

# Citizen's Jury

A Citizen Jury is a panel made up of a randomly selected and demographically diverse group of people (Jurors) who listen to and examine information on complex issues. Witnesses (representatives on the issues being explored) present their case to the Jury and respond to questions. The Jury deliberates on the information presented to them and decide on recommendations they will put to decision makers. A Citizen's Jury works well where there is a critical need to provide a transparent and democratic tool to support a decision making process. The characteristic of a Citizen Jury are:

## **REPRESENTATIVE**

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

## **INFORMED**

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

## **IMPARTIAL**

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

## **DELIBERATIVE**

The jury deliberates in a variety of formats and is given time to ensure that all of the jurors' opinions are considered.

(Jefferson Centre, 2006)

## What is to be achieved?

A Citizen Jury is assigned a task known to all involved as “the charge or remit” which usually takes the form of a question or series of questions that the jurors will address and answer. The charge defines the scope of the jury's work and will guide the jurors and the testimony of the witnesses.

The charge is one of the most critical pieces to the success of a Citizen's Jury project and needs to be crafted in consultation with the sponsors of the jury and an Advisory Committee. Great care is taken to ensure that the charge is neither too broad nor too narrow and it does not direct the jury towards a particular outcome. The jury may choose to go beyond the charge, but if they do, they need to outline the reasons for doing so. The charge questions are top priority for the jury. The charge focuses the jury on the issue and provides a framework for their recommendations.

## What is the format?

The format for the Jury process will depend on the complexity of “the charge” and the geographic area likely to be impacted by the Jury recommendations. A local Jury may be capable of hearing a “charge” that is not too complex within a day or two. The Citizen's Jury held in Adelaide to answer the charge “How can we ensure we have a vibrant and safe Adelaide nightlife?” took 5 days over three weekends to complete their task.

A “charge” that relates to an extensive geographic area, may require a series of preliminary Citizen Jury sessions in a number of locations followed by a final Citizen's Jury to review all the information presented before they can make their final recommendations. An example of this type was the Citizens Jury that was held across [Western Australia](#) to seek recommendations from everyone about how they wanted to be engaged with special reference to water supply and demand as a case study.

## On-line use of the tool?

The use of an on-line tool to support and complement a Citizen's Jury process (such as the Better Together [yousay.sa.gov.au](https://yousay.sa.gov.au) site) increases the level of participation in the process and allows a broad audience to keep track of how the jury is going about the process. This on-line access increases transparency in the decision making process.

## What to consider?

- Consider the cost** Conducting a Citizen Jury is a resource intensive process and one of the main challenges is securing funding as the cost can range from \$3,500 for a very basic one-day Jury, \$100,000 for a standard Jury and \$400,000+ for a regional Jury
- Consider sponsors** The “sponsor” or funder for the Jury may be a government department or agency; or a partner to tiers of government, non-government agencies, not-for-profits or private corporations
- Keeping the jury impartial** The integrity of the process is critical to the success of the Jury. This is achieved through the appointment of an impartial project team and an Advisory Committee including representatives from the community who are not aligned to or have an interest in “the charge”. The main role of the committee is to craft “the charge”, the agenda for the hearing and the witness list. The selection of the Advisory Committee brings its own challenges and will require careful management
- Consider the time** A Citizen Jury takes between 4-5 months to plan and can take between 1-5 days to complete generally over a number of weekends
- Maintain transparency** The use of a random survey to select the jury pool is an essential part of the Citizens Jury process and is usually managed by a research company to maintain the transparency and impartiality
- Consider selection criteria** Time and specific criteria is required for the selection of the witness list to ensure a variety of perspectives are represented, and the jurors become fully informed about the issues in a balanced and impartial manner
- Select quality facilitators** Two skilled facilitators are required for each Jury session to lead the Jury through the process and keep them on track with “the charge”; and to provide feedback to one another on how to improve the jury experience

# How to use the Citizen's Jury tool?

## Before the session

- secure a sponsor
- recruit a project team
- set up an Advisory Committee
- select a venue and arrange catering
- prepare a Media Release to notify the general public of the Citizen Jury project and how they might be involved
- promote the Citizen Jury process through news media, website, word-of-mouth, local networks, and social networking such as Twitter
- conduct a random selection process to select Jurors
- notify Jurors of their selection
- establish “the charge”
- prepare an agenda
- select witnesses and prepare a witness presentation list
- send information packs to Jurors and Witnesses and provide general information for the public
- brief support staff and provide up-skilling for Moderators
- Follow up with Jurors and Witnesses a week before the Citizen Jury
- set up the venue and welcome Jurors, Witnesses and members of the public who may want to observe proceedings

## During the sessions

- commence proceedings (and all this entails) for the required number of days
- plan for next session with the jurors and conclude the session

## After the sessions

- follow up with Jurors, Witnesses and the Advisory Committee for feedback on the process
- debrief with the project team
- prepare a Media Release on the progress of the Citizen's Jury
- after the final session send the unedited report to the jurors, witnesses and decision makers

## Resource Required?

- funding
- office space for the project team
- meeting space for the Advisory Committee and for the Citizen Jury sessions
- possible accommodation and travel expenses for people involved who live outside metropolitan Adelaide
- staff costs and reimbursements to Jurors, Witnesses, Moderators and Advisory Committee
- project staff to plan, implement and wind up the process
- human resource management of all the contributors
- telephone survey
- data projector/laptop/screen/whiteboard/printer
- large, flexible, comfortable venue including conference room, meeting rooms and reception area, tables and chairs
- catering requirements over a number of days
- handout materials including information packs for Jurors, Witnesses and Advisory Committee, pens, paper
- information about translation of information for CALD groups as required
- information in alternative formats (as required) such as audio cassettes, Braille, large print, illustrated print

## How to Evaluate?

- allow opportunities for Jurors to provide verbal feedback throughout the process and at the conclusion of the Citizen's Jury and ask them and the Witnesses to complete a written evaluations throughout the process
- assess the overall satisfaction with the process by the jury, project team, Advisory Committee, facilitators and witnesses and use the feedback to make improvements to future Citizen Jury sessions
- consider conducting pre and post process evaluation surveys

### Case Study – How can we ensure we have a vibrant and safe Adelaide nightlife?

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

Jury reached is that Adelaide nightlife is already vibrant and safe when compared with similar cities interstate and overseas. Therefore their commendations are mostly concerned with how to make Adelaide nightlife more vibrant and safer than the current situation.

## Tips and helpful hints

<b>Media coverage</b>	Encourage active media coverage to help demonstrate the transparency of the process and to keep the general public informed of proceedings – be aware of organisation communication protocols and use to plan communication strategies
<b>Advisory committee</b>	Include individuals on the Advisory Committee from a variety of perspectives in the planning stages of a Citizen's Jury project, to ensure the final agenda and witness list covers a wide range of relevant opinions and perspectives
<b>Jury demographics</b>	Five demographic variables and one attitudinal variable are usually used to create a representative jury. The traditional demographic categories used are age, gender, educational attainment, race, and geographic location within the community
<b>Alternate Jurors</b>	Alternate Jurors are recruited just in case someone has to drop out at the last minute
<b>Juror payment</b>	A "stipend" or fee is paid to Jurors to encourage commitment to the process and to compensate for time off work or expenses incurred
<b>Staff time</b>	Staff time is the single most significant cost of a Citizen's Jury project – be mindful of how staff time is used during the process
<b>Limitations</b>	There are limitations to what can be address successfully in a Citizen Jury, "don't bite off more than you can chew" – be mindful of how much information jurors can digest in a limited amount of time and how this may affect their capacity to make decisions
<b>Juror list</b>	Don't publish the Juror list until the first day of deliberations to avoid lobbying by Witnesses
<b>Debriefing</b>	Hold a debrief meeting at the end of each day with Jurors and support staff to check how things are going and fine tune where necessary in preparation for the next day
<b>Guidelines</b>	Provide clear guidelines for Witnesses on the Juries expectations and check on audio/visual requirements of witnesses
<b>Additional communication</b>	Consider a podcast for the Citizen Jury or set up a Twitter account for the duration of the sessions

### Support References

1. **Citizen Jury Handbook, Jefferson Centre (2004)** [www.jefferson-center.org](http://www.jefferson-center.org)
2. **Citizen's Juries conducted through the Better Together Program** [www.yoursay.sa.gov.au/decisions/outcomes](http://www.yoursay.sa.gov.au/decisions/outcomes)
3. **newDemocracy Foundation** [www.newdemocracy.com.au](http://www.newdemocracy.com.au)