Parliamentary Committees: Improving public engagement

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Introduction

Engaging with the public is one of the core tasks of committees in the Australian parliament. *House of Representatives Practice* highlights the role of committees in engaging with the public:

> … committees are well suited to the gathering of evidence from expert groups or individuals. In a sense they 'take Parliament to the people' and allow direct contact between members of the public and representative groups of Members of the House.[1]

Similarly, *Odgers' Senate Practice* highlights:

> … committees provide a means of access for citizens to participate in law making and policy review. Anyone may make a submission to a committee inquiry and committees will normally take oral evidence from a selection of witnesses who have made written submissions. Committees frequently meet outside Canberra, thereby taking the Senate to the people and gaining first hand knowledge of and exposure to issues of concern to the public.[2]

Recent academic studies have suggested that parliamentary committees are uniquely placed to address increasing public dissatisfaction and disengagement with the political process. These studies have suggested ways in which parliamentary committees across the world could improve how they engage with the public and thereby contribute to 'democratic renewal'. This paper examines some of the suggestions made in these studies, particularly in the UK, and how they could be implemented in the Australian parliament.

Parliamentary committees and 'democratic renewal'

Commentators and studies have long bemoaned the rising public disaffection and disengagement with politics and democratic processes in Western democracies, highlighting that the political system has grown disconnected from the public that it nominally serves.[3] In a recent example, the ANU's 2016 Australian Election Study found the public satisfaction with democratic processes and public trust in politicians were at some of the lowest levels ever recorded, following similar trends in the UK, US and Italy.[4]

Some academics have suggested that parliamentary committees, through their role in bringing 'parliament to the people', are best placed to address this perceived disengagement. In their 2012 study, *Democratic decline and democratic renewal*,

Professor Ian Marsh and Professor Raymond Miller suggested that parliamentary committees have a unique opportunity to contribute to 'democratic renewal' by 'reconnecting citizens to the political system'.[5] In his paper to the 2015 ASPG Conference, Professor Marsh argued that contemporary disaffection and disengagement with politics was the result of two fundamental and interconnected structural changes: the standing and influence of the major political parties; and the changing identities that define citizen political affiliations. Professor Marsh noted that the 'systemic consequences' of these changes are 'fundamental', resulting in:

- a representation gap – 'citizen opinion has pluralised but systemic capacities to listen and respond have diminished'; and
- a strategy gap – 'the key role of party conferences as tantamount to agenda setting forums for the nation is, if not negated, at least much diminished'.[6]

Marsh and Miller argue that parliamentary committees 'clothed with appropriate access to floor debates, standing and powers'[7] are well placed to address these gaps as 'critical potential agents of democratic renewal'.[8] Marsh and Miller suggest that with 'appropriate changes in their prestige and formal standing':

> … parliamentary committees could offer new, essentially political, capacities to recreate the capabilities that were formerly located in the mass party organisations … This involves the ability to renew the link between civil society and the formal political system, in a discursive or deliberative setting that can register, assess and refine the preferences of protagonists. Committees have the capacity to do this around single issues. Their findings might then frame later contention between rival political elites. We conjecture that no other agent in the political system offers these essential capabilities.[9]

Further research by Professor Marsh highlights that public engagement is central to ensuring committees can fulfil this role in democratic renewal. In 2015, Professor Marsh contributed to a research project commissioned by the UK House of Commons Liaison Committee to examine the how UK Select Committees engage with the public. The resulting *Building public engagement* report concluded:

> Building engagement must obviously be weighed against the other demands on committees and its members, but research suggests there is a virtuous circle between public engagement and the other core tasks. Effective public engagement facilitates effective scrutiny that, in turn, supports good governance.[10]

More recently Associate Professor Carolyn Hendriks and Professor Adrian Kay from the ANU's Crawford School of Public Policy have suggested that parliamentary committees offer a unique opportunity for democratic renewal. Hendriks and Kay argue:

> As party politics and elections become less reliable in revealing public preferences on policy issues, the focus of democratic renewal needs to look at potential innovations to the form and function of representative institutions operating between elections … committees represent an important yet undervalued site of participatory innovation, particularly their capacity to promote inclusive public deliberation.[11]

Hendriks and Kay argue that public engagement should play a 'more central role in the deliberative work of parliaments, especially committees'.[12] They suggest that parliamentary committees should 'deepen and broaden' their public engagement:

> To deepen participation means moving beyond one-way information flows, towards more deliberative conditions where communication is open, reflective and dialogical. To broaden participation requires reaching out to everyday publics and actively recruiting under-represented or marginalized voices.[13]

Hendriks and Kay observe that 'most legislative committees tend to rely on traditional methods for seeking community input' and suggest instead a series of proposals for promoting more inclusive public engagement, ranging from:

> … amending the selection procedures and communicative conditions of public hearings, taking committee deliberations to where publics meet, through to more radical proposals to integrate citizens' forums into committee deliberations.[14]

This paper examines some of the suggestions by the *Building public engagement* report and Hendriks and Kay, and how they could be implemented in Australia.

Improving public engagement and the Australian Parliament

How to achieve 'broader and deeper' public engagement by parliamentary committees has been the subject of a number of inquiries in the Australian Parliament over the past 20 years. Two key reports by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure (Procedure Committee) have made recommendations about how to improve the awareness and involvement in committee inquiries. These report focus on:

- increasing publicity to raise awareness of inquiries; and
- use of technology to encourage participation in inquiries.

It's Your House

In 1999, the Procedure Committee inquired into community involvement in the procedures of the House of Representatives and its committees. The report followed a comprehensive review of the House Committee system completed in 1998.[15] The Committee's report, *It's Your House*, made a number of recommendations to address

barriers to participation and improve community involvement in and understanding of the work of House committees, including:

- improve coverage of committees in school educational material;
- developing a strategy to raise profile of committee web pages;
- developing a media strategy for committees; and
- changes to standing orders to allow committees to conduct business using audio visual technology.[16]

The Committee Secretary for this inquiry, Robyn Webber, noted that the report represented a 'new direction for the House of Representatives and its committees' but was only 'one small step on the road to changing the way the House and its Committees operate within an ever changing environment'.[17]

Building a modern committee system

A decade later in 2010, the Procedure Committee undertook another inquiry into improving the committee system and to assess the 1998 reforms. In relation to public engagement, the committee examined improvements to 'accommodating new ways of interacting with the public; ensuring strong relationships with witnesses; and, the House's role in managing its relationship with the public'.[18] The report, *Building a modern committee system*, stressed the importance of public engagement in raising the profile of the work of House committees.[19]

The report noted that the main reforms suggested by the *It's Your House* report had been implemented, and identified new areas of focus. The Committee encouraged new ways of evidence gathering:

> … committees should continue to be innovative in their evidence-gathering methods, having regard to the nature of the inquiry and the needs of interested individuals and organisations.[20]

The Committee also highlighted the opportunities rapidly changing technologies offered in increasing and improving engagement with the public. The Committee supported:

> … the use of relevant technologies to make deliberations and evidence-gathering more efficient and effective, and sees scope for the House to take a more strategic approach to its use of technology.[21]

The possibilities for developing innovative evidence-gathering techniques and greater use of technology and will be discussed in more detail below.

Public engagement and the UK Parliament

The importance of public engagement has been a particular focus of the UK House of Commons Select Committee system following the 2009 House of Commons Reform Committee report (the Wright Committee). In its 2012 report on the effectiveness, resources and powers of Select Committees, the Liaison Committee added a new core task on public engagement.[22]

Building public engagement

In line with its new core task, in 2014 the Liaison Committee commissioned Professor Marsh, together with Professor Matthew Flinders and Leanne-Marie Cotter, to research the effectiveness of select committees in engaging with the public. The research focussed on the work of five select committees[23] and highlighted that while there had been a significant shift within the committee system to taking public engagement seriously, the shift had not been systematic and levels of engagement differed from committee to committee. The resulting report, *Building public engagement: Options for developing select committee outreach*, concluded that a 'more vibrant and systematic approach to public engagement is urgently needed'.[24]

The conclusions of the *Building public engagement* report were consistent with the 2015 Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy (Commission). The Commission examined how digital technology could improve public engagement with and understanding of the UK Parliament, and made a number of recommendations including that the Parliament be 'fully interactive and digital' by 2020.[25] These recommendations built on the Hansard Society's 2013 report, #*futurenews: The Communication of Parliamentary Democracy in a Digital World*.[26]

The *Building public engagement* report suggested ten steps to achieving change which translate into twelve broad recommendations to achieve more effective public engagement.[27] Four of these recommendations and their possible application in the Australian Parliament are outlined below.

Options for broadening public engagement

Engaging with online communities

Recommendation four suggests extending committee outreach through 'intermediary platforms' and 'existing online platforms'. The report argues that committees should consider:

> … adopting informal partnerships with those existing on-line communities or off-line public groups that can give them advice in relation to language and layout, while also offering them large pre-existing public audiences.[28]

Box 1 highlights two UK case studies where committees have used existing online platforms to seek contributions to inquiries.

> **Box 1 – UK Select Committees and online communities**
>
> *Education Committee*
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> In 2010-11, the Education Committee conducted an inquiry into services for young people. The Committee used the online platform the *Student Room* to gather the views and experiences of young people about which services they want and would prioritise. Examples from the forum were published throughout the report to highlight particular concerns.[29]
>
> *Business, Innovation and Skills Committee*
>
> In 2012-13, the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee conducted an inquiry into Women in the Workplace. The Committee used the online platform *Mumsnet* to seek views on what steps are being taken to tackle workplace gender inequality and what more should be done.[30] The Committee noted that in using *Mumsnet*, it wanted 'to reach people directly affected by the issues concerning women in the workplace who might not otherwise have considered contributing their experiences'.[31]

In the Australian Parliament, committees have also experimented with engaging with online communities. In his 2009 paper, John Baczynski examined a unique approach taken by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing to online forums to gather evidence for its 2007 inquiry into the benefits of breastfeeding.[32] The Committee approached a number of parenting websites with online forums, including the Australian Breastfeeding Association, BellyBelly and Bub Hub, to seek information from mothers who were having trouble breastfeeding. Baczynski noted that while the experiment 'could be deemed a success, the style of submissions and the information they contained varied widely'. Baczynski also highlighted a number of issues, including the difficulty of applying parliamentary privilege to submissions taken from a dynamic online environment, as the forum continued to be updated and changed after the posts had been formally submitted to the committee, and difficulties in identifying the names and locations of contributors.[33]

Committees have also used other online tools such as surveys to connect with online communities. In 2012, the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Security, as part of its inquiry into cyber-safety for senior Australians, designed and launched an online survey using the Survey Monkey website.[34] The survey sought contributions from senior Australians on their internet use and their concerns about cyber-safety and the Committee received 536 responses. The Committee concluded that the survey was a 'worthwhile exercise' because:

> … the results have provided some evidence of trends regarding how seniors use the internet including: where they most often use the internet; for what purposes; how often they use it; and what their experiences have been with the technology, service providers, education opportunities and scams. Results have also provided some insight into the differences between metropolitan, regional

and rural users as well as some interesting differences between age groups.[35]

Similarly, in 2014 the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs used an online questionnaire to enable individuals to make a personal contribution to its inquiry into the child support program. The Committee received over 11,000 responses and various forms of information gathered from the questionnaire were used throughout the Committee's final report, including three snapshots summarising the key issues. The Committee noted that the information 'proved very useful' and drew the Committee's attention 'to aspects of the child support system which may require review, while also highlighting areas where the program is working well'.[36]

These unique examples demonstrate ways committees can use online platforms to gather evidence from particular groups that may not be familiar with contributing to committee inquiries. However, more commonly, engagement with online communities is initiated by lobby groups or organisations. These groups are able to mobilise a large numbers of individuals to make submissions through online surveys or form letters. In some cases, these campaigns may not assist committees in their deliberations as much as those targeted surveys developed by committees themselves. For example, in their 2009 analysis of Senate committee inquiries, Jackie Morris and Sophie Power highlighted that:

> …receiving a large number of submissions from individuals supporting a particular point of view does not always provide committees with proportionate amounts of useful evidence. For example, some inquiries receive a large number of form letters or petitions. While we would not wish to discourage individuals from participating in inquiries in this manner, this sort of evidence does not always greatly assist the committee's deliberations. Nor are large numbers of submissions necessarily an accurate indication of public sentiment on an issue—it may simply indicate the superior organisational skills of a lobby group in mobilising its membership to make submissions.[37]

One of the challenges for committees is to balance the management of the large number of submissions generated by online campaigns, and ensuring that other individuals have the opportunity contribute their views through other platforms.

Democratising committees

Recommendation six is to 'enhance the democratic quality of the committee process'. As many observers have pointed out, committees traditionally to seek contributions from the 'usual suspects', a 'pre-existing set of established organised interest associations and individual experts'.[38] The report suggests there is an opportunity to

'develop the democratic or representative character of the process' to reach out to more diverse ranges of individuals, communities and organisations.[39]

While there may be scope to reach out to more diverse groups, research suggests that seeking advice from the 'usual suspects', does not exclude other groups from the process. In relation to Senate Committee bill inquiries, Kelly Paxman noted a key criticism was that members 'are accused of "rounding up the usual suspects" to support their positions' and 'the same old paths are being trodden as particular issues regularly arise, with predictable outcomes'.[40] In examining this criticism in the context of the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee, Anthony Marinac noted that while there certainly are 'usual suspects', their relationship with committees is not exclusive and barriers to the participation in the inquiry process with other groups 'are not unreasonably high'.[41]

In the current environment, particularly in the Senate, the high workload of committees is putting increasing stress on the 'usual suspects' and a number of observers have raised concerns about 'witness fatigue'. During the 44th Parliament, the then Clerk of the Senate, Dr Rosemary Laing, expressed concern about the increase of inquiries and the strains the high volume of work was placing on the system:

> Frankly, I wonder where all this is heading. I conclude by saying that I sincerely hope that the thoroughness and credibility of Senate committee inquiries, the willingness of witnesses to make submissions and keep coming back to give evidence, and the value of what is unique about Senate committee inquiries, which are all the product of decades of sustained efforts by senators and staff, will survive the demands currently being placed on the system.[42]

Recent indications suggest this trend, particularly in the Senate, is continuing. In February 2017, the Australian Financial Review reported that the high number of inquiries was pushing the committee system to 'breaking point'.[43] In response questioning about the article, the newly appointed Clerk of the Senate, Richard Pye, told the Finance and Public Administration Committee:

> We are always concerned about what we loosely call 'witness fatigue'. If witnesses are being invited along to talk to Senate committees about the same topics time and again, it can be very difficult for them to respond. And obviously where committees have very short time frames that can be very difficult as well.[44]

The impact of the high committee workloads in the Senate and the House impacts on Members, Senators and committees across the parliament. While 'democratising' participation in inquiries is important, equally important is ensuring that those dedicated organisations that committees depend on to contribute to their inquiries

are not overwhelmed by the demands placed upon them by the increasing workload.

Two-way learning

Recommendation nine is to 'explore opportunities to enhance two way learning'. The report suggested that the 'professional skills and capacities of committees arguably need to change in both cultural and institutional terms'. The report suggested that one option for this 'two way learning' would be 'for committees to think not so much in terms of engagement but also in terms of *deliberation* in the sense of a more meaningful two-way dialogue and learning process'.[45]

Similarly Hendriks and Kay suggest that this 'two-way learning' could be facilitated by conducting public hearings 'under more dialogical conditions':

> … for example where 'witnesses' could also ask questions of committee members (rather than only the reverse). This would require committees shifting their role from 'mediator of competing interests' to 'facilitator of public deliberation'.[46]

Many committees across the House and Senate engage in this 'two-way dialogue' through the use of roundtable discussions to deliberate on issues of contention. Unlike traditional public hearings, these roundtable discussions enable committee to participate in debates with experts and community members to sound out potential courses of action. For example, in its 2016 inquiry into the contentious issue of Lyme-like illness, the Senate Community Affairs References Committee held a roundtable discussion with medical experts, lobby groups and patients to address what steps the committee could take to address their concerns.[47] Similarly, the House of Representatives Health Committee held a similar roundtable on the same issue to discuss possible courses of action.[48]

The *Building public engagement* report suggests there may be scope for committees to further develop the use of roundtables and other informal discussions to engage in more 'two-way learning' throughout the inquiry process.

Setting agendas

Recommendation ten is to 'involve committee publics in setting agendas'. The report notes that some committees have experimented with allowing the public to 'nominate issues and themes for further scrutiny', and other have 'allowed the public to suggest questions for witnesses'.[49] The report suggests a 'more radical approach' to develop:

> … more innovative ways of bringing multiple publics with a cross-section of viewpoints and backgrounds together around a specific theme or topic. This is not a replacement for representative democracy but a valuable adjunct that can either dovetail with

parliamentary process by involving MPs or can feed their conclusions and recommendations into parliament.[50]

The report highlighted the 'value of opening-up the agenda for initial ideas about inquiry topics beyond the committee itself. The more visible or salient inquiries had frequently been initially identified through non-parliamentary channels.'[51] **Box 2** highlights some examples of engaging the public in setting agendas for inquiry topics and questions for ministers.

Box 2 – Examples of setting agendas

Transport Committee

In 2014, the Transport Committee called for suggestions for its future work program and possible subjects for inquiries. The Committee used its website and Twitter, as well as the blog site *Which?* to call for suggestions. The Committee received 119 suggestions, from which it selected three inquiry topics. The Committee noted that it was 'committed to ensuring that the public is fully involved in our work. Our intention is to ensure that, over the course of the Parliament, we consider issues affecting all of the main modes of transport which are of most pressing concerns to the public we serve'.[52]

Questions for the Minister

Other Committees (Communities, Education, Energy and Transport) have used Twitter to generate ideas for questions that can be put the relevant minister. For example, in 2012 the Transport Committee sought advice via Twitter on questions for transport ministers about cycling safety for its inquiry into the Government's road safety strategy.[53] The #AskCycleMinisters hashtag received 775 questions, some of which were put to the relevant ministers.[54]

The report suggested that these examples using digital tools 'do allow committees to gauge the public temperature around either a broad issue or a set of competing issue' and suggests committees could 'put in place a parallel but cross-sectional outreach processes to complement their routine inquiries'.[55] The report highlighted:

> These are clearly early first steps into a new world of digital communication and engagement, but the evidence does suggest that these conduits can extend engagement to more fluid, segmented and issue-specific sections of the public.[56]

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is unique in the Australian parliament for its 'parallel outreach processes'. The Committee and its Sub-Committees hold a regular program of private briefings with the diplomatic and defence communities, in addition to its routine inquiries. However, these processes are not common across the parliament. In most cases, issues for inquiry are raised by committee members and, in the case of the House, put to the relevant Minister for approval, or in the case of the Senate, voted on by the Senate.

Research has demonstrated that the level of public engagement in particular inquiries ultimately depends on the subject matter of the inquiry itself. In their 2009

paper, Morris and Power found that while a 'complex range of factors' affect the level of participation in Senate inquires, overall, the key determinant of participation 'appears to be the subject matter of an inquiry'.[57] Morris and Power found that other perceived barriers, such as the short timeframes for inquiries and lack of publicity and advertising, were not as influential as the subject matter of the inquiry itself, including the level of public interest in the issue, the role of lobby groups and the amount of media coverage.[58]

The examples from the UK suggest there may be scope to further develop the ways committees seek input on inquiry topics to ensure they are addressing those issues of concern to the public.

Conclusion

Committees perform a vital role in the Australian parliament in connecting members with the public they serve. Through inquiries, submissions and public hearings, members of the public have the opportunity to engage directly with their elected officials.

However, for committees to contribute to 'democratic renewal' as suggested by Professor Marsh and others, committees must be able to continue to demonstrate their value in addressing areas of community concern and involving the public in these deliberations.

The UK *Building public engagement* report has highlighted different ways parliamentary committees could improve how they engage with the public, through using online platforms, 'democratising' participation, encouraging 'two-way learning' and setting agendas. Committees in the Australian parliament have experimented with some of these suggestions, and there could be scope to develop these further as committees seek to continue to 'broaden and deepen' their engagement with the Australian public.

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[1] B.C. Wright (ed.), *House of Representatives Practice*, Sixth Edition, Canberra: Department of the House of Representatives, 2012, p. 639.
[2] Rosemary Laing (ed.), *Odgers' Senate Practice, as revised by Harry Evans*, 14th edition, Canberra: Department of the Senate, 2016, p. 462.
[3] See, for example: Mark Blyth and Richard Katz, 'From Catch-all Politics to Cartelisation: The Political Economy of the Cartel Party,' *West European Politics*, v 28, n 1, 2005, pp 33 – 60.
[4] See: Sarah M. Cameron and Ian McAllister, *Trends in Australian Political Opinion: Results from the Australian Election Study 1987-2016*, Canberra: The Australian National University, 2016, http://www.australianelectionstudy.org/ (accessed 8 September 2017).
[5] Marsh and Miller, *Democratic decline and democratic renewal*, p. 289.
[6] Ian Marsh, 'The Commons Select Committee System in the 2015-2020 Parliament', ASPG Conference 2015, 30 September – 2 October 2015, p. 11. See also: Ian Marsh, 'The Commons Select Committee System in the 2015-20 Parliament', *The Political Quarterly*, v 87, n 1, 2016, pp 96–103.

[7] Marsh and Miller, *Democratic decline and democratic renewal*, p. 310.

[8] Marsh and Miller, *Democratic decline and democratic renewal*, p. 33.

[9] Marsh and Miller, *Democratic decline and democratic renewal*, p. 33.

[10] House of Commons Liaison Committee, *Building public engagement: Options for developing select committee outreach*, First Special Report of Session 2015-16, 14 October 2015, p. 25.

[11] Carolyn Hendriks and Adrian Kay, 'From 'Opening Up' to Democratic Renewal: Deepening Public Engagement in Legislative Committees', *Government and Opposition*, 7 August 2017, pp 20–21.

[12] Hendriks and Kay, 'From 'Opening Up' to Democratic Renewal', p. 21.

[13] Hendriks and Kay, 'From 'Opening Up' to Democratic Renewal', pp 7–8.

[14] Hendriks and Kay, 'From 'Opening Up' to Democratic Renewal', p. 21.

[15] See: House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure, *Ten Years On: A review of the House of Representatives Committee System*, Canberra, 1 June 1998.

[16] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure, *It's Your House: Community involvement in the procedures and practices of the House of Representatives and its committees*, Canberra, 1999, recommendations 12 – 31, pp xi–xviii.

[17] Robyn Webber, 'Increasing Public Participation in the Wok of Parliamentary Committees', ASPG Conference 2001, Parliament 2000 – Towards a Modern Committee System, p. 44.

[18] See: House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure, *Building a modern committee system: An inquiry into the effectiveness of the House committee system*, June 2010, Canberra, Chapter 3 – Committees: Participatory democracy.

[19] *Building a modern committee system*, p. 52.

[20] *Building a modern committee system*, p. 46

[21] *Building a modern committee system*, p. 48.

[22] The report added the following core task for select committees: 'To assist the House of Commons in better engaging with the public by ensuring that the work of the committee is accessible to the public'. See: UK House of Commons Liaison Committee, *Select committee effectiveness, resources and powers – second report*, HC 697, 8 November 2012, https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmliaisn/697/69702.htm (accessed 11 September 2017).

[23] The five select committees examined were: Business, Innovations and Skills; Justice; Work and Pensions; Science and Technology; and, Political and Constitutional Affairs.

[24] House of Commons Liaison Committee, *Building public engagement: Options for developing select committee outreach*, First Special Report of Session 2015-16, 14 October 2015, p. 1.

[25] Digital Democracy Commission, *Open Up! Report of the Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy*, 26 January 2015, http://www.digitaldemocracy.parliament.uk/documents/Open-Up-Digital-Democracy-Report.pdf (accessed 11 September 2017).

[26] The #*futurenews* report examined the changing media environment and the importance of social media in addressing emerging communications and linkage challenges with fragmented communities of interest. See: Hansard Society, #*futurenews* – *The Communication of Parliamentary Democracy in a Digital World*, London, 2013, https://assets.contentful.com/u1rlvvbs33ri/3x5fTrhbji6AQswyGMcwMA/48f494c8e1b4523dc7ab63f39027e69a/Publication__Future-News-the-Communication-of-Parliamentary-Democracy-in-a-Digital-World.pdf (accessed 11 September 2017).

[27]27 *Building public engagement*, 'Chapter 5: Strategies to Consolidate an Extend Public Engagement', pp 60 – 70.

[28] See: Recommendation 4, *Building public engagement*, p. 65.

[29] See: UK Education Committee, *Services for young people*, 23 June 2011, http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/inquiries/serives-for-young-people/ (accessed 12 September 2017).

[30] For a list of the posts, see: Mumsnet, 'Parliamentary committee wants your views on issues faced by working women', https://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/site_stuff/a1633298-Parliamentary-committee-wants-your-views-on-issues-faced-by-working-women (accessed 12 September 2017).

[31] UK Business, Innovation and Skills Committee, *Women in the Workplace*, 20 June 2013, p. 7, http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-innovation-and-skills/inquiries/parliament-2010/women-in-the-workplace/

[32] See: House Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, *The Best Start: report on the inquiry into the health benefits of breastfeeding*, 9 August 2007, http://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/house_of_representatives_committees?url=haa/./breastfeeding/report.htm (accessed 12 September 2017).

[33] John Baczynski, 'Opportunities for Greater Consultation? House Committee Use of Information and Communication Technology', *Parliamentary Studies Centre Paper 8*, ANU Crawford School of Economics and Government, 2009, p. 4.

[34] Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, *Cybersafety for Seniors: A Worthwhile Journey,* Second interim report, March 2013, Canberra, Appendix D – Online survey evaluation, pp 153–168, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jscc/senior_australians/report.htm (accessed 11 September 2017).

[35] *Cybersafety for Seniors: A Worthwhile Journey* p. 168.

[36] House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, *From conflict to cooperation: Inquiry into the Child Support Program*, June 2015, Canberra, p. 5, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Social_Policy_and_Legal_Affairs/Child_Support_Program (accessed 12 September 2017).

[37] Jackie Morris and Sophie Power, 'Factors the Affect Participation in Senate Committee Inquiries', *Parliamentary Studies Paper 5*, ANU Parliamentary Studies Centre, 2007, p. 9.

[38] See: Kate Burton, 'Community Participation in Parliamentary Committees: Opportunities and Barriers', Parliamentary Library, Research Paper No. 10 1999-2000, 30 November 1999, p. 8, http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp9900/2000RP10 (accessed 15 September 2017).

[39] *Building public engagement*, p. 66.

[40] Kelly Paxman, 'Referral of Bills to Senate Committee: An Evaluation', *Papers on Parliament No. 31*, June 1998, pp 83–84, http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Research_and_Education/pops/~/link.aspx?_id=FAB4AAC7BC46454AA36E4B9D5EB7E558&_z=z (accessed 11 September 2017).

[41] Anthony Marinac, 'The Usual Suspects? "Civil society" and Senate Committees, *Papers on Parliament No. 42*, December 2004, p. 138, http://www.aph.gov.au/~/~/link.aspx?_id=1AF5557C98A84D45A0ACCB0E6C36945D&_z=z (accessed 11 September 2017).

[42] Dr Rosemary Laing, *Estimates Hansard*, Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, Additional Budget Estimates 2015-16, 8 February 2016, p. 5.

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[44] Mr Richard Pye, *Estimates Hansard*, Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, Additional Budget Estimates 2016-17, 27 February 2017, p. 12.

[45] *Building public engagement,* p. 68.

[46] Hendriks and Kay, 'From 'Opening Up' to Democratic Renewal', p. 14.

[47] Senate Community Affairs References Committee, Inquiry into Growing evidence of an emerging tick-borne disease that causes a Lyme-like illness for many Australian patients, 2016, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Lymelikeillness45 (accessed 15 September 2017).

[48] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Inquiry into Chronic Disease Prevention and Management in Primary Health Care, 2016, http://www.aph.gov.au/chronicdisease (accessed 15 September 2017).

[49] *Building public engagement*, p. 69.

[50] *Building public engagement*, p. 69.

[51] *Building public engagement*, p. 44.

[52] UK Transport Committee, *Future Programme 2014, Twelfth Report*, 14 March 2014, p. 3 https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmtran/1143/1143.pdf (accessed 12 September 2017).

[53] See: UK Transport Committee, 'Twitter questions for ministers on cycling safety requested', 16 April 2012, http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/news/ask-cycle-ministers/ (accessed 13 September 2017).

[54] For footage of the hearing, see: 'Cycle ministers answer twitter questions during Transport Committee evidence session', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7COU7yuwjc (accessed 13 September 2017).

[55] *Building public engagement*, p. 68.

[56] *Building public engagement*, p. 45.

[57] Morris and Power examined inquiries conducted by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee across the 40th and 41st Parliaments. See: Jackie Morris and Sophie Power, 'Factors the Affect Participation in Senate Committee Inquiries', *Parliamentary Studies Paper 5*, ANU Parliamentary Studies Centre, 2007.

[58] Jackie Morris and Sophie Power, 'Factors the Affect Participation in Senate Committee Inquiries', *Parliamentary Studies Paper 5*, ANU Parliamentary Studies Centre, 2007, p. 13.