

AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES: RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?

A NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT
incorporating:

- 1) **A Series of Regional Deliberations with
Indigenous Australians**
- 2) **A National Deliberative Poll**
- 3) **National Survey of Indigenous Australians
before and after the Regional
Deliberations**
- 4) **A National Survey of Australians as a
control group**

FINAL REPORT

**This report was tabled in the Federal Parliament of Australia on
September 25, 2001**

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FINAL REPORT

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**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES:
RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ATSIC

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Deliberative Poll

The gathering in Canberra of a random sample of Australians from all over the country to deliberate, to ask questions of competing experts and advocates, to discuss with peers, the various aspects of Reconciliation.

National Deliberation

The gathering in Canberra of a random sample of Australians from all over the country to deliberate, to ask questions of competing experts and advocates, to discuss with peers, the various aspects of Reconciliation. For this project, the National Deliberation also included 46 indigenous Australians from each state and territory. Convened February 16-18, 2001.

IDA

Issues Deliberation Australia: a non-profit organisation established to conduct and dissemination of high quality research on topical social and public policy issues impacting Australia, and to facilitate public consultation and public debate on those topics.

Pre-Deliberation

Events or opinions prior to attendance at either a Regional Deliberation or National Deliberation. *Uninformed* opinions.

Post-Deliberation

Events or opinions prior to attendance at either a Regional Deliberation or National Deliberation. *Informed* opinions.

Representative Australian

An Australian citizen, randomly selected from the white pages of the Australian telephone directory who agreed to come to *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?*

Regional Australian

An Australian of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent who attended one of the Regional Deliberations

Regional Deliberation

The coming together in one regional centre in each state and territory, a cross section of Australians from that local region to deliberate on reconciliation: convened from November 2000 to February 2001.

**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES:
RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?**

**A MULTIFACETED NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES: RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

THE PROJECT

This research project combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians about Reconciliation. The research was conducted between November 2000 and June 2001, and was designed to facilitate “the voice of indigenous Australians” and the “voice of the general population of Australians” on the general topic of reconciliation. A team of researchers convened focus groups and conducted surveys with indigenous Australians in every state and territory, and conducted a national survey of the general population. The research culminated in a national Deliberative Poll on February 16 through 18, 2001 involving 344 Representative Australians and 46 Regional Australians who had completed the initial surveys. They came together to learn more about the issue, to question experts, advocates and community leaders on a variety of aspects of the reconciliation dialogue, and to debate their own personal views with their peers. Their informed opinions provide valuable information to those designing and implementing programmes relating to reconciliation. The research design also provided crucial information that sheds light on key debates in the Social Sciences about individual and group decision-making.

THE VOICE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Indigenous Australians across the country sent a strong consistent message about their perceptions of the relative disadvantage of their people, and what they hope to see done to address the disadvantage in the next five years.

“Symbolic” gestures of reconciliation were universally perceived by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, to be the foundation of enduring reconciliation. With ninety percent of respondents in agreement, indigenous Australians wanted formal acknowledgement of their ‘true’ place in Australian history and Australia’s future. They wanted acknowledgement of being unfairly treated in the past, they wanted a formal apology to their people who were forcefully removed from their families, and they wanted compensation paid to those same people. They also wanted more concrete symbols of reconciliation, including legal structures to enhance reconciliation: a treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, special seats in parliament for indigenous Australians, formalisation of an integrated legal system combining indigenous and dominant culture Australian laws; and the continuing of the granting of Native Land Title.

At a practical level, the indigenous Australians surveyed for this research were virtually unanimous in their desire to see more education in all Australian schools about indigenous culture, and the indigenous components of the history of the Australian continent. Many also wanted a more inclusive Australia Day—a national day when *all* Australians could join together in celebration, not one that is divisive, with some Australians sad, in remembrance of ‘invasion’.

In terms of specific measures to address the disadvantage, indigenous Australians recognised the role they must play in the improvement of their own life situations. They recognised the need to heal divisions among their own people, and to educate non-indigenous Australians about indigenous culture and history. They also recognised the need to move forward in empowerment, with education of their own people perceived as the key priority for Government spending in the next five years. Health was the next priority, with growing awareness of the devastating affects of disease and substance abuse on current and future generations of indigenous Australians.

THE VOICE OF THE GENERAL POPULATION OF AUSTRALIANS

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the results from the national survey of the general population of Australians, was the clear demarcation in opinions according to age, education, geography and political affiliation. Following deliberation, younger Australians, more educated Australians, and Australians living in capital cities, were more observant of indigenous disadvantage. This intensified perception of the degree of indigenous disadvantage correlated highly with the tendency to agree to an official government apology, a treaty, native land title, an integrated legal system and payment to the ‘stolen generation’. Prior to deliberations, Coalition and Australian Labour Party supporters were starkly different. Comprehensive weighing of opposing arguments tended to negate that political divide, with post-deliberation opinions converging on key aspects of reconciliation.

Regardless of these ‘gaps’, the informed voice of the general population of Australians was a far less divided and ambivalent voice than the pre-deliberation uninformed voice. In general, informed Representative Australians revised their perceptions of how important the issue of reconciliation is to the nation, and how disadvantaged indigenous Australians are in comparison to their non-indigenous counterparts. Fuelling these changes in perceptions were dramatic increases in levels of political knowledge, and knowledge of the life situations of indigenous Australians on all major indicators.

These changes in perceptions and increases in knowledge correlated highly with levels of support for a range of national initiatives:

- formal acknowledgement that Australia was occupied without consent of indigenous Australians; 81%
- formal acknowledgement that indigenous Australians were the original owners of the land and waters: 81%
- an apology to the “stolen generation”: 68%

Where support increased for these and other initiatives, such as land rights and compensation to ‘the stolen generation’, support was based on specific conditions, such as proof of historical/cultural links with the land, and proof of physical, emotional, financial and cultural deprivation as a result of forced removal from families. After deliberation, the Representative Australians were evenly divided about a treaty or set of agreements between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, with fifty percent for a treaty and fifty percent against.

In terms of government focus for the future: following deliberations, support for education as the key priority rose significantly from 42% to 59% while health, unemployment and housing all dropped by an average of ten percentage points. Education was seen as the key to addressing all disadvantages among indigenous Australians.

The research design allowed for analysis of the effect on the opinions of the Representative Australians of indigenous participation in groups. The presence of indigenous Australians seemed to facilitate a more empathic response to Reconciliation. The Representative Australians in those groups were more likely than their fellow Australians to agree to an apology, compensation, a treaty, native land title and an integrated legal system.

**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES:
RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?**

**A MULTIFACETED NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT
PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES: RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here? is an ambitious and comprehensive research project. Combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this research synthesises the informed voices of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians on a range of complex and emotional issues that are encompassed by the “reconciliation” label.

From November 2000 to February 2001, a team of researchers travelled to indigenous communities in every state and territory of Australia, conducting focus groups and administering surveys to some 250 indigenous Australians. These Regional Deliberations were convened in Port Augusta (SA), Menindee (NSW), Fitzroy Crossing (WA), Alice Springs (NT), Echuca (Vic), Liverpool in Sydney (NSW), Launceston (Tas), Canberra (ACT) and Townsville (Qld).

The research culminated in a national Deliberative Poll, convened in Canberra from February 16 to February 18 2001. There, at Old Parliament House, 344 randomly selected Australian voters assembled with the 46 indigenous Australians to learn, to discuss, to listen, to question. The 344 “Representative Australians” who came to Canberra were recruited through scientific random sampling from all over Australia. Their homes included: Thornlie, Donneybrook, Mount Barker, Prospect, Murdunna, Rocherlea, Mudgee, Buninyong, Mount Isa, Indooroopilly, Russell Island, Jabiru, Chambers Flat, Garran and Charnwood.

These Representative Australians were a microcosm of the Australian electorate – brought to a single place where they could come to a considered judgement. As in typical random sample surveys, all voting age Australians (with telephones) had an equal random chance of being selected. Because they were a random sample, the concerns and questions about reconciliation voiced by these Australians, were the concerns and questions of their fellow Australians all over the country. However, unlike their fellow Australians, when they gathered in Canberra, these Representative Australians had the time, the resources and thus the opportunity to become seriously informed on the issues. They had the opportunity to question experts, advocates and community leaders on a variety of aspects of the reconciliation dialogue, and to debate their own personal views with their peers. Unlike their fellow Australians, they had the opportunity to focus on the various aspects of reconciliation away from newspaper headlines and television sound bite representations of the arguments.

The research thus encompassed a series of Regional Deliberations (informed focus groups) with Indigenous Australians in every state and territory; a national survey of indigenous Australians before and after the Regional Deliberations; and a national Deliberative Poll with a national random sample

of Australian citizens. The resulting data provide definitive insights into the opinions of indigenous *and* non-indigenous Australians about a range of aspects of reconciliation: perceptions of indigenous disadvantage or advantage; government programs in housing, employment, education and health; native title; a treaty; an apology, and compensation.

The Advisory Group for the project included many distinguished Australians: former Prime Minister Bob Hawke; former National Party Leader and Speaker of the House, Ian Sinclair; former MP and ALP Federal President, Barry Jones; Democrat Senator Aden Ridgeway; the Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Geoff Clark; Liberal Members of Parliament, Sharman Stone (also Member of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation) and Warren Entsch; Liberal Senator Jeannie Ferris; Labor Shadow Minister, Bob McMullan; Former Chair of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, Evelyn Scott; former High Court Judge and Author of *Bringing Them Home*, Sir Ronald Wilson; Former Liberal Minister, Fred Chaney; and independent film maker, Rachel Perkins. Ian Sinclair and Barry Jones moderated the National Deliberation at Old Parliament House in Canberra. Many other people were also consulted, including several Government Ministers and their Advisers: Ruddock (Reconciliation), Reith (formerly Employment), Kemp (Education), Williams (Law and Justice), Herron (formerly Aboriginal Affairs), Wooldridge (Health), and Moore (Defence); as well as journalists Mike Steketee and Ray Martin. Professors Blainey, Bolton, Reynolds and Higley, and authors Brunton and Johns also had input into the Briefing Document and the Agenda of the National Deliberation.

Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation- Where from Here? was a collaborative venture between Issues Deliberation Australia, the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University, the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia, and the Centre for Australian Studies at the University of Texas. Strategic advice was given by the Centre for Deliberative Polling at the University of Texas. Hundreds of Australians volunteered their services as Group Facilitators, “Persuaders”, Group Managers, Administrative Assistants, “buddies”, PR Consultants and “general helpers”. Numerous foundations, corporations, small businesses and non-profit organisations provided in-kind and financial support.

B. WHY *DELIBERATIVE* POLLING: What makes this research different?

This second Australian Deliberative Polling research venture built upon strong international precedents. Seventeen previous Deliberative Polls, conducted in the United States, Great Britain, Denmark and Australia, provide clear and dramatic testimony to the powerful role of balanced information and education in individual and national decision-making. Voters who have had the opportunity to consider competing arguments on an issue and to have their questions answered by a diverse range of experts and advocates, appear to process information differently and hence reach different conclusions than their uninformed counterparts.

Opinion Polls and focus groups have proliferated in the last half-century. Now, with almost 70 years experience conducting opinion polls and focus groups, we have learned some valuable lessons. While very useful for political campaigns, businesses, government agencies and media, the flaws inherent in traditional opinion polls and focus groups can result in misleading information. Opinion Poll methodology can be poorly implemented, with flawed questions, sampling techniques and analyses. Survey results are often published without reference to sample size, sampling methodology, date of interviews or example questions, all of which can skew results. More problematic, however, even when the methodology is perfectly implemented and reported, is the well documented finding that most people do not have informed opinions on most issues.

Decades of research consistently reveal the paucity of information that most citizens possess about political issues. The knowledge they do possess is often gained from 8 second sound bites gleaned during 30 minute news summaries, 30 second political advertisements, or newspaper headlines. Thus, on many issues, few people have truly well informed positions. The possible reasons for this are numerous: people may not have the time or resources to focus on the issue; they may not be paying attention; people may be disenchanted with the political process, or they may not be motivated. They are, as Anthony Downs labelled it, “rationally ignorant”. In our busy 20th century lives, it is in our personal interest to economise on seeking and storing information about public policy issues. By nature, human beings take shortcuts, use heuristics. By nature, human beings pay attention only to what matters, when it matters.

Thus, when participating in a focus group, or answering questions for a typical opinion poll, most people have never thought about the questions being asked. Many do not want to either disappoint the interviewer, or appear ignorant, and so make up an answer on the spot. Philip Converse (1964) labelled such survey responses as “non-attitudes”. In the United States, these “non-attitudes” were clearly demonstrated in the now famous research about the *Public Affairs Act of 1975*. Large proportions of random samples of the American population supported or opposed this act. Yet the *Public Affairs Act of 1975* does not exist! More recently, on the 20th “non-anniversary” of that Act, a follow-up study was done to examine public opinion about the repeal of the Act. The random samples were divided into those who were told that then President Clinton had repealed the Act, and those

who were told that the Republican Congress repealed the Act. Results supporting or opposing the Repeal of the entirely fictional *Public Affairs Act* strongly correlated with political affiliation. That is, individual, and hence collective public opinion, varied according to political allegiance.

Deliberative Polling attempts to counter rational ignorance, non-attitudes and the associated flaws inherent in both typical opinion polls and typical focus groups. Citizens are given the opportunity to become informed about the issue under consideration, the opportunity to consider competing perspectives, have their questions answered, and debate with their peers. They also have time – time to weigh the arguments, time to draw considered conclusions. Deliberative Polling empowers individuals and the collective citizenry, to make informed decisions about issues affecting their lives and their nation.

C. SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS: Sequence of events

1. From November 2000 to February 2001, a series of Regional Deliberations was convened in every state and territory. 234 indigenous Australians completed questionnaires and a total of 250 participated in focus group discussions.
2. During the third week of November 2000, a random, representative sample of 1220 Australian voters was polled on the diverse range of issues encompassed by the label, reconciliation.
3. All 1220 respondents to the baseline survey were invited to come to Canberra to discuss the diverse range of issues encompassed by the label, reconciliation.
4. A team of “persuaders” telephoned the 770 interested respondents to provide them with information about the deliberative weekend, and to help them overcome any obstacles that may have hindered their willingness to attend.
5. Throughout the last part of January 2001, a Briefing Document, summarizing competing arguments on various subtopics of reconciliation, was sent to the committed participants. This document was also made publicly available on the Internet and by request from Issues Deliberation Australia.
6. On Friday, February 16, 2001, 344 Representative Australians and 46 Regional Australians arrived in planes, trains and cars from all parts of the country at Old Parliament House in Canberra. They were welcomed by Damien Freeman, a randomly selected Representative Australian who also represented the local Ngunnawal people; Chris Gallus, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs; Bob McMullan, Shadow Minister for Reconciliation and Aboriginal Affairs; Senator Aden Ridgeway, Spokesperson on Reconciliation, Australian Democrats; Professor Ian Chubb, Vice Chancellor, Australian National University; Ian Sinclair, Barry Jones, and Pam Ryan, IDA.
7. After the Welcome, participants were randomly assigned to small groups for dinner and “Get to know one another” exercises. They were assigned to that group for the entire weekend. After dinner two experts from competing perspectives, Henry Reynolds and Geoffrey Bolton, briefed participants on the history of reconciliation in Australia.
8. On Saturday, February 17, participants immediately gathered into their small groups to set to work on discussing “Reconciliation – what it means - from indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives”. During the final part of their group discussions, groups came to consensus about which questions they would like to ask the panelists in the ensuing plenary session.
9. This pattern – of group discussion followed by a plenary session in which the Representative and Regional Australians asked questions of the panelists – was repeated throughout the weekend. The plenary sessions were televised live by the ABC Television Network. The emphasis for the weekend was on empowering the Representative and Regional Australians to air their concerns and questions, and to have those questions and concerns answered by the competing experts, advocates and community leaders on the panels. The complete agenda appears in Appendix 3.

Group Discussions were designed to ensure all Representative Australians had a chance to voice their opinions and concerns. Indeed, as in previous Deliberative Polls, this peer discussion played a crucial role in education and information dissemination. Where questions of fact arose, the Representative Australians were encouraged to refer to their Briefing Document or retain the question for the Plenary Session. Complete transcripts for the plenary sessions can be found at <http://itemedia.idx.com.au>

10. On Sunday, February 18, 2001, at the conclusion of the final plenary session, these 344 Representative Australians and 46 Regional Australians were surveyed again. They were asked the same questions they had been asked eight weeks prior to attending *Australia Deliberates* so that changes in opinion as a result of deliberation, could be gauged. As in all seventeen previous Deliberative Polls, the resulting changes in opinion represent the conclusions the public would reach under ideal circumstances, that is, when it has an opportunity to become more informed and engaged by the issues and to work through the pros and cons of a variety of options.

11. On Sunday afternoon, February 18, responses to two of the 52 item questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed. Preliminary Results were released for the television evening news programs and newspaper deadlines for the Monday editions.

12. Throughout that same weekend of February 16-18, a separate and new random sample of the Australian population was interviewed on several key questions being asked of those who attended *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* This independent random sample was questioned as a national control group for comparison to the *Australia Deliberates* national sample.

13. During the following two weeks, all other quantitative data for the *Australia Deliberates* national random sample were tabulated, with a Press Conference on March 3, 2001 releasing the results.

14. In the following weeks and months, the remaining questionnaires and focus group discussions were tabulated and analyzed, with results of these tabulations added to the previous results for inclusion in this Final Report.

15. The Documentary, *Without Prejudice*, filmed to track the series of Regional Deliberations culminating in the National Deliberation in February, was screened in Federal Parliament last Tuesday, September 18, 2001. This was supported by a bipartisan group of parliamentarians, including Members of the House of Representatives – Philip Ruddock, Chris Gallus, Sharman Stone and Bob McMullan, and Senators Jeannie Ferris, Rosemary Crowley and Meg Lees. *Without Prejudice* will also be shown on SBS Television in Australia and possibly national public television stations in the USA and Great Britain.

16. The Final Report for *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* was tabled in the Senate of the Federal Parliament of Australia on September 25, 2001.

D. PREPARATIONS FOR DELIBERATIONS ON RECONCILIATION

1. Establishment of the Advisory Board

The goal for any Deliberative Poll is to have an Advisory Board reflecting a balanced range of views on the issue, from one extreme to the other. This does not mean setting up a false “Yes/No” dichotomy. Rather, the make-up of the Advisory Board attempts to reflect the continuum and the gradations of perspectives on the topic that might be found in the popular and scholarly literature. The Advisory Board for this project was developed through an iterative process of consultation with existing Advisors, Bob Hawke and Ian Sinclair, Members of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, including Sharman Stone, Aden Ridgeway and Ray Martin, as well as others involved in the area – John Herron, then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Phillip Ruddock, Minister for Reconciliation and Jon Altman, Director of CAEPR at the ANU. Meetings were then held with the people who were recommended at those initial consultations, and further suggestions were sort. The result is the group listed earlier, reflecting not only the range of perspectives on the issue, but also a balance with respect to gender, political allegiance, public and private organisation, community status, and availability to be involved.

The Advisory Group was kept informed about the progress of preparations toward *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* throughout the months of preparation. They were consulted regularly about the Briefing Document, the agenda and other associated activities.

2. Development of the Briefing Document

The Briefing Document (which was sent to all participants during the three weeks prior to their attendance at *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?*) took over six months to develop, and 11 iterations. Virtually every sentence was scrutinised and revised as feedback from reviewers, reflecting a diverse range of perspectives on reconciliation, was taken into account.

Initially, an independent freelance journalist was commissioned to conduct comprehensive background research on the range of perspectives covered by the general label of reconciliation. Over the next few months, Dr Pamela Ryan revised successive versions, in consultation with several members of the Advisory Board, and a team of political scientists from the Centres for Deliberative Polling and Australian Studies at the University of Texas. This was an experienced team of political scientists, including veterans of seventeen previous Deliberative Polls and numerous publications on both international and Australian politics. The ultimate goal was a Briefing Document that did not advocate any specific view of reconciliation but rather a balanced variety of perspectives. The final version of the document benefited from the input of the Advisory Group listed earlier and key Government Ministers: Herron (formerly

Aboriginal Affairs), Ruddock (Reconciliation), Reith (formerly Employment), Wooldridge (Health), Kemp (Education), Williams (Law and Justice) and Moore (Defence). Professors Blainey, Bolton, Reynolds and Higley, as well as authors Brunton and Johns also reviewed the document for balance and accuracy. The final version was approved by the Advisory Group and is posted on the IDA web site: www.ida.org.au.

3. Development of the questions for the initial telephone interview/survey

The development of the questions for the initial telephone interview of the national random sample was another process of teamwork and revisions through several iterations. A team from Issues Deliberation Australia, the Centres for Deliberative Polling and Australian Studies at the University of Texas, and Newspoll, worked together to develop the 25 minute interview protocol. Jon Altman, Director for the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University, and member of the Advisory Board for *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* was also consulted. The questions were specifically designed to assess people's knowledge and attitudes on issues associated with the subtopics encompassed by the reconciliation label. The Questions appear in Appendices 1 and 2.

4. Recruitment of Supporters for the project

Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here? would not have been possible without the generous in-kind and financial support of hundreds of individuals and organisations. In this year of the volunteer, over one hundred Australians donated their services as Group Facilitators, "Persuaders", Group Managers, Administrative Assistants, "buddies", PR Consultants and "general helpers". Further in-kind and financial support was provided by numerous foundations, corporations, small businesses and non-profit organisations:

The Australian newspaper

Normandy Mining

Ansett Airlines

Rydges Hotels

Old Parliament House, Canberra

Reconciliation Australia Foundation

Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation

Silverton Foundation

Morgan Disney and Associates Consulting

Michells Warren Public Relations

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the ANU

The Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia.

The Centre for Australian Studies at the University of Texas

The Centre for Deliberative Polling at the University of Texas

Social Options Australia

Issues Deliberation Australia

5. Preparations for the Regional Deliberations

The preparations for the Regional Deliberations involved considerable overlap with the National Deliberation. The same Briefing Document, Questionnaire, Public Relations strategies and materials were all utilised in each region. Local “pathfinders” were employed in each region to engage the local communities in the process, to convene the follow-up forums and to administer the post-deliberation questionnaires. As is typical for focus group research, participants were paid a token of appreciation for attending. An example Regional Deliberation Agenda and example focus group format appears in Appendix 5.

The series of deliberations was organised by Issues Deliberation Australia with the assistance of Morgan Disney and Associates. Helen Disney and Elizabeth Morgan were tireless in their travels around the country to ensure we convened Regional Deliberations in all states and territories prior to February 16, 2001.

6. Selection and Training of Group Facilitators

As stated earlier, many of the Group Facilitators for *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* were veterans of Australia’s first Deliberative Poll, *Australia Deliberates: A Republic, Yes or No?* These Group Facilitators had been recruited from organisations with proven track records in facilitating focus groups, group discussions or group counselling in both the private and public sectors. These included Social Options Australia, Sheppard Consulting Group, Relationships Australia, Morgan Disney and Associates, Issues Deliberation Australia, the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia and the Centre for Australian Studies at the University of Texas. The result - some of the best group facilitation talent in Australia.

All Group Facilitators underwent an intensive training program to ensure neutrality and to help facilitate an environment of respect and listening, free from emotional attacks, rhetoric from lobbyists and sound bites. The Facilitator Training Agenda appears in Appendix 6. The “Desired Culture” for the weekend was incorporated into everything we did. All participants, facilitators, group managers and panellists were apprised of these values. Indeed, throughout the weekend, participants could be heard sanctioning each other for not adhering to the culture, and requesting that panellists be reminded before their plenary session. We believe that these values significantly added to the success of the weekend. A more detailed copy of the values can be found in Appendix 7.

7. Selection of Panellists for the National Deliberation Plenary Sessions

The process of developing the agenda for *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* and organizing the panellists was another long, arduous and iterative process. The same group of people who were consulted for the development of the Briefing Document were also consulted extensively about who might represent the various perspectives on reconciliation for each of the panels. We were trying to achieve a balance between experts and advocates from the continuum of perspectives, as well as a mix of gender, age and ethnicity. Obviously, the ultimate make-up of the panels was also dependent upon who was available. We did have difficulty finding experts and advocates reflecting more conservative views of reconciliation – with some of the recommendations from Ron Brunton and Peter Howson being unavailable. Despite these hurdles, the ultimate agenda reflected the balance of perspectives on reconciliation that might be found in the scholarly and popular literature. The goal was to reflect that range, not set up a false and divisive “Yes-No” dichotomy. The final Agenda for the weekend is in Appendix 3.

8. Public Relations

Public Relations efforts were also an ongoing process, with a concerted effort to inform journalists and the public about the concept of Deliberative Polling and what to expect of *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* Australia’s first Deliberative Poll had been well publicised in the media, so journalists and the general public were very open to this second venture. Several Media Conferences were convened, and the network of journalists, regional, national and international, was kept informed via regular Press Releases. The calling of the Queensland State Election on the same weekend meant that many political journalists were pre-occupied. However, with the continued commitment of the ABC Television Network to televise the main plenary sessions live throughout the weekend, despite the election, coverage of the deliberations was still quite extensive. Many articles were published in *The Australian*, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and many regional newspapers following the release of results. Equally important, radio interviews were conducted for radio stations all over Australia, involving many of the Representative Australians who attended. The BBC in London also conducted several live interviews. A selection of the newspaper articles appears in Appendix 8.

9. Organising the information, travel and accommodation for participants, panellists and administrative staff

As participants committed to attend the National Deliberation, Issues Deliberation Australia, in conjunction with Ansett Group Travel and Flight Centre Group Travel, set about the logistical challenge of bringing some 450 Australians from all over the country to Canberra on one day. It was a relief to all organisers on February 16 to see multitudes of Representative and Regional Australians heading toward the *Australia Deliberates* signs at the Canberra airport.

Prior to their travel, all participants, panellists and facilitators, were sent a copy of the Briefing Document which had been printed, compliments of *The Australian* newspaper. It should be noted that the process of deliberation actually starts when a participant commits to attend. At that point in time, they become “engaged citizens” – many scouring newspapers, visiting web sites, going to local libraries, purchasing books etc. Our Representative Australians were no exception. Indeed when some of the people were contacted by journalists expecting to find “ignorant” citizens, they found people who had already set about becoming informed on reconciliation.

10. Selection and Training of Canberra Volunteers

The greeting upon arrival and monitoring the movement of over 450 people for three days, (many of whom had never travelled outside their home town), was also a logistical challenge. Almost 75 local volunteers answered the call to help throughout the deliberative weekend. Many of them had helped during *Australia Deliberates: A Republic - Yes or No?* The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University, Issues Deliberation Australia and Old Parliament House met this challenge with enthusiasm and energy.

11. Logistical Organisation throughout the weekend:

The convention itself was also a logistical challenge – providing meals for 450 people, organizing the flow of people from hotels to Old Parliament House, and then within Old Parliament House, so that the live television schedule was met, greeting panellists and VIP’s, negotiations with the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, on site administration, security, photographs, answering media inquiries, solving participant problems, solving television problems – were all in a day’s activities at *Australia Deliberates*. The staff and volunteers from the Australian National University and Old Parliament House were a credit to their organisations and Australia. Feedback about the organisation of the weekend was consistently positive. Examples can be found in the Thank You letters and commendations in Appendix 11.

Plenary Session Moderators, Ian Sinclair and Barry Jones, were also crucial to the success of the weekend. They could have just flown in and chaired the plenary sessions as they were asked. Instead, they were actively involved in many aspects of the weekend’s logistics, including the training of the facilitators. Many of our participants left Canberra both thrilled that they had met these two political icons, and impressed with their dedication to the political process.

**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES:
RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?**

**RESEARCH STREAM #1:
THE VOICE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS**

THE VOICE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

A. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Between November 2000 and February 2001, a series of Regional Deliberations was convened in every state and territory of Australia. Locations were specifically selected to include a diverse range of indigenous communities around the country – urban, rural, river, outback, remote, English speaking and non-English speaking. From each location, a cross section of indigenous Australians from the local communities and surrounding districts attended. The size of the gatherings ranged from forty-three in Alice Springs, to nine in Echuca. A total of 250 indigenous Australians participated. The total number of focus groups was 21. Typical focus group research involves only 10-15 groups. Beyond this number, “theoretical saturation” occurs, with marginal increases in findings. The objective for these forums was to be as representative of the indigenous population as possible. Forum organisers worked with local indigenous “pathfinders” in each community to achieve this goal. Groups therefore included young and old, male and female, urban and rural, blue collar workers, professionals with formal education, as well as others who had left school at a very young age and a small number of older people who had never attended formal schooling. Some groups also included people who included themselves as part of the ‘stolen generation’. The final list of locations included:

Port Augusta, South Australia: November 2nd, 2000
 Menindee, New South Wales: November 26th, 2000
 Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia: December 5th, 2000
 Townsville, Queensland: Wednesday, January 17th, 2001
 Alice Springs, Northern Territory: Wednesday, January 31st, 2001
 Sydney, NSW - western suburbs, Friday, February 2nd, 2001
 Launceston, Tasmania : 1st or 2nd February, 2001
 Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: February 8th, 2001
 Echuca, Victoria: Feb 14th/15th, 2001

The format of each Regional Deliberation was a micro-version of the National Deliberation. A typical Regional Deliberation started with participants completing the pre-deliberation questionnaire, followed by an information session about reconciliation activities at local, regional and national levels. Participants then broke into small focus groups (each containing 8-15 participants), for discussion led by trained impartial facilitators. They then reconvened into the whole combined group for discussion of the content of the small group discussions and the provision of further information. Finally, participants framed questions to be asked at a special session to be convened at the National Deliberation on February 18. A sample discussion format for a typical Regional Deliberation can be found in Appendix 4.

At the conclusion of each Regional Deliberation, 5-7 participants were randomly chosen to attend the National Deliberation in Canberra. They experienced the same process as the Representative Australians in the national sample. Those Regional participants not selected to travel to Canberra reconvened on February 18 or as soon as possible afterward, for post-deliberation discussion and completion of the post-deliberation questionnaire.

The voice of indigenous Australians thus included:

1. **Quantitative** data from pre and post-deliberation surveys. Total number of Regional Australians in pre-deliberation survey was 234 while the post-deliberation survey involved 112 respondents.
2. **Qualitative** data from focus group discussions and post deliberation survey. Total number of participants was 250 in 21 Groups.

THE VOICE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

B. THE PEOPLE: The national sample of Regional Australians

Two hundred and thirty four Australians, of indigenous descent, completed pre and post-deliberation questionnaires in the nine regions included in the series of Regional Deliberations. The same questionnaires were used as for the National Deliberation. The indigenous Australians in this sample therefore came from communities in Port Augusta, Menindee, Fitzroy Crossing, Townsville, Alice Springs, the western suburbs of Sydney, Launceston, Echuca and Canberra. They represented at least ten different language groups.

Demographically, these indigenous Australians represented a reasonable cross section of their people: with ages ranging from 17 to 83, male and female, skilled and unskilled, English speaking and non-English speaking, minimal education to university/college and post graduate degrees. More specifically, of the 234 respondents, 41% were male and 57% were female. In relation to education, 39 % had some secondary education, with 13% gaining their matriculation qualification. Twenty – five percent had attended a tertiary institution, with 6% gaining a post-graduate qualification, thus matching other national statistics indicating that indigenous participation in higher education fall below participation rates of non-indigenous Australians. In relation to employment, 44% of these Regional Australians were engaged in full-time employment, 11% in part –time employment and 38 % were unemployed. Sixty – eight percent of those employed described themselves as professionals. The income levels of the indigenous Australians were also significantly lower than those of the general population, with 38 % earning less than \$20,000 per year, 80 % falling in the middle range - \$20,000 to \$60,000, with 12% earning over \$60,00 per year. In terms of political affiliation, a majority (almost 70 %) of the indigenous Australians describe themselves as Labor supporters, and only 2% describe themselves as Liberal/Coalition supporters.

A map on the following page depicts the geographic location of the communities where these indigenous Australians reside.

Map

Key to Map

Regional Deliberations

National Deliberation

THE VOICE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

C. THE RESULTS

1. PRE-DELIBERATION NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

Overview

This survey of 234 indigenous Australians revealed extremely consistent and strong views about reconciliation, relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, as well as strategies for a more harmonious future. The results were virtually unanimous across Australia, across indigenous language groups, across ages, and across education levels. The message from indigenous Australians is loud and clear. They see themselves as distinctly disadvantaged on all major indicators (health, housing, employment and education). They want formal acknowledgement that Australia was settled without indigenous consent, that indigenous Australians are the owners of traditional lands and waters, and that the Government and hence the nation, are sorry for what has happened to Aboriginal and Islander people in the past. They want Government assistance to reduce levels of disadvantage, and to help indigenous Australians become more financially self-sufficient.

Detailed Pre-Deliberation Findings

Strong perceptions of indigenous disadvantage

From Fitzroy Crossing to Townsville, from Launceston to Alice Springs, there was a consistent and strong message from indigenous Australians – an overwhelming belief that indigenous Australians are worse off than their non-indigenous counterparts in relation to a range of key indicators. A vast majority expressed the view that indigenous Australians are generally disadvantaged (85%). More specifically, indigenous Australians perceive their peoples to be worse off than non-indigenous Australians in terms of living conditions (74% expressed this view), opportunities to get ahead in life (71%), opportunities for health (73%), housing (78%), employment (80%), education (68%), life expectancy (81%), rates of imprisonment (88%) and levels of income (78%). Eighty-five percent also believed that today's indigenous disadvantage is predominantly a result of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were treated in the past. Ninety-four percent believed that the nation should be trying to improve the life situation of Aboriginal and Islander peoples in the areas of health, housing and unemployment. They simultaneously hold a very strong belief that the Government can play a useful role in helping Aboriginal people become more financially independent and self-reliant, with some 92 percent feeling this way. Further, eighty-three percent of respondents believed that current government assistance for specific indigenous programs to address current levels of disadvantage was not enough.

Thus, indigenous Australians recognise their relatively high levels of disadvantage and want to see the Government doing more to reduce it. They also accept that such disadvantage is a problem to be addressed by indigenous communities and individuals, and so agreed very strongly that indigenous Australians can redress the disadvantage by becoming more economically independent and self – sufficient.

Very Strong belief in the need for formal acknowledgement of the past

Indigenous Australians across Australia felt very strongly about the need to formally acknowledge that Australia was occupied without the consent of the existing indigenous occupants, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the traditional owners of the Australian lands and waters. Some 84% ***strongly*** agreed to the need to acknowledge non-consensual occupation of Australia, while a further 8% moderately agreed, resulting in an amazing 94% wanting formal recognition of their existence in Australia prior to white settlement.

For acknowledgment of traditional ownership of Australian lands and waters, an astoundingly high 93% of indigenous Australians ***strongly*** agreed that they wanted this to happen. Such strong and unanimous opinion for indigenous Australians around the country, points to the symbolic and healing role that formal acknowledgement might play in the ongoing process of reconciliation.

While some indigenous Australians did believe it was time to stop talking about the past and get on with the future (20%), seventy percent disagreed with that statement, indicating a desire for acknowledgment before they move on to the future.

Very strong belief in the need for a Government Apology

Ninety percent of indigenous Australians felt strongly that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had been treated unfairly in the past, with 94% believing that the Government should formally apologise to members of “the stolen generation”. When asked whether compensation should be paid to members of “the stolen generation”, some 88% of Indigenous Australians wanted to see compensation paid to children who had been removed from their families.

Extremely strong agreement with the need for education of non-indigenous Australians about indigenous history and culture

The indigenous Australians involved in this study were also consistent across the whole country in their desire to see more education about historical events surrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with an overwhelming 99% agreement. Similarly, 97 percent agreed that there should be more education about Aboriginal and Islander culture in all Australian schools, as well as the public arena in general. This points to a real need

among indigenous peoples to have their history, culture and identity not only acknowledged, but also taught to new generations of Australians.

Preferred Strategies for the Future

Not surprisingly, ninety four percent of indigenous Australians felt that the Government should help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders improve health, housing, education and employment opportunities. When asked to prioritise the area on which the government should concentrate most, 40% selected health, 29% chose education, 14% unemployment, and 10% chose housing. When asked separately about government strategies for improving the financial self-sufficiency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, 92% expressed a desire to see the government assist this outcome.

Strong Support for Treaty/Native Title/Special Seats in Parliament, Compensation to the Stolen Generation and “combined” laws

Consistent with their strong beliefs about the need for formal acknowledgment of traditional ownership of Australia, and the need to apologise for past injustices, indigenous Australians felt strongly about the need for a treaty: 90% wanted to see some form of formal agreement between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

In relation to Native Land Title, 88% believed native land title claims should be granted under certain circumstances. Similarly, a large 94% want to see indigenous Australians allocated special seats in Parliament, and 95% wish to see a legal system where there was some combination of traditional law and mainstream Australian law.

THE VOICE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

2. POST DELIBERATION NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

Overview

The indigenous Australians who participated in the post – deliberation survey maintained their strong consistent agreement across the country on virtually all aspects of reconciliation. Their perceptions of indigenous disadvantage relative to mainstream Australia, along with their desire to see more education about Australian history that is inclusive of indigenous as well as indigenous culture, remained around the 90th percentile. (Any changes were minor and not statistically significant). These indigenous Australians did however, revise their perceptions about the nature of general relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians – coming away from the deliberations with a more optimistic and positive perception of how Australians can all work together to achieve mutual goals.

It should be noted that the sample size of the post deliberation indigenous sample was 112. If this were an isolated research project, 112 would be an insufficient sample size from which to draw meaningful conclusions. However, given the collaborating qualitative data, and the unanimous and unequivocal nature of the pre-deliberation results, these findings can be considered valid.

Detailed Post-Deliberation Findings

Increased optimism

These indigenous Australians came away from the deliberations with a more optimistic view of general relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Many respondents expressed surprise at how much had been achieved by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation at a national level, and how much had been achieved locally by local Reconciliation groups. The Regional Deliberations thus helped educate participants about the progress being made across the country on relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Having had their attention focussed on the issue and its associated sub-topics, Reconciliation also moved to the fore of their thinking in terms of its importance on a national scale of issues, increasing by twelve percentage points.

A United and Unequivocal Indigenous Voice

The voice of indigenous Australians following deliberations remained strongly united across the country. Their post-deliberation opinions about various aspects of reconciliation were as unequivocal as their pre-deliberation opinions, and remained virtually unmoved. Their strong beliefs that the nation should:

- formally acknowledge indigenous ownership of traditional lands and waters;

- formally acknowledge that Australia was settled without indigenous consent;
 - ensure more education in schools about Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander culture;
 - ensure more education in schools about the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australian history;
 - apologise to indigenous people who had been forcefully removed from their families;
 - pay compensation to the so-called “stolen generation”;
 - grant native title;
 - enter into a treaty arrangement with indigenous peoples;
 - enact special seats for indigenous representation in federal parliament; and
 - facilitate a legal system combining traditional and dominant culture law;
- were around the ninetieth percentile following deliberations. Specific details of these results appear in the table below.

Given that very few national polls on any topic yield agreement levels above the eightieth percentile on any given question, the consistently high levels of agreement before and after deliberation, indicate an Australian indigenous community united in their beliefs about their place in the larger Australian society, and their vision for a more harmonious future.

Key Opinions of indigenous Australians

	Pre	Post	
	%Agree	%Agree	Chg
Perception of Reconciliation as one of the most important issues facing Australia	70	82	+12
General relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous are Poor	49	39	-10
Nation should formally acknowledge Australia was occupied without Indigenous consent	89	92	+3
Nation should formally acknowledge Indigenous Australians as original owners of lands and waters	98	98	0
Government should apologise	93	96	+3
Financial compensation to Stolen Generation	86	88	+2
A treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians	94	90	-4
Special Seats in Parliament for Indigenous Australians	94	91	-3
Granting of Native Land Title claims	90	84	-6
A hybrid legal system combining Indigenous Laws with Dominant Australian Laws	96	90	-6
Should be more education in schools about Aboriginal culture	94	94	0
Should be more education in schools about historical events surrounding Aboriginal people	94	90	-4

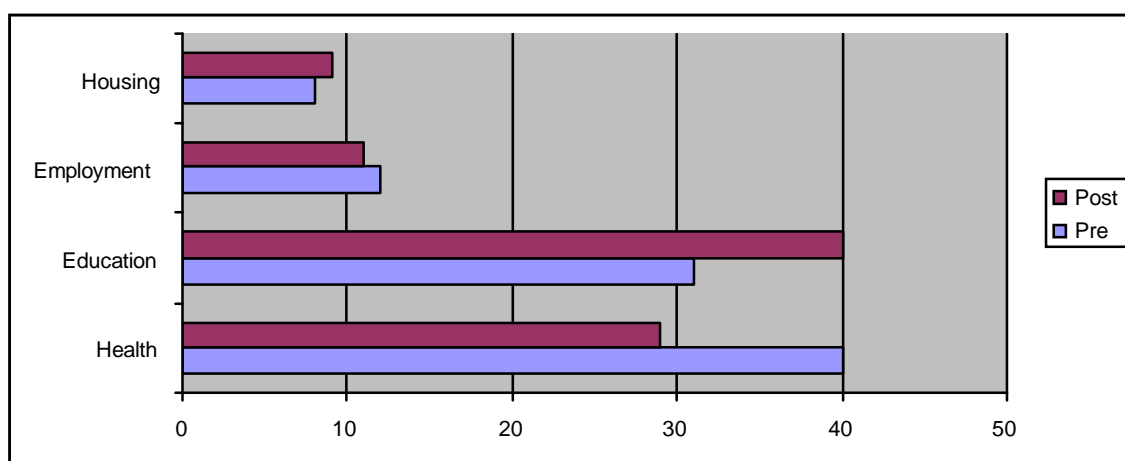
The importance of symbolic reconciliation for indigenous Australians

When asked about the circumstances under which they agreed to an apology, compensation and a treaty, these indigenous Australians either chose not to, or could not specify conditions of agreement. This seems to indicate that formal acknowledgement, of enacting a treaty, of paying compensation, are all sufficient and significant symbolic acts. The detail doesn't matter.

Change in Priorities for Practical Reconciliation

There was one major change between their pre and post-deliberation opinions: how indigenous Australians prioritised practical measures aimed at tackling the disadvantage. Prior to deliberations, these indigenous Australians felt that health was the key priority for practical combat of indigenous disadvantage, with some 40% agreeing. Their second priority was education, at 31%. Post-deliberation, these priorities changed significantly, with 40% then listing education as the major priority. Health became the second priority (with some 29% agreeing), followed by Employment at 11% and Housing at 9%. These results indicate a belief in the ability of education to be the universal antidote to the other forms of disadvantage. With education, indigenous Australians will be more equipped to battle the disadvantage evident in health, employment and housing.

Areas that the Government should concentrate on most



Thus, indigenous Australians all over the country, regardless of where they live, their age, level of education, employment status, gender, or degree of assimilation into the dominant Australian culture; are virtually unanimous and strongly united in their opinions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage, and what the nation should be doing about it, both symbolically and practically.

THE VOICE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

3. REGIONAL FOCUS GROUPS

General Observations

Although there was substantial consistency of views on some issues across all focus groups in all regions visited, there were also some major differences.

Intensity of emotion about lack of knowledge in wider Australian community

In many of the discussion groups, the level and intensity of emotion expressed by some participants was quite high, with anger and grief being the most commonly expressed. For the most part, the anger was not directed personally at any non-indigenous person, but there was strong anger that the dispossession, dispersal and decimation of the indigenous populations and the removal of children are either not known, or not acknowledged in the wider Australian community.

Wide Diversity of Views about “Reconciliation”

There was a very wide range of knowledge, views and reactions among the indigenous Australians who participated in the Regional Focus Groups:

- from having not heard anything about Reconciliation to knowing a lot and having been involved in Reconciliation activities;
- from believing an apology was very important to believing that one man’s decision should not stand in the way of Australians (indigenous and non-indigenous) moving on together and waiting for a leader who would apologise
- from awareness of the national issues to only awareness of local concerns and issues.

Major Areas of Indigenous Concern

Recognition that indigenous Australians have much work to do

Many of the indigenous participants expressed the view that it was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had to do most of the work. They saw this work as involving:

- increased education, for example, telling their stories over and over to educate both their own younger generation, as well as the wider Australian community,
- increased commitment and initiative toward reconciliation so that indigenous Australians play their part in building better relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

Desire for both symbolic and practical reconciliation

Indigenous Australians want the disadvantages of their people in relation to health and jobs etc. to be addressed, but most also wanted the spiritual, cultural and emotional issues to be addressed as well. The need for healing was mentioned in *all* communities.

Equally, in all communities the issue of an apology was raised in the key questions they wanted answered at the National Deliberation.

Similarly, all communities also raised the need for a treaty or some kind of agreement or set of agreements between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Many spoke of European settlement in terms of invasion and war, and only a treaty was seen to set that right.

In relation to practical reconciliation, the need for real jobs for Aboriginal and Islander people was raised in most communities, as opposed to government or CDEP jobs. The role of business in providing jobs and the need for them to talk to communities about how this could happen was a common theme. In remote communities people felt that there were more jobs for women than for men.

Desire to see more public commitment to Reconciliation

Many indigenous Australians, especially in the more outback communities, said they wanted to see clear evidence of public commitment to Reconciliation by non-indigenous Australians. In the smaller communities, only a small number of white fellas were perceived to be involved and most of those had been committed to working with Aboriginal and Islander people for a long time.

In less remote communities, many indigenous Australians felt heartened by the Walks across bridges as a sign of non-indigenous commitment to working together in the future. Many people spoke of the significance of the walks across the bridges– they felt the “Walks” showed evidence of local involvement in Reconciliation from all constituents - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. The sharing of information about the walks and other work of the Council had a positive affect, with many participants.

Desire to see a more inclusive rendition of Australia Day

In some communities, participants related the confusion and hurt they feel each Australia Day, when Australia ‘celebrates’ the arrival of European ships to this continent. For indigenous Australians, the arrival of European ships signalled invasion, war and decimation of culture. Thus, many participants hoped to see a more inclusive rendition of Australia Day – not a day of celebration that reminds indigenous Australians of their profound loss.

Desire to see more interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians

The lack of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians in social settings was commented on. Most communities still experience substantial segregation. Most interaction seems to be through the work place.

Many participants felt that segregation was partly propagated by the negative portrayal of Aboriginal and Islander people in the media. In the metropolitan areas - one person said “for every good thing that is shown they have to find an ugly side to show too”.

Recognition of the importance of Education

One of the themes common to all of the Regional Deliberations was the importance of education. This had several elements:

- the need for the “true history” of Australia to be taught to all Australians and especially in all schools;
- the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture to be taught to all Australians and especially in all schools;
- the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be involved in the teaching – especially local people;
- this education should continue into universities and TAFE.

Indigenous Australians also expressed a desire to see more cross-cultural training - for politicians, teachers, doctors, police, government officers etc. so that professionals and others working in indigenous communities could be prepared for the unique characteristics of that indigenous community.

Age gap in perceptions?

In several regions, there were sufficient numbers of young people to enable separate group discussions. These young indigenous Australians tended to be forward looking, to want adults to model Reconciliation, and to want less distinction between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people. The younger educated people wanted to find a way to live with non indigenous and indigenous cultures. Older people were more likely to want to regain traditional culture. The younger participants also commented that they felt young non-indigenous people *did* understand and know more about indigenous cultures than older non-indigenous people.

Desire for action not words

In some communities there is a view that they are consulted endlessly and talked to over and over, but in the long run, their views are not taken into account. In other especially rural communities they stated that state government officers particularly, did not consult or negotiate with them and yet mining and pastoral companies do.

An appreciation of the opportunity for their voice to be heard

Many participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to have their say in such a forum. In some cases, for example, where feuding families had come together for the first time in years, participants expressed their thanks for the opportunity to discuss these issues for the first time with their fellow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Many went away with more optimism for the future – with hope that indigenous and non-indigenous Australians would listen to each other with respect and equality.

**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES:
RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?**

**RESEARCH STREAM #2:
THE VOICE OF
THE GENERAL POPULATION OF AUSTRALIANS**

AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES: RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?

THE VOICE OF THE GENERAL POPULATION OF AUSTRALIANS

A. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A national random sample of 1220 voting age Australians was selected from the white pages of the telephone directory during mid November 2000. The commercial polling organisation, Newspoll, was commissioned to do this, using normal random sampling techniques. A stratified random sampling process was adopted which included:

- A quota from each capital city and non-capital city area
- Random selection of household telephone numbers drawn from current telephone listings for each area code in Australia
- Random selection of an individual in each household by a 'last birthday' screening question.

To reflect the distribution in the general population of specific demographics, these data were post-weighted by gender, age, age on leaving school and geographical area, using Australian Bureau of Statistics data. To ensure the sample included those people who tend to spend a lot of time away from home, a system of call-backs and appointments was incorporated.

The 1220 randomly selected Australians were first interviewed by telephone during the period of 20-26 November 2000, several weeks prior to the planned National Deliberation in Canberra. Interviewers were fully trained and briefed prior to the interviews. Respondents completed a 56 item questionnaire with items including the various subtopics of reconciliation. The average interview time was 20 minutes. At the completion of the telephone interview, all 1220 interviewees were invited to come to Canberra to discuss reconciliation with their fellow Australians with all expenses paid. A total of 770 expressed interest in learning more about the weekend of deliberations.

In the weeks immediately following the initial interview, a team of "persuaders" from Issues Deliberation Australia and the Hawke Research Institute at the University of South Australia set about the mammoth task of telephoning all 770 interested citizens to provide more information and help them overcome the obstacles which might prohibit them from attending. The persuaders were especially trained for the task. Many had been persuaders for *Australia Deliberates: A Republic - Yes or No?* Follow up information was sent to interested citizens, and in some cases, letters were also sent to employers requesting Friday, February 16 off to enable the person to travel to Canberra. Many follow up phone calls were made to help persuade the more reticent citizens. The result, 344 "Representative Australians" arrived at Old Parliament House in Canberra on Friday, February 16, 2001. The 344 Representative Australians were joined at Old Parliament House by 46 Regional Australians who had been randomly selected from the Regional Deliberations.

Upon arrival at Old Parliament House, the Representative Australians were randomly assigned to 25 discussion groups. They were to remain with the same group throughout the weekend. Each group was assigned a specially trained Group Facilitator and a Group Manager. As with the persuaders, a majority of group facilitators and managers had also been involved with *Australia Deliberates: A Republic, Yes or No?* The 46 Regional Australians were assigned to 10 of the 25 discussion groups. This was done to enable post – deliberation analysis of the effect of indigenous presence in a group. In this way, bias caused by indigenous presence beyond that in the general population, could be controlled for. Further, from an academic perspective, the role of group discussion in opinion change could also be examined.

Following wide-ranging discussions and questioning of experts from all sides of the issue throughout the weekend of deliberations, the Representative Australians and Regional Australians were polled again. In both plenary and small group discussion sessions, all views were encouraged, and no views were sanctioned. The views of the experts, advocates and community leaders on the panels reflected the range of views on reconciliation evident in the scholarly literature and society at large. The complete Agenda for the National Deliberation in Canberra appears in Appendix 3.

The Voice of the general population of Australians thus included:

1. Quantitative data from pre and post-deliberation surveys for all 344 participants
2. Quantitative data from pre and post-deliberation surveys for all 344 participants analysed according to indigenous presence in groups: 240 representative Australians were assigned to groups without Regional Australians, while 104 were assigned to groups with Regional Australians.
3. Qualitative data from open-ended questions in the post-deliberation survey.
4. Quantitative data from an independent (“control”) national sample to compare informed and uninformed opinions during the same time frame.

THE VOICE OF THE GENERAL POPULATION OF AUSTRALIANS

B. THE PEOPLE

The initial random sample of 1220 Australians

One thousand two hundred and twenty potential participants were initially interviewed between November 20 and 26, 2000. These respondents were typical of respondents in other random sample surveys conducted by Newspoll, and were very similar demographically to the 1220 respondents in the national random sample for *Australia Deliberates: A Republic Yes or No?* but with slight differences reflecting the slightly changing demographics of the whole Australian population. With fifty percent male, and fifty percent female, their ages ranged from 18 years to 80 years, and approximately 62 percent were married. Forty eight percent had some form of tertiary education, with almost fifty percent engaged in full-time work, 20% in part-time work and 30% not working outside the home. They hailed from all areas of Australia (in proportion to the distribution of the whole population), with approximately 35% from N.S.W, 25% from Victoria, 19% from Queensland, 9% from South Australia/Northern Territory, 10% in Western Australia, and 2.5% from Tasmania. Almost 60% lived in one of the five major capital cities. Their annual household incomes ranged from less than \$20,000 (14%), to \$60,000 and over (30%). Their occupations included a diverse range - students, housewives, pensioners, administrators, lawyers, doctors, artists, teachers and PR professionals.

When asked about their backgrounds – where they were born and where their parents were born, the following pattern emerged: 61% were born in Australia (both themselves and their parents), 17% were born overseas in an English speaking country (either themselves or a parent), 8% were born overseas in a non-English speaking country (both themselves and their parents). 2.6% described themselves as of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, with almost 9% stating that at least one member of their immediate family was Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. When asked about their political affiliations 31.5% viewed themselves as affiliated with the Liberal Party, 32.5% with the Labor Party, 3.5% with the National Party, 3% with the Australian Democrats, 2% with the Greens, .7% with One Nation, and almost 25% did not know.

The “control” national sample of 1200 Australians

One thousand two hundred Australians were interviewed over the weekend of *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* to enable comparisons in attitudes with the *Australia Deliberates* (AD) national sample.

The respondents in this “control” sample showed very similar demographic characteristics to the AD national sample, and very similar attitudinal responses to the initial, pre-deliberation, *uninformed* AD national sample. Again, due to stratified sampling and weighting in line with the general population, fifty percent of this control sample were male, and fifty percent female. Eight percent were aged between 18 and 24, 38% 50 years or older, and the rest were aged somewhere in between. Just over 62 percent were married. Forty eight percent had some form of tertiary education, with 46 % engaged in full-time work, 17% in part-time work and 37% not working outside the home. They also hailed from all areas of Australia. Because this sample was part of the weekly Newspoll Omnibus survey, the Northern Territory was not included, and there were more from South Australia and Western Australia. More specifically, approximately 29% of these respondents were from N.S.W, 25% from Victoria, 17 % from Queensland, 12.5 % from South Australia, 12.5 % in Western Australia, and 4% from Tasmania. Almost 60 % lived in one of the five major capital cities. Their annual household incomes ranged from less than \$20,000 (14%), to \$60,000 and over (30%).

THE VOICE OF THE GENERAL POPULATION OF AUSTRALIANS

C. THE RESULTS

1. PRE-DELIBERATION NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

OVERVIEW

The random sample of 1220 Australians interviewed during November 2000, displayed similar attitudes to reconciliation that had been evident in the Australian community for some time. The attitudes of Australians in this study were consistent with research conducted in April 2000 by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. In general, the Australian community, as reflected in this national random sample, does not perceive reconciliation to be one of the most important issues facing the country. In November 2000, almost sixty percent of Australians believed that reconciliation was important, but many other issues facing the nation were more important.

In terms of attitudes about general relations between races in Australia, almost 50% of Australians believed that general relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians are fair or better. Further, a majority of 51% of Australians perceived indigenous Australians as not disadvantaged in relation to non-indigenous Australians. When specific aspects of disadvantage were addressed, Australians tended to see a more complex picture of indigenous disadvantage. A little over half agreed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are generally worse off than their fellow Australians in terms of living conditions. In other areas, such as health, life expectancy, housing, employment, and rates of imprisonment, a large majority of the Representative Australians acknowledged significant indigenous disadvantage relative to mainstream Australia, but were not prepared to agree to specialised solutions for the disadvantaged. A majority of Australians also believe that indigenous Australians have about the same opportunities for education as their fellow Australians. Further, about half the community disagreed with the statement that any disadvantage experienced by indigenous Australians today is a result of how they were treated in the past.

The result reflects a divided and ambivalent community. Although a large majority of Australians do acknowledge that Aboriginal and Islander people had been treated unfairly in the past (almost 90%), just over half (53%) do not want the government to formally apologise for what has happened to indigenous Australians in the past. Only thirty-eight percent felt the government should apologise, while 8% remained undecided.

A clear majority, (almost 70%) believed that the nation should formally acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were the original owners of traditional lands and waters, and that Australia was occupied without indigenous consent (61%). However, just over half the population do not want to see that acknowledgement enacted in a treaty. Australians are divided on their opinions regarding a treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. In November 2000, almost 42% supported a treaty, while 51% did not (7% were undecided).

These opinions were also strong for the “control” group of Australians who were interviewed during the weekend of the National Deliberation. This national random sample of 1200 Australians again reflected the ambivalence and division in the Australian community about reconciliation and what to do about it. On February 16-18 2001, a large majority of the uninformed general population agreed that there should be more education in Australian schools about Aboriginal and Islander history and culture. At the same time, they continued their strong opposition to a formal apology from the Government, with only 34 percent in agreement, and fifty-two percent in disagreement. These results reflect very consistent community attitudes on reconciliation over time. These latest results may also reflect a prevailing community attitude that much ‘reconciling’ has already been done. During December 2000 in particular, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation handed over its final Document for Reconciliation to the Government, which included detailed strategies for the future, and the December 3rd Walk across the bridge in Melbourne was both well attended and highly publicised.

Significant attitude “gaps”: age, education, place of residence, political affiliation

The pre-deliberation findings on attitudes toward reconciliation reflect some significant “gaps” in Australian society according to age, level of education, place of residence (urban or rural) and political affiliation. Differences in levels of income were analysed, but did not yield significant differences in attitudes.

Age gap

In general, it appears that 18-34 year old Australians are more disposed to the nation formally acknowledging past treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – in a variety of forms, including a government apology (44%) and a treaty. A majority of young Australians (58 %), supported a treaty between Aboriginal and other Australians. Younger Australians were also much more likely to agree to pay compensation to the ‘stolen generation’, with 74 % of 18-24 year olds in agreement, in stark contrast to only 36 % of the over 50 year olds. Older Australians, although they agreed to a general formal acknowledgement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were the original owners of traditional lands and waters, and that Australia was occupied without indigenous consent, opposed both an apology (62%) and a treaty (62%).

Education gap

Similar differences in attitude were evident between Australians who have been educated to a tertiary level and beyond, versus those who have not. The longer the education, the greater the likelihood of agreement with formal acknowledgement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were the original owners of traditional lands and waters (71% for tertiary educated Australians versus 65% for primary/secondary educated Australians) and formal acknowledgement that Australia was occupied without indigenous consent (56 versus 46%). Australians with education beyond secondary school were also more likely to agree to a formal apology from the government (46% versus 31%), a treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians (47% versus 37%), and compensation to the stolen generations (56% versus 45%).

Urban/Rural gap

Australians living in the five major capital cities, showed significantly different attitudes to their rural counterparts. Urban Australians were more likely to agree with formal acknowledgement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were the original owners of traditional lands and waters (72% versus 62%), and formal acknowledgement that Australia was occupied without indigenous consent (66% versus 53%). Urban Australians are also more likely to agree to a formal apology from the Government (42% versus 32%), a treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians (44% versus 37%), and compensation to the stolen generations (54% versus 44%).

Political Affiliation gap

The most striking differences in attitudes were those evident between respondents who described themselves as supporters of the Australian Labor Party, and those who described themselves as Coalition supporters. On virtually every question, from perceptions of indigenous disadvantage through to opinions about ways to improve relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, these two groups viewed the world through starkly contrasting lenses. This result is even more potent given the lack of significant differences in attitudes in relation to income levels. If income levels had also shown significant differences in opinion, such differences in opinion between Labor and Coalition supporters may have been negated. At a minimum, the argument could have been made that responses reflected a socio-economic status divide – that people in the wealthier suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne think differently about Reconciliation than low income earners in the bush. While there is a consistent rural / urban divide, as described above, the socio-economic divide was not significant, either before or after deliberations. Given the size and scope of the different opinions across multiple questions, the consistent Labor / Coalition gap in attitudes is the most obvious and dramatic of all the “gaps”.

In terms of perceptions of relative disadvantage, Labor supporters tended to perceive perceived indigenous Australians as disadvantaged (51% for ALP Supporters versus 35% for Coalition supporters); and Reconciliation as one of the most important issues facing Australia (33% versus 18%). ALP supporters

also described general relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians as poor (33% versus 25%); and perceived that indigenous Australians are worse off than non-indigenous Australians in relation to health, housing, education, employment, income and imprisonment rates (differences ranging from 6 to 15 percentage points).

Similarly, Liberal/Country Party supporters tended to agree to formal acknowledgement that Australia was occupied without consent of Aboriginal and Islander people (52% for Coalition supporters versus 72% for ALP supporters); formal acknowledgement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were the original owners of traditional lands and waters (60% versus 78%); that current indigenous disadvantage is the result of the way indigenous Australians were treated in the past (58% versus 40%); a formal apology to Aboriginal and Islander people about what happened in the past (25% versus 52%); financial compensation to the 'stolen generation' (40% versus 62%); and a treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians (33% versus 51%).

2. POST-DELIBERATION: NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS OF THE GENERAL POPULATION

THE PEOPLE

The Representative Australians who attended Australia Deliberates

As in the seventeen previous Deliberative Polls, the 344 Australians who attended *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* showed few significant differences from the original representative group of 1220, and hence the general population. Indeed, Sol Lebovic, CEO of Newspoll was once again surprised at just how representative they were. There were slightly more females than males (51%/49%). Ages ranged from 18 to 78 years – with slightly more of the 35-49 year old age group represented in the weekend sample, and slightly less of the 18-34 year olds than in the general population. Similar distributions to the general population, in terms of engagement in the work force, income and occupation were evident. The attendees at *Australia Deliberates*, however, were more likely to have some form of tertiary education, with 59% having gone to college, technical institution or university, and 15% with a post graduate degree, compared to 48% and 10% in the initial sample. Within the 1220 sample, comparison of the opinions between the group who attended *Australia Deliberates* (344) and the group who did not (876), also yields very few significant differences, except those relating to levels of education.

On attitudinal measures, as might be expected given the “education gap” described above, the attendees at *Australia Deliberates* were slightly less conservative than the larger random sample, although few of these differences were statistically significant.

In general terms, on both demographic and attitudinal measures, the three hundred and forty-four Australians who gathered at Old Parliament House in Canberra on February 16-18, 2001 can be considered representative of their fellow Australians. Further, even given these slight differences between the two samples, the dramatic changes in opinion as a result of deliberation are evident and consistent across demographics and attitudes, no matter what the starting point.

The Regional Australians who attended Australia Deliberates

Although 46 respondents is too small a sample for comprehensive statistical analyses, we can nevertheless gain insight into who these Regional Australians were by an analysis of their demographic information.

All of the Regional Australians were of indigenous descent, with 46% male, 54% female. Almost half the delegates had some secondary education, with 15% gaining their matriculation qualification. Twenty six percent had attended some form of tertiary institution, with 4% gaining a postgraduate qualification.

In terms of employment, 44% were engaged in full-time employment, 15% part – time employment, and 37% were not employed outside the home. Seventy percent described themselves as in a “professional” occupation.

Dedication to mutual problem solving

The Representative and Regional Australians approached the deliberation task with energy, enthusiasm and dedication. Anyone who was privileged to observe the group discussions could testify that by midway through the very first group discussion, the groups were focussed and intense. Young and old were listening to each other’s views with respect, the shy and the confident were talking equally, the highly educated and the less educated were trying to understand each other’s perspective. Equally impressive was their willingness to express their views and ask questions in the plenary sessions on live national television. The atmosphere in the House of Representatives Chamber reflected respect for each other and the seriousness of their mutual problem-solving task. As nerves were overcome, people clamoured to the podium to ask their questions of the experts. By Sunday afternoon, after two days of intense work, pride at having worked together, was omnipresent. The Representative and Regional Australians knew they had climbed the learning curve – not just about the history of their nation, but the complications and difficulties for policy makers on this emotional and complicated issue. They returned to their home towns very tired but content in knowing they had participated in an historic event. Their thank you letters, shown in Appendix 9, are testimony to the sentiments that were displayed throughout the weekend.

The Representative and Regional Australians who attended *Australia Deliberates* are pictured on the first page of the Photo Section in the Appendices.

OVERVIEW OF POST-DELIBERATION RESULTS

In general, when the Representative Australians attending *Australia Deliberates* had the opportunity to comprehensively and systematically review all of the data and the competing explanations of the diverse sub-topics of reconciliation, they came away from their involvement with different, more informed, more complex mental maps of the issue and hence drew dramatically different conclusions.

Differences in Results Based on Indigenous Participation

As stated in the Methodology section, participants at *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* were randomly assigned to groups for the whole weekend of deliberations. To enable tracking of changes in opinion due to the over representation in groups of indigenous Australians with respect to the general population, the 46 indigenous regional delegates were allocated to only 10 of the 25 groups. This research design allowed for separate analyses of those groups with Regional Australians and those without. The tables on the following pages therefore include both sets of analyses. The main figure (on the left side of each column) provides the result that is controlled for indigenous participation. The number in parentheses on the right side of each column [] is the result for all 25 groups at *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* including both sets of groups, with and without indigenous participation.

Indigenous participation in a group did have a differential influence on the participants in those groups. Following their deliberative weekend in Canberra, Representative Australians *with* indigenous participants were marginally more likely than their fellow Representative Australians to:

- a) Rate reconciliation as one of the most important issues facing Australia (+11%)
- b) Perceive indigenous Australians as disadvantaged (+11%)
- c) Rate current levels of government assistance to indigenous Australians as insufficient (+15%)
- d) Rate the opportunities for indigenous Australians worse off than non-indigenous Australians for education (+6%), life expectancy (+5%), and income (+8%)
- e) Rate general relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians as poor (+5%)
- f) Agree to:
 - formally acknowledge that Australia was occupied without the consent of indigenous Australians (+6%)
 - apologise to members of the “stolen generation” (+8%)
 - compensation to members of the “stolen generation” (+5%)

- more education in schools about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture (+7%)
- more education in schools about the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australian history (+4%)
- More Government assistance on health, housing and unemployment (+7%)
- An integrated legal system combining dominant culture Australian law with traditional/tribal law under certain circumstances (+13%)
- A treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians (+12%)

Representative Australians from the national random sample involved in groups *with* indigenous participants were marginally less likely to:

- Say “Stop talking about the past and move on” (-7%)

Thus, indigenous participation in groups seemed to facilitate a more empathic response to Reconciliation for the Representative Australians in those groups. The Representative Australians heard first-hand personal stories of disadvantage from the indigenous Australians, as well as first hand views of what indigenous Australians want to see done about the disadvantage, both symbolically and practically. Given the unequivocal and united voice presented by the Regional Australians in the national survey, the impact of their strong opinions on their groups is not surprising.

3. DETAILED POST-DELIBERATION RESULTS

THE PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES

PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE

A dramatic increase in rating the importance of Reconciliation

When 344 Representative Australians were able to devote the time, energy and resources to consider the relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australia they came to perceive the issue as much more important than they had prior to such deliberation. The proportion of the participants perceiving reconciliation as one of the most important issues facing the nation increased from 31 percent prior to the deliberations to 63 percent afterwards. The most dramatic changes in perception came from Coalition supporters. Following the deliberations, there were only three participants rating the issue of low importance.

DETAILED RESULTS

Perception of Reconciliation as a National Issue: general population

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
One of most important issues	31	[31]	60	[63]	+29	[+32]
Important, but many other things more important	55	[55]	38	[35]	17	[-20]
Fairly low importance	29	[40]	3	[4]	-26	[-36]

Perception of Reconciliation as a National Issue: Coalition and Labor Supporters

	%Pre	%Post	%Chge
COALITION SUPPORTERS			
One of most important issues	17	61	+44
Important, but many other things more important	63	37	-26
Fairly low importance	16	1	-15
LABOR SUPPORTERS			
One of most important issues	43	62	+19
Important, but many other things more important	51	37	-14
Fairly low importance	5		0

At the same time, many participants came away from the deliberations with a more pessimistic view of general relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, perhaps reflecting the fact that many had not previously interacted with indigenous Australians for any extended period of time, and had not heard the strong and consistent level of concern among indigenous Australians about race relations. Prior to deliberations, Representative Australians who felt relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians were poor was 27%. This rose to 45% following deliberations.

General relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Good	21	[18]	15	[15]	-6	[-3]
Fair	48	[47]	40	[39]	-8	[-8]
Poor	27	[31]	45	[45]	+17	[0]

Dramatic increases in perceptions of indigenous disadvantage

Similarly, participants' perception of the level of disadvantage of indigenous Australians and their relative living conditions changed substantially following their participation in the deliberative process. Perceptions of levels of disadvantage rose from 52% when they were initially polled to 80% in the final poll. Equally, the number of participants who believed indigenous Australians are worse off than non-indigenous Australians rose 27 percentage points from 58% to 85%.

The general picture of the lives of indigenous Australians in relation to non-indigenous Australians changed dramatically following review and discussion of the statistics. The participants came away from their involvement in the deliberative process with a much more negative view of the relative life situation of indigenous Australians. Again, Coalition supporters made the greatest changes in perceptions of disadvantage, virtually negating the pre-poll political affiliation gap.

Perception of Level of Disadvantage and living conditions

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Disadvantaged	52	[51]	80	[82]	+28	[+30]
Not Disadvantaged	39	[41]	17	[16]	-22	[-25]
Worse off than fellow Australians	56	[58]	84	[85]	+28	[+27]
About the same	30	[30]	12	[10]	-18	[-20]

Perception of Level of Disadvantage and living conditions: Coalition (C)/Labor (L)Divide

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%C	%L	%C	%L	C	L
Disadvantaged	46	61	81	82	+35	+21
Worse off than fellow Aussie	57	63	86	87	+29	+24

In relation to particular aspects of indigenous disadvantage, perceptions of the degree of disadvantage increased dramatically on all key indicators: opportunity to get ahead in life (50% pre-deliberations to 75% post), health (60% pre to 84% post), housing (52%pre to 77% post), employment (61% pre to 82% post), education (45% pre to 68% post), life expectancy (72% to 89%), rates of imprisonment (67% to 88%) and income (60% to 78%). Similar trends were again evident regarding the Coalition / Labor Divide, with Coalition supporters dramatically changing their perceptions of disadvantage on all key indicators, while Labor supporters changed their perceptions only mildly.

Belief that indigenous Australians are worse off than their fellow Australians

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
In relation to getting ahead in life	50	[51]	74	[75]	+24	[+24]
In relation to Health	60	[61]	83	[84]	+23	[+23]
In relation to Housing	52	[52]	77	[77]	+25	[+25]
In relation to Employment Opportunities	61	[61]	80	[82]	+19	[+21]
In relation to Education	45	[43]	68	[68]	+23	[+25]
In relation to life expectancy	72	[71]	89	[90]	+17	[+19]
In relation to Imprisonment Rates	67	[68]	88	[87]	+21	[+19]
In relation to Income	60	[61]	75	[78]	+14	[+18]

STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

The Representative Australians, having the opportunity to assess the current life situation of indigenous Australians and non-indigenous Australians, and review the various explanations of the disparity in disadvantage, appeared to take a more sympathetic position regarding strategies for the future than they had in their pre-poll responses. These Representative Australians became aware of the huge differences between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians on all major indicators: health, life expectancy, education, employment, imprisonment rates and housing. They re-evaluated their choices on strategies that might help address the degree of disadvantage. These strategies, like their fellow indigenous Australians, included both symbolic and practical strategies.

Universal Agreement about Unfair Past Treatment of Indigenous Australians

Before the deliberative process began, there was almost universal agreement that indigenous Australians had been treated unfairly in the past – with a high 91% of Representative Australians agreeing with the statement in their initial interview. This agreement became virtually unanimous following the deliberations, with an astounding 97% of the Representative Australians agreeing that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been treated unfairly in the past.

Consistent with their mental revision of how indigenous Australians had been treated in the past, participants also revised their assessment of the causes of current Aboriginal and Islander disadvantage. Following the Deliberative Poll, some 62% of participants felt that current disadvantage experienced by indigenous Australians was a result of how poorly they had been treated in the past. Prior to the poll, 42% had felt this way, a significant rise of 18 percentage points. Throughout the deliberations, the Representative Australians were exposed to stories about indigenous disadvantage on a variety of indicators. These stories came from the media and from delegates' own research in the weeks prior to attending the weekend of deliberations, and then from panellists and fellow delegates during the weekend. While many indigenous stories relate triumph over adversity, the most salient stories (as for any topic) are those portrayals of hardship and tragedy. These seem to have left an imprint on the minds of the delegates. The Representative Australians weighed the evidence and drew their conclusions.

Indigenous Australians treated unfairly, with current disadvantage due to past treatment

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Agree that indigenous A's treated unfairly in past	92	[91]	97	[97]	+5	[+6]
Agree that disadvantage is result of past treatment	42	[43]	62	[xx]	xxx	[xxx]
Disagree that disadv'ge is result of past treatment	48	[47]	24	[22]	-24	[-25]

Increase in support for formally acknowledging indigenous history

Support for formally acknowledging that Australia was occupied without indigenous consent, and that indigenous Australians were the original owners of Australian land and waters, also increased substantially between the time of the first survey in mid November to the final survey in mid February: from 68 percent before the Deliberative Poll, to 81 percent afterwards. This is a particularly interesting result in relation to the failed 1999 referendum question relating to acknowledgement of indigenous Australian history. In 1999, the Australian population was asked whether the Preamble to the Australian Constitution should be changed, using the words:

“With hope in God, the Commonwealth of Australia is constituted as a democracy with a federal system of government to serve the common good. We the Australian people commit ourselves to this constitution: Proud that our national unity has been forged by Australians from many ancestries; Never forgetting the sacrifices of all who defended our country and our liberty in time of war; Upholding freedom, tolerance, individual dignity and the rule of law; Honouring Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the nation's first people, for their deep kinship with their lands and for their ancient and continuing cultures which enrich the life of our country; Recognising the nation-building contribution of generations of immigrants; Mindful of our responsibility to protect our unique natural environment; Supportive of achievement as well as equality of opportunity for all; and valuing independence as dearly as the national spirit which binds us together in both adversity and success.”

The Australians people spoke loudly at the referendum. A large majority of sixty-one percent of the Australians voted “No” to this Preamble, with only 39% voting “Yes”. This rejection was much greater than that of the Republic Model being offered on the same ballot paper (55% No to 45% Yes).

The dissonance between the expressed agreement with formally acknowledging Aboriginal ownership and this resounding no vote on referendum day could be due to: 1) A disagreement with the Preamble as the vehicle of formal acknowledgement, or 2) Disagreement with the actual wording of that particular version of the Preamble. Thus, Australians appear to be in a dilemma. They have a strong desire to acknowledge indigenous ownership of traditional lands and waters, and to acknowledge that Australia was settled without indigenous consent, but they share neither consensus nor specifics about how that might be done.

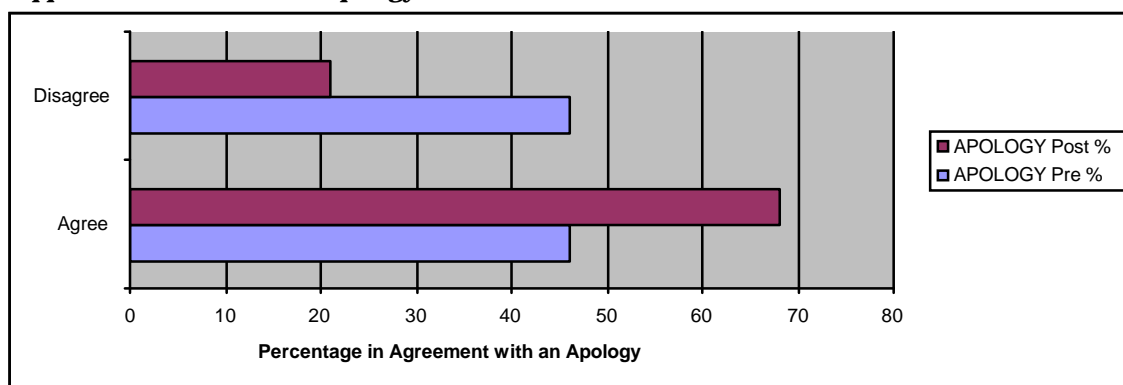
Formal Acknowledgement of Indigenous Australians

	Pre		Post		Change	
	% Agree		% Agree		%	
Formal acknowledgement that Australia occupied without Indigenous consent	68	[67]	81	[82]	+23	[+25]
Formal acknowledgement that Indigenous Australians original owners: land/waters	73	[74]	81	[82]	+8	[+8]

Dramatic Increase in Support for an Apology

Support for an official Government Apology to the “Stolen Generation” also increased dramatically between the first poll, in mid November, and the Deliberative Poll in mid February. This was after specific exposure of participants to the competing explanations of the stolen generation, including explanations of the recent court rulings that denied compensation to members who claimed to have been forcefully removed from their families, and who filed official lawsuits against the Commonwealth Government. The proportion of the participants supporting an apology increased from 46 percent prior to the deliberations to 68 percent afterwards, a large increase of 25 percentage points.

Support for a Government Apology



Associated with this increased consensus about an apology to the Stolen Generation, was an increase (15 percentage points) in the number of people willing to pay compensation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had been removed from their families: from 52% to 66%. Coalition supporters particularly changed their minds about compensation to the Stolen Generation: before deliberations, 39% agreed to compensation. Following deliberations, a majority of 61% agreed.

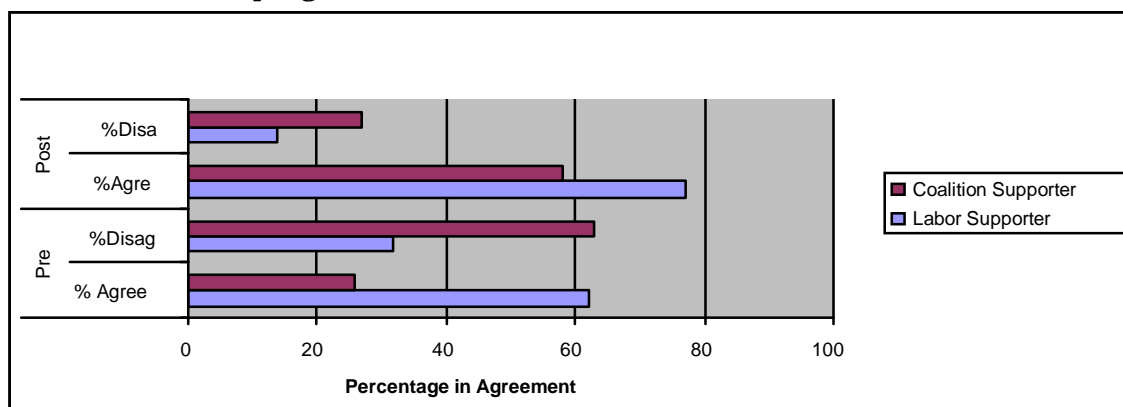
Such compensation however, came with conditions. When asked to specify the conditions under which compensation should be paid, focus was on proof – for a majority of respondents, there had to be clear evidence that the child was removed through coercion of a parent or without consent, and that removal from the family caused emotional, physical, cultural or financial suffering.

Financial compensation to Stolen Generations

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Certain circumstances	51	[53]	66	[69]	+15	[+16]
Not at all	47	[43]	33	[30]	-14	[-14]

It is important to note that the dramatic age differences evident in pre-poll results still applied post-poll on the question of an apology. Younger Australians, while they started out much more pre-disposed to a formal apology than their aged counterparts (49% compared to 39%), dramatically increased their agreement to saying sorry to 78% (an increase of almost 30 percentage points) while their older counterparts increased to a majority of 61% (an increase of 22 points), but still much lower than their much younger counterparts. The gaps in attitude according to education, as well as rural versus urban living, also continued to apply. However, the Labor/Coalition Divide, while still existent post-deliberation, was dramatically reduced by the extreme changes in opinion of Coalition supporters.

Government should apologise: Coalition/Labor Divide



PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Mixed thoughts about government funding allocation

With their revised mental maps of the life situations and levels of disadvantage of indigenous Australians, the Representative Australians also revised their beliefs about the appropriate level of government assistance for indigenous Australians. This was tempered by a very strong universal belief that indigenous Australians should be assisted in becoming more financially independent.

The specific priorities for allocation of funds following deliberations also reflect the desire to see Government assistance directed at helping indigenous Australians help themselves, rather than just welfare handouts. Prior to the deliberations, 35% of the Representative Australians thought that current levels of Government spending were about right. Following the National Deliberation, half the participants felt that current spending was insufficient, while 38% continued to think it about right.

Current level of Government Assistance to Indigenous Australia

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Too much	24	[26]	9	(10)	-15	(-16)
Not enough	32	[31]	45	(50)	+13	(+19)
About right	37	[35]	43	(38)	+6	(+3)

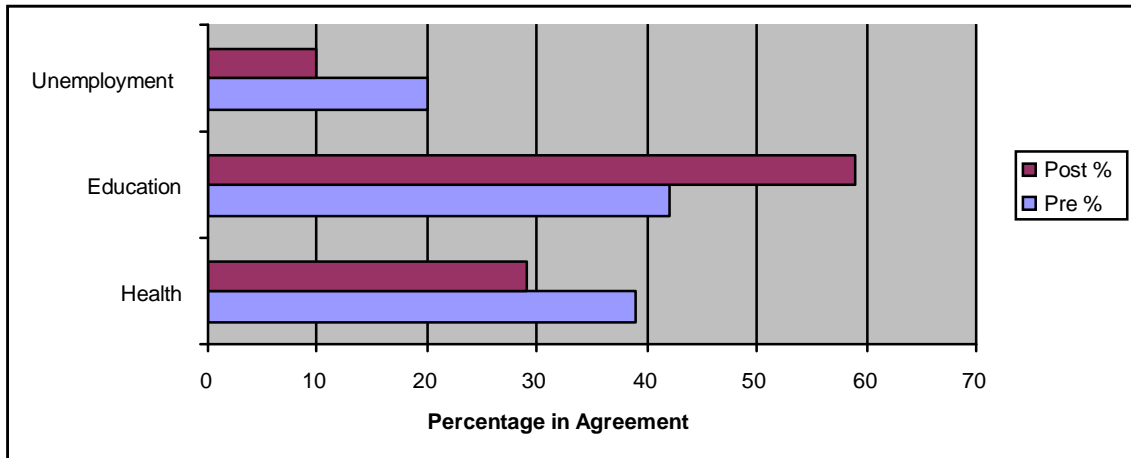
Nation should help Indigenous become more financially independent

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Agree	80	[80]	92	[92]	+12	[+12]
Disagree	11	[10]	2	[2]	-9	[-8]

Education as the Foundation for Overall Improvement

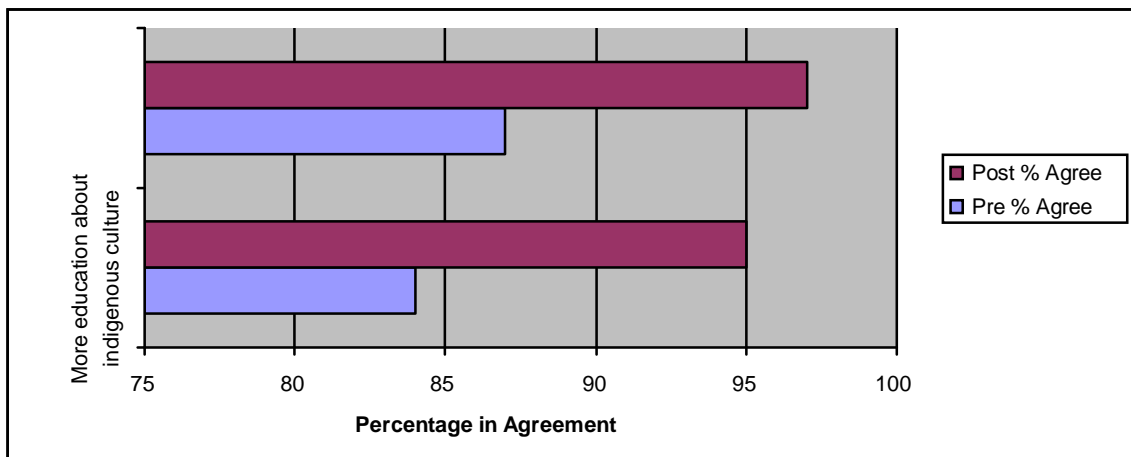
In relation to specific practical strategies, a high proportion of the Representative Australians who attended the weekend in Canberra began the process agreeing that there should be improvement in indigenous health, housing, education and employment (73%). Following deliberations, this consensus had grown to 89%. When asked to prioritise these key areas, before the Deliberative Poll, education was seen as the main priority at 42%, then health (39%), and unemployment (20%). Following deliberations, education became even more important in the overall scheme, with a majority of 59% selecting education, then health (29%), then unemployment (10%). Education appears to be viewed as the crucial foundation for improving the other indicators. If more people were educated, improvements in the other key factors would automatically follow. This increase in the importance of education as the cornerstone of improvement in indigenous life situations, was particularly evident for Coalition supporters. Before deliberations, Coalition supporters prioritised education as the number one priority, with 53% of coalition supporters in agreement. Only 46% of ALP supporters placed such emphasis on education, even though it was still their top priority. After deliberations, Coalition supporters were even more convinced of the value of education as a solution, with 66% in agreement (in contrast to almost 50% of ALP supporters).

Area that the Government should concentrate on most



Education was also seen as crucial to improvements in general relations between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Many respondents noted how little they knew prior to their involvement in the deliberations. At this time, 83% agreed that there should be more education in Australian schools about indigenous culture. Following the deliberations, 95% of these Australians wanted to see increased education about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in Australian schools. This pattern was reiterated in relation to education about indigenous history. Prior to the Poll, 87% of the Representative Australians wanted to see a fuller account of indigenous Australian history taught in schools. This rose to 97% following the Poll. A clear message for Education Policy: all Australians want to learn more about their indigenous counterparts.

More education in schools on Aboriginal/Islander culture and Aboriginal/Islander history



OTHER STRATEGIES FOR MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Mixed thoughts about Special Seats in Parliament

Regarding their attitudes to whether or not indigenous Australian should be allocated special seats in Federal Parliament, those who began the deliberations essentially opposed to this step (57%), remained relatively unmoved throughout the deliberations (54%). However, the number of those who started out undecided appears to have moved toward agreement, hence the slight increase in those who agreed to special seats in parliament following deliberations (35% pre to 43% post).

Special Seats in Parliament for Indigenous Australians

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Should	35	[35]	43	[44]	+8	[+9]
Should not	57	[58]	55	[54]	-2	[-3]
Don't know	8	[7]	0	[0]		

Mixed thoughts about a Treaty

A similar pattern is evident in people's attitudes on a treaty, or set of agreements between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Prior to deliberations, the Australian community was evenly divided in opinion about a treaty, with 46% for a treaty and 46% against. A huge political affiliation gap was evident on this particular question, with 30% of Coalition supporters, versus 57% of ALP supporters agreeing to a treaty.

Following deliberations however, these political differences were virtually negated. In overall terms, the proportion of Representative Australians who began the deliberations essentially opposed to a treaty (46%) remained unmoved throughout the deliberations. The number who agreed to a treaty following deliberations showed a slight increase, to a majority 53%. However, this majority seems to be accounted for by the seven percent undecided Representatives taking the "yes" side. Again, it appears that the most dramatic changes in opinion came from the Coalition supporters. Following deliberations, 45.5% of coalition supporters agreed with a treaty, a change of 15.5% toward a treaty, while the ALP supporters remained virtually unmoved at 58%.

When asked about the conditions under which they would agree to a treaty, all of the Representative Australians focused on the need to recognise indigenous history as a crucial element of total Australian history, working together as one Australia on how to proceed in the future, all peoples showing respect for their fellow Australians (no matter what their background), specific strategies for improving health, housing, education and employment, and strategies for protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Thus for many Australians, a treaty might be the vehicle through which the formal acknowledgement of indigenous Australians described earlier, could be expressed.

Agreement with a Treaty

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Yes/Support	46	[46]	49	[53]	+3	[+7]
No/Not support	46	[47]	50	[46]	+4	[-1]
Don't know/no answer		[7]		[1]		

Increased Support for the Granting of Native Land Title

Prior to deliberations, a majority of Representative Australians (78%) already agreed to the granting of Native Title claims under certain circumstances. Following the deliberations this rose 13 percentage points to a high 91%. As with other aspects of reconciliation, the greatest changes in opinion on Native Title claims came from Coalition supporters. Prior to deliberations, almost 70% agreed with Native Land Title (versus 83% versus ALP supporters). After exposure to a range of competing arguments on Native Title, 95% of Coalition supporters agreed with granting Native Land Title (versus 88% of ALP supporters), again negating the political affiliation gap.

When asked about the conditions under which Native Land Title should be granted, some caution on the part of most of the Representative Australians was evident. The focus was on indigenous Australians proving their significant and continuous links with the land. Many also agreed to Native Land Title in situations where it would not affect other Australians.

Granting of Native Land Title claims

	Pre		Post		Change	
	%		%		%	
Yes: under circumstances	78	[78]	91	[92]	+13	[+14]
Not at all	19	[20]	8	[7]	-11	[-13]
Don't know/no answer	3	[2]				

Increased Support for an integrated legal system

The picture in relation to the application of indigenous law versus dominant culture Australian law is a little more complex. Prior to deliberations, a majority (62%) had already agreed to a legal system in Australia that combined dominant culture Australian law with traditional tribal law. This majority increased to 84% following deliberations. Coalition supporters again showed the most dramatic changes in opinion – moving some 30% toward the hybrid system, in contrast to ALP supporters' move of 20%.

When asked to describe the specific conditions under which they would agree to a hybrid legal system, views were diverse and wide ranging. Many Representative Australians agreed to a combination of laws in specific circumstances, for example in areas where such a system was already working, in remote areas, and where such a system had been worked out with consultation from 'elders' from all constituents in the local communities. Many also specified that dominant culture Australian law should preside over traditional indigenous law for serious violent crimes such as murder.

LEVELS OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

Major Increases in Levels of Political Knowledge

During the course of the weekend, levels of basic political knowledge increased dramatically among the participants, and appears to be a major factor underlying the changes in opinions noted above.

The most dramatic change was in relation to the identities of key political figures involved in Aboriginal Affairs, and the role of ATSIC. Prior to the deliberations, just 42 percent knew the identity of the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, while after deliberations this rose to 68%. Similarly, with the identity of ATSIC Chair, prior to deliberations, only 25% were able to identify Geoff Clark. Following deliberations this rose to 75%. In relation to the specific role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, gains in knowledge ranged from eleven to twenty-four percent depending upon the aspect. Gains were also made in people's ability to identify other political figures such as the Federal Minister for Health, and the role of Meg Lees. Political knowledge on these items increased 16% and 15% respectively.

Similar gains in knowledge occurred in relation to historical events concerning indigenous/non-indigenous affairs. After their weekend of deliberations, the participants were much more likely to know the dates of historical events, for example, those participants who knew the date of the 1967 referendum to include indigenous Australians as part of the population, rose 21% after the Deliberative Poll. Similarly, more Representative Australians knew the result of the Mabo Court ruling after they had the opportunity to absorb the Briefing materials and have their questions answered by experts and advocates.

Levels of Political Knowledge

	Pre		Post		Change	
	% correct		% correct		%	
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs	42	[42]	66	[68]	+24	[+26]
Chair of ATSIC	25	[22]	75	[74]	+50	[+52]
Role of ATSIC:						
- democratically elected	42	[42]	65	[66]	+25	[+24]
- 50% of Federal indigenous funds	52	[53]	63	[64]	+11	[+11]
- Monitors Government Agencies	53	[52]	77	[76]	+24	[+24]
- Oversees indigenous health centres	43	[43]	58	[56]	+15	[+13]
Indigenous Australians first counted in census	67	[69]	88	[90]	+21	[+21]
Best description of Mabo result	70	[71]	81	[80]	+11	[+9]

As in all previous Deliberative Polls, the correlation between changes in political knowledge and changes in opinion, provide strong evidence for the powerful role of education and information in individual and national decision-making.

4. PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION OF THE DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

How Participants evaluated the Deliberative Process

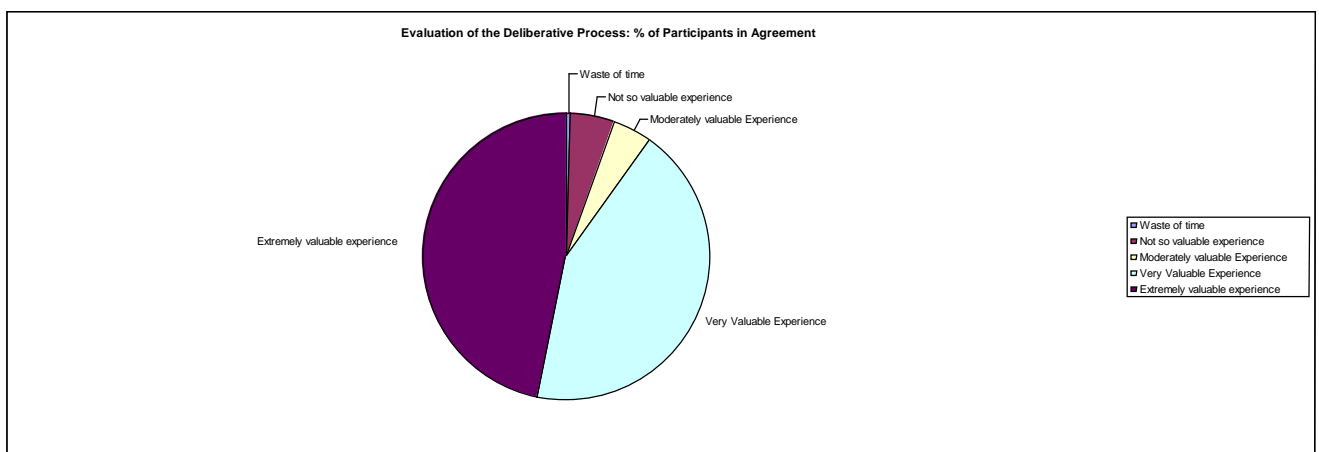
The participants of *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* found the process extremely informative, enjoyable and fair. Regardless of their ultimate positions on any of the sub-topics of reconciliation, 90% of these Representative Australians felt that the Group Facilitator was unbiased and did not attempt to impart their own views. Equally important, 98% felt that the Group Facilitator provided opportunity for everyone to participate in the discussion, and 90% felt that the important aspects of each issue were covered in the group discussions. A substantial majority (80%) of the Representative Australians also thought that the briefing materials sent to participants prior to their attending the deliberative weekend, were a balanced representation of the various sides of the reconciliation issue. 92% of participants had read at least half the briefing materials before attending, with almost 80% having read all.

Neutrality of the deliberative process

	% Agree
Group Leaders did not try to influence the group with own views	90%
Group Leaders helped everyone participate	98%
All aspects of topic covered	90%
Briefing materials were mostly balanced	80%

Overall Evaluation of the Deliberative Process

An astounding 96% of people who attended *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here?* viewed it a positive, valuable and worthwhile experience, with almost 50% evaluating the experience at the highest score possible.



**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES:
RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?**

IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS

AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES: RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS

Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here? is the eighteenth Deliberative Poll, the most recent addition to a decade of Deliberative Democracy that includes similar experiments in Great Britain, the United States of America, Denmark and Australia. The pattern of results is strong and unambiguous: when citizens are actively involved in analysing balanced information, have the opportunity to discuss with their peers and to question competing experts, they draw fundamentally different conclusions than their fellow citizens. Deliberative Polling facilitates an understanding of the pros and cons of a topic and the consequences of a particular choice. Citizens given this deliberative opportunity are able to filter the arguments of competing sides, and draw conclusions based on a more comprehensive, more systematic analysis of information. They therefore vote differently from less informed decision-makers. In Texas, where the methodology was first developed, results from nine regional Deliberative Polls provide convincing evidence that such differences in opinion will be consistently evident for the same subject matter, even with different sources of information, different competing experts, different groups of citizens, different facilitators and different points in time.

Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here? provides further evidence about human information processing that might facilitate changes in opinion. Comparative analysis between groups with and without indigenous presence, showed the power of the group discussion in influencing opinion. Group discussion is hypothesized to be one of the aspects of Deliberative Polling that may explain the resilience of changes in opinion over time, regardless of panelist profile, time, citizens etc.

Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here? also provides evidence that sheds light on the vigorous academic debate about the role of cues, or shortcuts in voting behaviour. Some scholars argue that a maximally informed citizenry is not necessary for effective and optimal collective decision-making. It is argued that citizens use cues as successful substitutes for comprehensive, systematic search and analysis of information. That is, substitutes for informed deliberation will lead to the same ultimate decision as the more time consuming search and analysis. These substitutes typically involve “shortcuts” or heuristics such as the use of cues or direction given by newspaper editorial affirmations, assertions of friends, co-workers, celebrities or community leaders, or specific policy of a political party. Cues are argued to be substitutes for “encyclopaedic” information gathering, which is usually too costly for the average individual, both in terms of time and effort. The cues are argued to work just as effectively for the collective citizenry as if the

citizens had been more informed; as if they had deliberated. Scholars supporting this view argue that the cues enable the public as a whole to form policy preferences that reflect the best available information without the time or effort involved in detailed information gathering and analysis.

In contrast, other scholars argue that such cues are an insufficient substitute for a “rational public”, (or a “rational” individual) and can lead to faulty conclusions. Scholars advocating this view point to the well documented and robust tendency of decision makers to seek information that confirms their existing beliefs, to selectively perceive new information in line with their existing beliefs, and to discredit new information if it is inconsistent with existing beliefs. These scholars point to the tendency of decision-makers to be influenced by how a situation is framed, by societal “leaders”, family, and peers, regardless of how well informed they are on the subject in question. Because humans are such fallible decision-makers, where the citizenry relies only on cues for collective decision-making, the result is ill-informed citizens. Citizens who are not fully informed can be misled. Ill-informed citizens can result in a less effective democracy. Therefore, to have an effective democracy, citizens need to be as informed as possible, especially when they are called upon to make a choice in an election or a referendum.

Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation – Where from Here? provides strong evidence that heuristics or unconscious shortcuts and the use of cues in decision-making are not adequate substitutes for informed, balanced analysis. Prior to deliberation, the Representative Australians involved in this research made decisions about reconciliation that were strongly tied to their political affiliation. Indeed, the “political affiliation gap” was evident on virtually every major question asked of the respondents. That is, prior to deliberations, respondents relied on the stance taken by their political party to direct their own response to the issue. The “Party Line” on reconciliation appeared to be the unconscious cue. Following deliberations, that political affiliation gap was dramatically reduced, or in many cases, actually negated. This suggests, that during the process of deliberation – following comprehensive search and analysis of information related to the issue of reconciliation – the chief cue that may have been guiding responses prior to deliberation, no longer applied. Considered judgment replaced the shortcut, and led to different conclusions.

AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES: RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?

IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA

The voice of indigenous Australians is unequivocal. Governments, educators, health administrators, and other organisations devising and enacting policy on indigenous affairs, as well as all indigenous and non-indigenous Australians across the country, can choose which components of that voice should be heard. If indigenous and non-indigenous Australians are to move forward together, then at least some action should flow from their words.

Indigenous Australians want all Australians, including Governments, to consider the following:

- Formal acknowledgement of unfair treatment in the past
- Formal Acknowledgment of indigenous components of Australia' s history
- A Formal Apology to the 'stolen generation'
- Compensation to the 'stolen generation'
- More investment in education:
 - education in all schools about indigenous culture
 - education in all schools about indigenous history
 - more education of indigenous Australians to enable fuller participation in dominant Australian society
 - cross cultural education of health/school and other professionals who work with indigenous Australians
- A treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians
- An integrated legal system incorporating both indigenous and dominant culture laws
- Special representation in Parliament for indigenous Australians
- Continuation of Native Land Title
- A more inclusive Australia Day

The *informed* voice of the general population of Australians was more divided than their non-indigenous counterparts. However, once they considered the relative disadvantage of their fellow Australians, the Representative Australians reviewed how our nation might respond to the obvious relative disadvantage of indigenous Australians. The informed Representative Australians supported the call for Australia as a nation to consider some of the measures listed above, although with several caveats. A majority of the Representative Australians agreed to:

- Formal acknowledgement of past unfair treatment of indigenous Australians
- Formal Acknowledgment of indigenous components of Australia' s history

- A Formal Apology to the ‘stolen generation’
- Compensation to the ‘stolen generation’
- More investment in education:
 - education in all schools about indigenous culture
 - education in all schools about indigenous history
 - more education of indigenous Australians to enable fuller participation in dominant Australian society
- A treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians
- A hybrid system of indigenous and dominant culture laws

The 344 “Representative Australians” who attended *Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation-Where from Here?* became a unique subset of Australians because they were fully informed. They came together on February 16-18 2001 to discuss relations between non-indigenous and indigenous Australians and how they might be made more productive in the years ahead. They heard competing arguments on various aspects of reconciliation and had their questions answered. At the closing of the deliberations, the Representative Australians drew dramatically different conclusions than their less informed counterparts. Because their conclusions are *informed* conclusions, and because they are a random sample of the Australian electorate, the final opinions of the 344 Representative Australians have *recommending force* for Governments, Government Agencies and other organisations, as they develop their policies and strategies in this area. In the interests of a more effective democracy, their informed conclusions should make a crucial contribution to the national dialogue and national action on Reconciliation.

It is the fundamental right of every citizen living in a democracy, to have a say. It is a fundamental responsibility of every citizen to make that an informed “say”. It is the responsibility of the rest of us to listen.

**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES:
RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?**

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 3

**AGENDA
NATIONAL DELIBERATION
FEBRUARY 16-18, 2001**

AGENDA

AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES: RECONCILIATION - WHERE FROM HERE?

Old Parliament House, Canberra

Friday, February 16, 2001

5.30 p.m. Representative Australians arrive at Old Parliament House
Cocktails in Old Parliament House Courtyard

6.30 p.m. **Welcome to Representative Australians**

Pamela Ryan: Managing Director, Issues Deliberation Australia
Welcome to Country: Local Ngunnawal Representatives
The Honourable Chris Gallus: Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister
for Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
The Honourable Bob McMullan: Shadow Minister for Reconciliation
and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Senator Aden Ridgeway: Spokesperson on Reconciliation, Australian
Democrats
Professor Ian Chubb: Vice Chancellor, Australian National University
The Right Honourable Ian Sinclair: Former Speaker of the House
The Honourable Barry Jones: Past President, Australian Labor Party,
Former Minister

(in House of Representatives Chamber)

7.30 p.m. **Introduction to Deliberation, to Reconciliation**

Formation of face to face discussion groups of approximately 15
Representative Australians each, meet with Group Facilitators, Group
Managers

Dinner in Groups

Introductions

Weekend Agenda: Pam Ryan

Brief summary of background to reconciliation:

Speakers: Geoffrey Bolton: Historian, Murdoch University
Henry Reynolds, Historian, Launceston

(in Old Parliament House Dining Room)

Saturday, February 17, 2001

- 7.00 a.m. Breakfast in designated area at Hotel Dining Rooms
- 8.30 a.m. Representative Australians and *Australia Deliberates* staff arrive at Old Parliament House
- 9.00 a.m. Resume discussion groups in break-out rooms to discuss the symbolic aspects of reconciliation including both indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives, including “what is symbolism, how do we know symbols when we see them?”
- 10.30 a.m. Morning Tea: OPH Dining Room
- 11.00 a.m. **Plenary Session 1: Reconciliation – what it means - from indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives**
- Moderators: Ian Sinclair and Barry Jones
- Panellists:
- Larissa Behrendt: University of Technology, Sydney
 Brian Butler: Commissioner (Social Justice Portfolio), ATSIC
 Mick Dodson: Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Australian National University
 Jackie Huggins: Queensland University and Reconciliation Australia
 Gary Johns: Institute of Public Affairs, Brisbane
 Robert Manne: La Trobe University
 Keith Windschuttle: Historian, Author
- (House of Reps Chamber)
- 12.30 p.m. Lunch in Old Parliament House Dining Room
- 1.30 p.m. Resume discussion groups in break-out rooms to discuss reconciliation at regional and national levels: what has worked, what has not worked
- 3.00 p.m. Afternoon Tea: OPH Dining Room

3.30 p.m. **Plenary Session 2: Reconciliation at regional and national levels: what has worked, what has not worked**

Moderators: Ian Sinclair and Barry Jones

Panellists:

Ron Brunton: Senior Fellows, The Institute of Public Affairs
 Lillian Holt: Director, Centre for Indigenous Education, U of Melbourne
 Gabi Hollows: Hollows Foundation
 May O'Brien: Educator, WA
 Nova Peris-Kneebone: Olympic Athlete
 Peter Sutton: Anthropologist, SA
 Chris Vass: Magistrate, Holden Hill Court (Adelaide Nunga Court)
 Paul Wand: Rio Tinto Foundation

(House of Reps Chamber)

5.15 p.m. Large group photo on steps of Old Parliament House

5.30 p.m. Barbecue Dinner in Old Parliament House Courtyard

Sunday, February 18, 2001

7.00 a.m. Breakfast in designated area at Hotel Dining Rooms

8.15 a.m. Representative Australians and *Australia Deliberates* staff arrive at Old Parliament House

8.30 a.m. Representative Australians and Group Facilitators resume discussion groups in break-out rooms to finalise questions to Final Panellists.

10.30 a.m. **Plenary Session 3: Reconciliation: Strategies For The Future**

Moderators: Ian Sinclair and Barry Jones

Panellists:

Jon Altman: Director, CAEPR, Australian National University
 Campbell Anderson: President, Business Council of Australia, Reconciliation Australia
 Dr. Kate Auty: Melbourne Magistrate
 Bob McMullan: Shadow Minister, Aboriginal Affairs
 Aden Ridgeway: Australian Democrats Senator
 Philip Ruddock: Minister for Immigration & Multicultural Affairs
 Sharman Stone: Federal MP, Liberal Government
 Richard Trudgen: Author; "*Why Warriors Lay Down and Die*"

(House of Reps Chamber)

12.15 p.m. Lunch – in groups in break-out rooms

Representative Australians resume discussion groups, complete final survey questionnaire

1.00 p.m. **Session for Indigenous Australians from the Regions:
Empowering our People: The Road Ahead**

Moderators: Ian Sinclair and Barry Jones

Panellists:

Fred Chaney: Former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Fraser Liberal Government) and Co-Chair, Reconciliation Australia Foundation
Geoff Clark: Chair, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
Bob McMullan: Shadow Minister, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
John Moriarty: Chief Executive Officer, Balarnji Design
Aden Ridgeway: Australian Democrats Senator
Philip Ruddock: Minister for Immigration & Multicultural Affairs
Sharman Stone, Federal Member for Murray, Former Member of Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation
David Tacey: La Trobe University
Glenn Wightman: Ethno Biologist, Northern Territory

5.50 p.m. Special Program: Summary and Results

Wednesday, March 7, 2001

11.30 a.m. News Conference in [New] Parliament House to announce complete results

APPENDIX 4

**NATIONAL DELIBERATION
SAMPLE GROUP DISCUSSION FORMAT**

GROUP DISCUSSION 1:

Preparation for the Plenary Session: Reconciliation: what it means – from indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives.

1. OUTLINE SCHEDULE FOR DAY

Recap on goals and ground rules, culture.

2. COMMENCE DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Please Note: Group Discussion guidelines are a very loose guide only. The groups should guide the discussion, but the facilitator needs to ensure that opposing views are heard and expressed with equal opportunity. The following guide is merely a supplement to assist in ensuring the balance of the discussions.

WHAT IS RECONCILIATION?

Reconciliation means different things to different people.

Understanding and respect:

- Within cultures
- Across cultures

WHAT DOES “RECONCILIATION” MEAN TO YOU?

- How do you know it’s happening? What things do you see happening that you think could be different?
- Views about Bolton/Reynolds presentations?
- Refer to the Preamble to the Bill that established the Council for Reconciliation: page 6 of Briefing Document. How do you feel about the preamble?
- If “Reconciliation” is “living together” with understanding and respect, - what things do you see that tell you that in your community, or the wider community people are not living together with understanding and respect?
- Refer to the 8 issues identified by the Council as crucial to the process of Reconciliation. What do you think of these – do they contribute to reconciliation/hinder true reconciliation?
- Do the points raised in the Preamble to the June 1991 Act constituting the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and the 8 issues identified by the Council adequately describe “reconciliation”?
- Consider the Document for Reconciliation (page 16 of Briefing Document): How do you feel about the document?

How do you feel about the proposed amendments of Prime Minister Howard?

- What are impediments to true reconciliation?
- What will be a sign to you that this so-called “Reconciliation” is working?

For the last 20 minutes of the Session, refer to the list of Panellists in that session and ask group which specific questions they’d like answered in the Plenary sessions.

DEVELOPING QUESTIONS

1. Warn groups they need to prepare at least 2 simple short questions for each expert panel session.

These may be:

- issues/areas they are uncertain about
 - something they want clarified or explained
 - a view that they want to test out
2. Identify a spokesperson to ask each question.
 3. Warn participants that not all questions will get asked but they may be able to follow up on questions from others by raising their hands.
 4. **TWO COPIES OF EACH QUESTION ARE NEEDED – ONE FOR THE PRODUCER AND ONE FOR THE QUESTIONER.**
 5. **TAKE THE QUESTIONS TO THE DESIGNATED POINT OUTSIDE THE HOUSE OF REPS CHAMBER.**

GENERIC ISSUES THAT MAY ARISE IN EACH SESSION

We expect the following topics to arise throughout the deliberations, and each should be explored comprehensively as they do, ensuring with open questions that competing sides are discussed with questions like (Does anyone have a contrasting view? What might be some competing arguments/competing explanations? etc.)

“Sorry”

- Explore what the word “sorry” means to the members of your group.
- What do you think about the “Motion of Regret” that was passed in Parliament in 1999? (Have group refer to Briefing Document if they are unclear of what this was).
- How is “sorry” different from that?
- What do you wish to say “sorry” or not say “sorry” for?
- To whom?
- If you do think “sorry” should be said, who do you think should say it?
- What do you see “sorry” achieving?
- Why do you not want an official sorry beyond the Motion of Regret?
- Is it too late to say “sorry”? If not, how should it be expressed?

“Stolen Generations”

The “Stolen Generations” refers to the government policy of removing half-caste children from their families and placing them in an institute.

There are competing explanations about whether or not the children were ‘stolen’ and whether for welfare or deliberate assimilation.

What are your thoughts on this? (Refer to Briefing Document as much as possible).

APPENDIX 5

REGIONAL DELIBERATIONS

- 1. SAMPLE AGENDA**
- 2. SAMPLE GROUP DISCUSSION FORMAT**

AGENDA

REGIONAL DELIBERATION ON RECONCILIATION

PORT AUGUSTA

November 2, 2000

Pika Wiya Health Service

Welcome: Alwyn: Director Pika Wiya Health Service, Pt Augusta

Introductions: Elizabeth Morgan: Morgan Disney and Associates
 Helen Disney: Morgan Disney and Associates
 Pika Wiya Health Service

Administration of Questionnaire

Introduction to the Process: This Regional Deliberation: Elizabeth Morgan
 Other Regional Deliberations: Pam Ryan
 National Deliberation: Pam Ryan

Information about Local / Regional Reconciliation Activities: Auntie Elsie
 Collin

Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation: Port Augusta Group: Jenny

BARBECUE LUNCH

Small Group Discussions

Groups of 10-15 convene with group facilitators to discuss Reconciliation and what it means to them.

Large Group Forum

All groups reconvene in large group forum to:

1. Discuss outcomes of individual discussion groups
2. Ask Questions of panelists (Elsie, Collin, Jenny, Helen, Pam)
3. Devise questions to be asked at National Deliberation in Canberra

Group Photo

Farewell

REGIONAL DELIBERATIONS

GROUP DISCUSSION OUTLINE

1. WHAT IS RECONCILIATION?

Reconciliation means different things to different people
Understanding and respect

- Within cultures
- Across cultures

Q.1 WHAT DOES “RECONCILIATION” MEAN TO YOU?

(How do you know it’s happening? What things do you see happening that you think could be different?)

Q.2 **If “reconciliation” is “living together” with understanding and respect, what things do you see that tell you that in your community, or the wider community people are not living together with understanding and respect?**

Q.3 **What will be a sign to you that this so-called “reconciliation” is working**

2. WHAT HAS WORKED, WHAT HAS NOT WORKED?

A. YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Q.1 In your daily lives, what good things do you see that suggest better relations between aboriginal / non-aboriginal people?

Q.2 In your daily lives, what are the bad things you see that you’d like to see less of?

B. NATIONALLY

How about things you hear about across the whole of Australia?

Q.3 Nationally, what are some of the good things you see being done to improve relationships between aboriginal / non-aboriginals, so we can all live together?

Nationally, what are some of the bad things you still see happening that contribute to poor understanding / respect between the cultures?

C. SOME SPECIFIC TOPICS

Q. 4 Over the last 10 years, there has been a lot of talk and a lot of controversy over several aspect and I'd like to talk about each of these in turn:

- First: let's talk about land rights

Recently (Nov. 28 – Spinifix people of WA were allowed to reclaim a large part of the WA desert).
- What about special seats in Parliament House?
- What about a treaty?
- What are your thoughts about the stolen generation and the "sorry debate" that surrounds it?
- The "Stolen Generations" – this refers to the government policy aimed at removing children from their families and placing them in an institute. A policy that ended in the late 1960's.

D. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE BEING DONE?

Q.5 LOCAL

What things / programs / activities / behaviour do you think could be done to make things better at a local level (also among aboriginals – between different groups)

Q.6 NATIONAL

What things / programs / activities / behaviours do you think could be done at a National level (all over Australia) to make things better between aboriginal and white Australians (and also among aboriginals between different tribes)

APPENDIX 6

FACILITATOR TRAINING

GROUP FACILITATORS: Job Description

Group Facilitators: twenty-five group facilitators will meet with groups of 15 Representative Australians on Friday evening for dinner, and remain with that group for the whole weekend of Deliberation. A Group Manager will also be assigned to each group to ensure all travel/accommodation and “housekeeping” type arrangements are OK.

Responsibilities of Group Facilitators

Facilitate group discussion process by:

- a) Establishing rapport with and among group members;
- b) Establishing an atmosphere in which all Representative Australians would feel good about participating;
- c) Establishing an atmosphere that facilitates participation by quiet, reticent group members, without domination of discussion by louder, more extroverted group members;
- d) Establish an “open” atmosphere – an ethos which conveys the message that we are all here to listen, to learn, and be open to new ideas “ (subtly encouraging those Representative Australians who come with a closed mind to consider other options);
- e) Establishing an atmosphere in which the group dynamic dominates – i.e. rather than the facilitator answering all questions, encourage the group members to give information to other group members;
- f) Ensuring completely neutral, non-partisan approach in own role i.e. no advocating either a yes or no vote on the referendum, or a specific position on the republic;
- g) Guiding discussion to cover major topics on the itemised discussion guide,
- h) Help Representative Australians frame questions to be asked of advocates;
- i) Establish an atmosphere that helps Representative Australians feel comfortable in their groups while being filmed.

Group Facilitator Specifications

Group Facilitators will have

- **Qualifications in Group facilitation from the Social Sciences - for example, an advanced degree in Psychology, Social Work, Organizational Behaviour, or equivalent, which included individual and group counselling techniques**
- **Experience in-group facilitation – for example focus groups, group counselling, organizational consulting.**

GROUP MANAGERS

Need at least 25 people – with 3 or more back-ups identified in case of need for emergency substitutes on the weekend of deliberation.

Background:

Over 300 Australian citizens will arrive in Canberra on February 16, 2001. They will then go to their hotels to check in, before being transported to Old Parliament House at 5.00 p.m. for registration at *Australia Deliberates*.

Role as Canberra Hosts:

- On Friday - To greet citizens at the arrival venue and transfer them to their hotels
- Provide introduction to Canberra and the weekend, along with Orientation Package
- To assist in Check in at hotels – sorting out any problems with rooms etc.
- Ensure smooth transfer to Old Parliament House
- Provide ongoing support, information about Canberra, Hotels, Old Parliament House, *Australia Deliberates*.
- On Sunday - Assist with transfer to departure point

Role as On Site Floating Group Manager

Specific tasks:

- To Liaise with Group Managers and Admin Centre to ensure Groups, Group Facilitators and Group managers have the materials and information they need.
- To act as “runner” around Old Parliament House to deliver and retrieve emergency information and materials as needed
- To help Group Managers direct the “Representative Australians” to the various parts of Old Parliament House as required.

**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES: RECONCILIATION:
WHERE FROM HERE?**

**Old Parliament House, CANBERRA
FEBRUARY 16-18, 2001**

GROUP FACILITATOR ORIENTATION

Friday, FEBRUARY 16, 2001

- 11.00 a.m** **WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS: Pam Ryan**
- BRIEF OVERVIEW of Derivation of topic:
Why Reconciliation
What we hope to achieve**
- REFRESHER:
Deliberative Polling
Core Processes
Culture and Values**
- 12.00 noon** **LUNCH**
- 12.30 p.m.** **Australia Deliberates: Reconciliation –
Where From Here?**
- UPDATE ON WHOLE PROJECT: Pam Ryan**
- Numbers
Agenda
Old Parliament House: Tour**
- 2.00 p.m.** **HANDLING THE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS: Moira Deslandes**
- LESSONS FROM THE REGIONAL DELIBERATIONS:
Helen Disney and Elizabeth Morgan**
- 4.00 p.m.** **“Sound” Practice in House of Representatives Chamber**

GROUP FACILITATORS: WHAT TO EXPECT

At about 5.00 p.m. this afternoon, some 380 Australian citizens from all parts of the country - all ages, all backgrounds – will walk into Old Parliament House to tackle the republic issue in preparation for the November referendum. It will be the first time in Australian history that a truly representative group of Australians has come together in one place.

After a Welcome Ceremony in the Senate Courtyard, they'll be assigned to groups. You will have 15-16 people in your group – the same 15-16 people for the whole weekend.

Each group will also have a Group Manager – responsible for

- a) Logistics: moving people from place to place
- b) Emergencies
- c) Taking questions from the group at the end of each group discussion to the “Control Centre” for organizing prior to the plenary session.
- d) Tactfully ensuring this wonderful building is protected during our stay.

OUR GOAL for the weekend: to promote and facilitate a culture of dialogue, mutual respect and access to good, balanced information about the issues.

We hope to promote:

- **Respect** for other people's views
- **Listening** to other people's views without interruption
- **Appreciation** that other people may have a *different* perspective from one's own, and they have a right to be heard
- **No denigration** of other people or organizations
- Focus on reasoned argument and fact rather than emotional personal attacks

THE PATTERN FOR THE WEEKEND

You will see from your agenda that the Representative Australians will be assigned to their groups upon arrival. At dinner tonight, they will have dinner in their groups with some getting to know you exercises that are similar to what you have just done.

Tomorrow morning:

Group Discussion followed by Plenary Session on WHAT IS RECONCILIATION?

The Pattern – group discussion followed by questioning of panellists in the Plenary sessions – will be iterated all weekend. Plenary sessions televised live. We'll need to keep in mind that this is both a social science experiment, and a television production – and we have to meet television schedules.

YOU:

Have a crucial role in the “whole process”

- **help people to feel comfortable**
- **guide the discussion in a neutral way**
- **guide the discussion to cover all aspects of the topic**
- **harvest questions from the group throughout the whole group discussion.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FACILITATOR ROLE (*Moirra Deslandes*)

Introduction

- understand that anger and sadness, grief, frustration, embarrassment etc. are all likely emotions we will be contending with
- remind ourselves of the skills we all have in these areas so we can draw on them promptly
- design a common method of managing these emotions so that we can maintain the integrity of the process as far as possible
- design our own back up system to manage ourselves if we need some de-briefing

Word Association

Reconciliation – Meaning and Message

What have we heard so far – report from Elizabeth and Helen

- input from facilitators about own experiences
- exchange of ideas

Reconciliation is an emotional topic

Emotions we will be dealing with:

- Anger and fear
- Anger as a secondary emotion (fear, pain, betrayal)
- Anger as a dynamic in the group
- Anger as part of grief and loss

Your best techniques for managing an angry person in a group

Facilitator Management Strategies: (Before / During / After)

Managing Ourselves and Managing the Process

How our own fears, anger etc might get in the way

What do we need to do to manage ourselves in this environment?

Developing a common approach

The steps we will all take

Refining/Practising the method

In groups of 5: Role plays and discussion

(using stories from Morgan Disney and Associates or from Bringing them Home)

Review

Does the method need any further revision?

Agreeing on the method

When should we evaluate it and where?

Support

What support will we need?

How will we get it?

What back up and support for citizens who may need it?

APPENDIX 7

DESIRED CULTURE AND VALUES

**AUSTRALIA DELIBERATES:
RECONCILIATION – WHERE FROM HERE?
Old Parliament House, February 16-18-2001**

DESIRED CULTURE/VALUES FOR THE WEEKEND OF DELIBERATION

Overall goal:

To promote and facilitate culture of dialogue, mutual respect and access to good, balanced information about the issues.

We conduct the weekend in a way which:

- Encourages participants to express their views in a respectful way and which is not personally attacking
- Recognizes that Reconciliation is a complex and often emotional topic
- Encourages listening to other peoples views without interruption, appreciates that people may have different perspectives derived from their own history
- Acknowledges that everyone has a right to be heard
- Encourages a dialogue which is reasoned and constructive
- Does not denigrate other people or organizations
- Recognizes that a range of emotions may be expressed including anger and sadness and encourages all participants to deal with these respectfully

This will be achieved by:

- Selecting panellists for plenary sessions whom agree to adhere to the ground rules
- Ensuring Television Networks are apprised of these ground rules and are committed to the same culture
- Briefing Plenary Session Moderator on the ground rules to ensure zero tolerance for panellist's or participant's degeneration into verbal attacks
- Expecting that Group Facilitators will assist groups to show respect for all members and facilitate the above values
- Ensuring that all involved understand that this is a culture of dialogue, not debate, and that the emphasis is on dialogue between Representative Australians and panellists, not among panellists

APPENDIX 8

PHOTOS

APPENDIX 9

SAMPLE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

APPENDIX 10

EXAMPLE THANK YOU LETTERS

APPENDIX 11

EXAMPLE COMMENDATIONS

**EXCERPTS FROM SPEECHES FROM
PREMIER OF *WITHOUT PREJUDICE***

Robert Champion de Crespigny: CEO Normandy Mining

It was an enormous privilege to Normandy to support Issues Deliberation Australia on this whole reconciliation project. I wanted just to say a few words of, of why we did it and also just to touch on reconciliation.

Normandy was very much involved in this process I think probably more than any other reason, than as a Company we are involved more than any other Company in Australia in exploring and mining and Aboriginal lands throughout Australia. I was asked to be part of the founding group that started the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. That is why it is lovely for me tonight to have Bob Hawke here, who of course is the person who decided, following the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission, that something had to be done. I think that was a tremendous initiative. More importantly it is one of the very few unanimous decisions made through both the Lower and Upper houses of Parliament. That's why having you here as well Ian (Ian at that stage for some unfortunately you weren't the Speaker and for others they were delighted that you weren't), but the fact that they all joined together to do it, was a wonderful start to reconciliation. The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was very revved up when it started, and I think that's one of the challenges as it moved through. It went up and down during its term, and near the end I think quite rightly decided that it was finished.

The challenge though was to pick up reconciliation in the community, and I think that challenge has long been grasped enough. And to perpetuate something centrally wasn't going to work, and that's why in the end Normandy wanted very much to get behind Pam Ryan and the whole of the Issues Deliberation Australia team - which really is an extraordinary team and an extraordinary initiative to bring people together.

We deliberately chose to be involved in the film that you'll see because we want it to be something that gets out into the community and means people, understand the challenge that we have ahead. And it is very much to us that we felt to give it some life. But, like all things can be when we sit watching the film, remember this film will only have a limited life, and it will all be up to us in the end what we want to do forward to take reconciliation if we are going to make a difference in Australia in this very challenging issue.

Ian Sinclair

I don't think there is a more important topic for modern Australia than trying to reconcile the past for today, and tomorrow and particularly as far as Indigenous Australia is concerned it's very difficult for them to live through all the traumas to which they have been subject. And for us as those that have come over some phase through the last two and a half centuries, for us to adopt our thing towards the reconciliation process and giving them the path that we all know is their right. And this of course tonight is part of that process so, and I'm delighted in the process that we have been able to achieve that.

The process and Issues Deliberation Australia, and the people involved have been really quite remarkable in the initiatives they have undertaken. Barry Jones and I wondered what on earth we'd face when we took up the first of the Deliberative Polls as you recall on the republic. In part because, when you put questions it's hard to know how or why and in what way having 400 odd Representative Australians can advance understanding. But essentially it's because you have people talking together not in a forced way, but listening as well as talking and gradually understanding that others' views might be different from your own. That, the reaction that's initially assessed on the first poll that's taken, is one which so often significantly changes by the time we take our final poll that was taken in each instance, in this one on indigenous reconciliation and on the first one on the republic. It's not a matter of forcing people to these things, but really as is so important in today's age – making people think, making people listen and making people understand that other people might have a different view to your own, and that often that different view is something that you should listen to.

But now looking at the process and looking at those two Deliberative Polls, is really not as important as the third thing, and that is people. We have not only a couple who met at the last Deliberative Poll. We have people like Pam and her team, who really have been tremendous, because it was a remarkable initiative for them to get together the sort of people they got together, because they were just ordinary Australians who came from across the continent, came together and spent that weekend as they did.

I'd like you to pay particular tribute to Pam and her team because they picked up on an idea that I had. I wasn't happy that we only had people assembling in Canberra. I suggested to Pam that there should be other mini Deliberative Polls through regional Australia where people who lived in those communities could have their opportunity to have some input. And I gather in *Without Prejudice* tonight we are going to see something of that because really if we are going to look at Australia we are not just those that live in Adelaide, or Melbourne, or Sydney or the capital cities. We are those who live wherever in this wonderful country of ours. Pam and her team are prepared to take the initiative and go out there and meet and talk to them and part of the real benefit of the Deliberative Poll on Reconciliation was that there was that blend of people. But as Robert said a moment ago, the real challenge is not to leave it where it finished at the end of that weekend.

There were all sorts of things that emerged from that weekend. One of them I'd not thought of but, so many of those Representatives that I spoke to said they'd actually never before, if they were indigenous Australians or white Australians spoken to the other group of people socially. You know, that really is an indictment, to think that in this day and age so many have never spoken if they are non-indigenous to an indigenous Australian if they were indigenous to another Australian in a social context and I hope that that's something that we can all learn we have to advance and what *Without Prejudice* I know will do and full marks to the team who produced it. They moved amongst us, they had interviews with all sorts of people, but what they are doing is preserving a little of the ethos in what was a magical opportunity over the weekend and hopefully are going to transfer that to a wider audience.

Congratulations Pam. Congratulations to all who are responsible for *Without Prejudice* and I'm sure we are all going to enjoy the next little while.

Bob Hawke

Ladies and Gentlemen, I've been in public life now for something like 43 years and I find it difficult to remember an occasion, which I have been more excited by something, which is relevant to the political process than what we have witnessed tonight. I want at the outset to congratulate you Pam, and all the team around you for creating Issues Deliberation Australia, and in particular I would also like to congratulate Gillian and all those associated with the production of that film. It was a moving experience and it was something, which creates optimism, and by God we need optimism these days.

Two or three things in particular I'd like to say. Firstly, I think one of the disturbing features of our society, over recent years and at the present time is the disconnect which is happening between people and their elected representatives. Sense of alienation that is occurring, which I think it is becoming dangerous in the sense that it is begging almost to the question the whole democratic process and therefore anything which, directs itself to that issue tries to bring people into the processes of thinking intelligently about issues which are of importance to the present and the future of this country are to be applauded. And I can think of no process at the present time which tackles that issue more directly than what Pam has been doing in these two processes in regard firstly to the republic and secondly in regard to the question of reconciliation. So more strength to your arm Pam, and those around you, because you are right. The evidence is there, it's overwhelming. If people are given the opportunity of being confronted with the arguments - pro and con about the particular issues they will indicate a capacity to change their thinking, to understand the points of view other than their own prejudices are important and should be taken into account.

Coming to the issue itself of reconciliation, I have believed for a long time now that it is hard to think of an issue which is more important in terms of deciding what sort of society we are going to be. It was in 1991 that I initiated a reconciliation process and as Robert said in his remarks earlier this evening it was one of those rare occasions in which we got a unanimous vote of the Parliament and I pay tribute therefore not only to my own side of politics but to the Liberal and National party and Democrats for recognising the importance of that issue.

Of course I have my disappointments about how that process has gone because I had expressed the hope then in 1991 that the process would proceed in a way which would mean when we came to the year 2001 to start the next century of federation that in a formal sense the process would have been finalised. That the reconciliation would have reached a point of which the non-indigenous Australians have made a statement and committed themselves to a position, and then on their part indigenous Australians had accepted the integrity of that statement and that commitment. Unfortunately as we know that has not happened.

But it is the process that has now been initiated and the results of which you have seen tonight which are going to help to keep that issue alive because it is my firm opinion now as it was even more firmly held now than I did 10 years ago, that we will not be a Nation at peace with ourselves until we have finalised this process and commitment of reconciliation.

One point that I'd also like to make, it's a parenthetic in a way, but I think it needs to be made and that is that we do owe a great deal of gratitude to people like Robert de Crespigny. The Mining Industry is one in which over the years I have had my fights. The Industrial Relations fronts, Environmental fronts, but I must say that there is not sufficient recognition of the way in which significant sections of the Mining Industry and Robert, of course is an outstanding example of this in which they have understood not simply in terms of what they have perceived as their self-interest, but in moral terms, the obligation that industry has to the aboriginal people in general and to supporting the process of reconciliation in particular and I think that Robert and those like him deserve particular recognition for their support.

You will notice that I haven't been political in my comments and I don't intend to.....
End.

APPENDIX 12

**SENATOR ADEN RIDGEWAY'S SPEECH TO THE SENATE
On Tuesday, September 25, 2001**

Senator Aden Ridgeway

**Adjournment Speech:
Australia Deliberates – Reconciliation: Where to from here?**

Tuesday 25th September 2001

Thankyou Madam President,

I rise tonight to bring to the Senate's attention a document that I believe will play an important part in the social history of our nation, particularly in relation to the way we continue to deal with the challenge of achieving and promoting Reconciliation.

Australia Deliberates – Reconciliation: Where to from Here is the final report resulting from an unprecedented series of deliberations on reconciliation conducted by the organisation, Issues Deliberation Australia. Senators may recall that Australia's first Deliberative Poll was conducted by this same organisation in 1999 at the rime of the referendum on the Republic.

I am sure many of my colleagues in both Houses of Parliament would recall the weekend deliberations on reconciliation that took place here in Canberra at Old Parliament House earlier this year. This process, which saw a group of 350 Australians taken from a national random sample come together to deliberate the issue of Reconciliation, generated this report. In addition, the film *Without Prejudice* was produced, which followed the process of this series of deliberations in communities across Australia, culminating in the Canberra weekend. This film was recently shown here in Parliament House, and is also expected to be screened by SBS in coming months.

This final report that I speak on today includes:

- § analysis of the many data sets collected throughout the research project;
- § the pre-deliberation survey results of the national random sample of 1220 Australians;
- § the post deliberation survey results of the 350 representative Australians who deliberated in Canberra;
- § the pre-deliberation survey results of the 300 Indigenous Australians from around the country; and
- § the post-deliberation survey results of this group;
- § as well as analyses of their 25 focus group discussions.

This second Australian Deliberative Polling research venture built upon strong international precedents. Seventeen previous Deliberative Polls, conducted in the United States, Great Britain, Denmark and Australia,

provide clear and dramatic testimony to the powerful role of balanced information and education in national decision-making.

Voters who have had the opportunity to consider competing arguments on an issue and to have their questions answered by a diverse range of experts and advocates, process information differently and hence reach different conclusions than those that do not get this opportunity.

I was approached by Issues Deliberation Australia to table this report as someone who was involved in the deliberation process on the issue of Reconciliation. The weekend was not only a unique and informative experience for me, but identified some important issues about how we form opinions on issues such as Reconciliation, and related issues such as an apology or treaty between indigenous and non indigenous Australians.

Therefore, I was happy to support the tabling of the report, as I feel it is important for representatives of all political parties to be made aware of the types of issues discussed in this process. It also gives us a chance to appreciate the way in which the participants' opinions changed once they were given the chance to meet Indigenous people and get more specific information on issues such as reconciliation.

This research project combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians about reconciliation. The research was conducted between November 2000 and June 2001, and was designed to facilitate the voice of indigenous Australians and the voice of the general population of Australian population.

A team of researchers convened focus groups and conducted surveys with indigenous Australians in every state and territory, and conducted a national survey of the general population. The research culminated in a national deliberative poll on the weekend of February 16-18. This involved 344 representative Australians and 46 regional Australians who had completed the initial surveys.

They came together to learn more about the issue, to question experts, advocates and community leaders on a variety of aspects of the reconciliation dialogue, and to debate their own personal views with their peers. Their informed opinions provided valuable information to those designing and implementing programs relating to reconciliation.

Indigenous Australians across the country sent a strong consistent message about their perceptions of the relative disadvantage of their people, and what they hope to see done to address the disadvantage in the next five years.

Symbolic gestures of reconciliation were universally perceived by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to be the foundation of lasting reconciliation. With 90% of respondents in agreement, Indigenous Australians believe the following issues are crucial to the Reconciliation process:

- formal acknowledgement of their true place in Australian history and Australia's future;
- acknowledgement of being unfairly treated in the past;
- a formal apology to their people who were forcefully removed from their families; and
- compensation paid to those same people.

The Indigenous participants also want more concrete symbols of reconciliation, including:

- § legal structures to enhance reconciliation;
- § a treaty between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians;
- § special seats in parliament for Indigenous Australians;
- § formalization of a hybrid system which integrates our national legal system with Indigenous laws; and
- § the granting of Native Land Title to continue.

Indigenous Australians consulted were virtually unanimous in their desire to see more education in all Australian schools about Indigenous cultures and experience, and greater recognition of the Indigenous history of the Australian continent prior to 1788.

Many also wanted a more inclusive Australia Day – a national day when *all* Australians could join together in celebration, not one that is divisive, in remembrance of ‘invasion’.

In terms of specific measures to address the disadvantage, Indigenous Australians recognise the role they must play in the improvement of their own life situations. They recognise the need to heal divisions among their own people, and then to educate non-indigenous Australians about indigenous culture and history.

They also recognise the need to move forward in empowerment, with education of their own people being perceived as the key priority for Government spending in the next five years.

Health was the next priority, with growing awareness of the devastating affects of disease and substance abuse on current and future generations of indigenous Australians.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the results was the clear demarcation in opinions according to age, education, geography and political affiliation.

Following deliberation, younger Australians, more educated Australians, and Australians living in capital cities, were more observant of Indigenous disadvantage.

This greater acknowledgement of Indigenous disadvantage correlated highly with the tendency to agree to an official government apology, a treaty, native title, a hybrid legal system and payment to the stolen generations.

Prior to deliberations, Coalition and ALP supporters were starkly different. Comprehensive deliberation tended to negate that political divide, with opinions converging on key aspects of reconciliation.

Regardless of these ‘gaps’, the informed voice of the general population of Australians was a far less divided and ambivalent voice than the pre-deliberation uninformed voice.

In general, informed representative Australians revised their perceptions of how important the issue of reconciliation is to the nation, and how disadvantaged Indigenous Australians are in comparison to their non-indigenous counterparts. Fuelling these changes in perceptions, were dramatic increases in levels of political knowledge, and knowledge of the life situations of their fellow Australians on major indicators.

The change in opinion that was recorded by the majority of participants in the deliberations (ie the opinion they gave on an issue before and after the deliberations weekend) was particularly stark on a number of key issues. One example was on the question of an apology, where the percentage of those in favour of an apology being given to Indigenous Australians increased from 46% to 68%.

On the question of the recognition of Native Title, the figure also grew quite dramatically, from 78% in favour to 91%.

However, on some issues, such as the question of a treaty or series of agreements, the number only increased from 46% to 63%, a figure that perhaps reflects the fact that most Australians are still somewhat unsure or uncomfortable with that a treaty might result in.

Conclusion

In terms of government focus for the future: following deliberation, support for education as the key priority rose significantly from 42% to 59%, while health, unemployment and housing all dropped by an average of 10%. Education was seen as the key to addressing all disadvantage among Indigenous Australians – something for us all to think about.

I would encourage Members and Senators from all political parties to read this final report.

I have said on many occasions that the achievement of real and lasting reconciliation is an ongoing process. I regard this report, and the process that lead to its tabling here today, as yet another important step on that reconciliation path. I believe it has identified the importance of us taking the time to educate ourselves about each other's opinions and perspectives on issues relating to not only reconciliation, but the place Indigenous culture plays on our past, our present and our future.

Thank you.