would bring to the Open Government Forum the necessary experience and creative vision to make a good contribution to the National Action Plan as a means of promoting continuing open government reform.

I firmly support the values articulated in the Open Government Declaration. During my career as an Australian diplomat I was often focused on advancing the promotion and protection of human rights, setting up the first Human Rights Section in both DFA and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Now as Vice-President of the Australian Council for Human Rights Education and a Board member of Cultural Infusion, I have been actively promoting “greater civic participation in public affairs”. For example, I initiated the concept of a Model Global Parliament, to enable university students to think about the idea of democratic global governance and to give them practical experience in standing up and debating vital issues. <http://worldcitizens.org.au/index.php/model-global-parliament-program/>

My expertise relevant to the Open Government Partnership was acknowledged when I was elected to the New York position of Secretary-General of the World Federation of United Nations Associations from 2006 - 2009. In this role I coordinated the activities of UN Associations in countries all around the world with a view to enabling them to keep their governments accountable for decisions that they had enacted at the United Nations.

While in New York I was connected with the late Dr Benjamin Barber, who created the Interdependence Movement that led to the formation of the Global Parliament of Mayors. <https://globalparliamentofmayors.org/>. This network strongly supports the principles and values of open government. As a judge of the Melbourne City Council Annual Awards, I have regular contact with the office of the Mayor of Melbourne.

I retain active links with a wide variety of networks shaping global civil society and am particularly keen to see the Australian Government endorse the Joint Declaration on Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Looking to the future, I would like to encourage the Open Government Forum to give consideration to the Australian government developing a State of the Future Index. <http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/SOFI.html>.

As a member of the Institute for Economics and Peace, which produces the annual Global Peace Index, I worked with an informal network of NGOs and academics to convene a seminar on the concept of Positive Peace in May this year. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p35Hr3jIj0>. We are now planning to hold a formal conference with the aim of inspiring over a million people around the world to learn about and become advocates for Positive Peace.

My experience of working with and influencing governments has been very varied, including a year as the Director of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (1998/9) and now as a member of the Committee for Australians for War Powers Reform. <http://www.warpowersreform.org.au/>

I would be very happy to participate in the Open Government Forum and commit to being an active and responsible representative of civil society.

Pera Wells

