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Australian Government Open Government National Action Plan

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Submitted via the Open Government Network Portal: <https://ogpau.govspace.gov.au/>

5. Public Participation and Engagement

Commitment 5.1: Delivery of Australia's Open Government National Action Plan

Extract

We will ensure that Australia's Open Government National Action Plan is a platform for ongoing dialogue, collaboration and open government reform.

Objective: *Australia will establish a permanent dialogue mechanism with civil society, which includes a multi-stakeholder forum. The multi-stakeholder forum will track the implementation of commitments, ensure commitments continue to be relevant and ambitious, inform the drafting of future National Action Plans and raise awareness about open government in the broader community.*

Comment

Improving communication is the heart of this commitment. Aside from a few people connected to government and some civil society actors, hardly anyone knows about open government or understands it and how they can participate. I suggest that this be acknowledged and funding be allocated to help resolve this and a communications plan be added to this commitment.

Commitment 5.2: Enhance public participation in government decision-making

Extract

We will work together to improve public participation in government decision making for better policy development and service delivery outcomes.

Objective: *Australia will work towards improving public participation and engagement to enhance policy and service delivery outcomes for Australians.*

Comment

My comments and suggestions are on specific sections:

Objective: *“Australia will work towards improving public participation and engagement to enhance policy and service delivery outcomes for Australians.”*

This commitment could be stronger. I recommend the wording “work towards improving” be changed to “will improve”.

To implement this commitment, I strongly recommend the government commit to embedding participatory design into the design of policy and government services.

Ambition:

“To design and adopt a whole-of-government framework that embeds meaningful, open, public and multi-stakeholder participation into the business of policy development and service delivery.”

I suggest the language in this section be more specific and changed from “multi-stakeholder” to perhaps communities of interest. The aim of changing the language is to ensure participation with communities impacted by the policies and services.

I suggest the words “in the business” be replaced by “in the whole lifecycle (conception, design, implementation, delivery) of policy and service development. “

Other recommendations:

To deliver true public participation, my recommendation is the Government should create an initiative under the National Innovation Agenda or establish a new procurement framework for private enterprises and non government organisations to pitch unsolicited proposals to government, access funding to develop and prototype ideas, and collaborate with government in designing and delivering online and offline solutions to enhance participation.

Relevance:

Suggestion: Add – Ensure timely public participation.

Milestones:

Suggestion: to strengthen this add the words

1. Digital Transformation Office **co-create, improve** and more effectively use...
2. Establish a funding initiative similar to the Business Research and Innovation Initiative “challenges” to provide opportunities for businesses and non-government organisations to collaborate with government departments and the Digital Transformation Office to design and develop ways to deliver open government and develop new services to meet specific needs.