

Citizens' Jury

A Citizens' Jury is a panel made up of a randomly selected and demographically diverse group of people (*Jurors*) who listen to and examine information on complex issues. In a nutshell, the way it works is:

- *witnesses* (representatives on the issues being explored) present their case to the *Jury* and respond to questions
- the *Jury* deliberates on the information presented and decide on recommendations they will put to *decision makers*.

A Citizens' Jury works well where there is a critical need to provide a transparent and democratic tool to support a decision making process.

Citizens' Juries are:

REPRESENTATIVE

Jurors are carefully selected to be representative of the public at large. No other process takes such care to accurately reflect the diversity of the community.

INFORMED

Witnesses provide information to the jury on the key aspects of an issue. They present a range of perspectives and opinions. The jury engages the witnesses in a dialogue to guarantee that all questions are answered.

IMPARTIAL

Witness testimony is carefully balanced to ensure fair treatment to all sides of the issue.

DELIBERATIVE

The jury deliberates in a variety of formats and is given time to ensure that all of the jurors' opinions are considered. (Jefferson Centre, 2006)

What is to be achieved

- A Citizens' Jury is assigned a task known to all involved as "*the charge or remit*" which usually takes the form of a question or series of questions that the jurors will address.
- The *charge* defines the scope of the jury's work and guides the jurors and the testimony of the witnesses.
- The *charge* is one of the most critical pieces to the success of a Citizens' Jury and needs to be crafted in consultation with the sponsors of the jury and an Advisory Committee.
- The *charge* needs to be neither too broad nor too narrow and it should not direct the jury towards a outcome.
- The jury may choose to go beyond the *charge* outlining the reasons for doing so.
- The *charge* questions are top priority for the jury. It focuses the jury on the issue and provides a framework for their recommendations.

What is the format?

- The format will depend on the complexity of *the charge* and the geographic area likely to be impacted by the jury's recommendations.
- A local jury may be capable of hearing a *charge* that is not too complex within a day or 2.
- The Citizens' Jury held in Adelaide to answer the charge "How can we ensure we have a vibrant and safe Adelaide nightlife?" took 5 days over three weekends to complete their task.
- A *charge* that relates to an extensive geographic area, may require a series of preliminary Citizens' Juries in various locations followed by a final Citizens' Jury to review the information presented before they can make their final recommendations.

Online use of the tool?

The use of an online tool to support and complement a Citizens' Jury process (such as yousay.sa.gov.au) increases the level of participation and allows a broad audience to keep track of the process. This online access increases transparency in the decision making process.

See some [examples of previous Citizens' Juries hosted on YourSAy.gov.au](#).

See another example of a [Citizens' Jury delivered by DemocracyCo in the midst of COVID](#). Its purpose was to consider the improvements that could be made to Queensland motor accident Insurance scheme for RACQ.

What to consider?

Cost	Citizens' Juries are very resource intensive so securing funding can be a challenge. As a reference, the cost can range from \$3,500 for a very basic one-day jury, \$100,000 for a standard jury and \$400,000+ for a regional jury.
Sponsors	The <i>sponsor</i> or funder for the jury may be a government department; or a partner to tiers of government, non-government agencies, not-for-profits or private corporations.
Keeping the jury impartial	To keep the integrity of the process, appoint an impartial project team and an <i>Advisory Committee</i> including community representatives who are not aligned to or have an interest in <i>the charge</i> . The main role of the committee is to craft <i>the charge</i> , the agenda for the hearing and the witness list.
Time	A Citizens' Jury takes between 4-5 months to plan and can take between 1-5 days to complete generally over several days.
Maintain transparency	The use of a random survey to select the jury pool is an essential part of the process and is usually managed by a research company to maintain the transparency and impartiality.
Selection criteria	A specific criterion is required for the selection of the witness list to ensure a variety of perspectives are represented. The jurors need to become fully informed about the issues in an impartial manner.
Select quality facilitator	At least 2 skilled facilitators are required for each jury session. Their role is to lead the Jury through the process, keep them on track with <i>the charge</i> and provide feedback to one another on how to improve the jury's experience.

How to use the Citizens' Jury tool?

Before the session

- Secure a sponsor.
- Recruit a project team.
- Set up an Advisory Committee.
- Select a venue and arrange catering.

- Notify the general public of the Citizens' Jury project and how they might be involved. You could do this via a Media Release.
- Promote the Citizens' Jury process through news media, website, word-of-mouth, local networks, and social networks.
- Conduct a random selection process to select jurors.
- Notify jurors of their selection.
- Establish *the charge*.
- Prepare an agenda.
- Select witnesses and prepare a witness presentation list.
- Send information packs to jurors and witnesses and provide general information for the public.
- Brief support staff and up-skill moderators.
- Get in touch with jurors and witnesses a week before the Citizens' Jury.
- Set up the venue.

During the sessions

- Welcome jurors, witnesses and members of the public who may want to observe proceedings.
- Commence proceedings as per the agenda for the required number of days.
- Plan for next session with the jurors and conclude the session.

After the sessions

- Follow up with jurors, witnesses and the Advisory Committee for feedback on the process.
- Debrief with the project team.
- Prepare a communications piece on the progress of the Citizens' Jury.
- After the final session send the unedited report to the jurors, witnesses and decision makers.

Resource Required?

- Funding.
- Office space for the project team.
- Meeting space for the Advisory Committee and for the Citizens' Jury sessions.
- Possible accommodation and travel expenses for people involved who live outside metropolitan Adelaide.
- Staff costs and reimbursements to jurors, witnesses, moderators and Advisory Committee.
- Project staff to plan, implement and wind up the process.
- Human resource management of all the contributors.
- Data projector/laptop/screen/whiteboard/printer and other IT resources.
- Large, flexible, comfortable venue including conference room, meeting rooms and reception area, tables and chairs.
- Catering requirements.
- Handout materials (hard or soft copies) including information packs for jurors, witnesses and Advisory Committee, pens, paper.
- Information about translation of information for CALD groups, as required.
- Information in alternative formats (as required) such as audio recordings, Braille, large print, illustrated print, to ensure materials are accessible.

How to Evaluate?

- Allow opportunities for jurors to provide verbal feedback throughout the process and at the end of the jury. Ask them and the witnesses to complete written evaluations throughout the process.
- Assess the overall satisfaction with the process by the jury, project team, Advisory Committee, facilitators and witnesses and use the feedback to make improvements to future Citizens' Jury sessions.
- Consider conducting pre and post process evaluation surveys.

Tips and hints

Media coverage

Active media coverage will help demonstrate the transparency of the process and keep the general public informed of proceedings. Follow communication protocols to plan communication strategies.

Advisory committee

Include individuals on the Advisory Committee from a variety of perspectives in the planning stages of a Citizens' Jury, to ensure the final agenda and witness list covers a wide range of relevant perspectives.

Jury demographics

5 demographic variables and one attitudinal variable are usually used to create a representative jury. The traditional demographic categories used are age, gender, educational attainment, race, and geographic location within the community.

Alternate Jurors

Recruited in case someone must drop out during the process.

Juror payment

A fee is paid to jurors to encourage commitment to the process and to compensate for time off work or other expenses.

Staff time

It is the single most significant cost of a Citizens' Jury so be mindful of how staff time is used during the process.

Limitations

'Don't bite off more than you can chew'. Be mindful of how much information jurors can digest in a limited amount of time and how this may affect their capacity to make decisions.

Juror list

Don't publish the Juror list until the first day of deliberations to avoid lobbying by witnesses.

Debriefing

Hold a debrief meeting at the end of each day with jurors and support staff to check how things are going and adjust where necessary prior to the next day.

Guidelines

Provide clear guidelines for witnesses on the jury's expectations and check on audio/visual requirements of witnesses.

Additional communication

Consider a podcast or social media coverage for the Citizens' Jury for the duration of the sessions.

Case Study

How can we ensure we have a vibrant and safe Adelaide nightlife?

The Citizen's Jury considered numerous submissions, heard from many local and interstate experts, and shared their own knowledge, experience and research in analysing and recommending how to ensure Adelaide's nightlife is vibrant and safe over five full Saturdays at three weekly intervals.

The general consensus that the Citizens' Jury reached is that Adelaide nightlife is already vibrant and safe when compared with similar cities interstate and overseas. Therefore their commendations are mostly concerned with how to make Adelaide nightlife more vibrant.

Examples

See how the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government convened a [Citizens' Jury to address the issue of compulsory third party insurance for drivers](#).

The Victorian state government commissioned a [Citizens' Jury to consider using quotas in the public sector to enhance women's representation and participation in public sector leadership](#).

*From [Participedia.net](#)

Further resources

[Participedia summarises the key elements involved in a Citizens' Jury](#).

Some further detail can also be found at [Involve UK](#).