

# Enabling participatory and deliberative governance: Institutional design and organisational capacity for local government

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# Managing the challenges and opportunities in implementing participatory governance practices in Victoria

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# Deliberative Democracy Now!



*Madison*

## The Federalist No. 10

The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection (continued)

It is one of the chief objects of this government to secure the public good by controlling the effects of faction. A faction is a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and act together, by an impulse of a common interest, passion, or inclination, in such manner as to disregard or injure the rights of other citizens.

## References

1. James Madison, "The Federalist No. 10," in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. James Madison, (New York: Penguin Classics, 1964), pp. 124-164.
2. James Madison, "The Federalist No. 10," in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. James Madison, (New York: Penguin Classics, 1964), pp. 124-164.
3. James Madison, "The Federalist No. 10," in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. James Madison, (New York: Penguin Classics, 1964), pp. 124-164.
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Participatory forms of policy making are seen as a way of addressing distrust in elected representatives, and building social capital;

‘... involving people in the hard, rationing choices of politics in the context of a shared sense of citizenship is a way of delivering a more mature and sustainable democracy.’

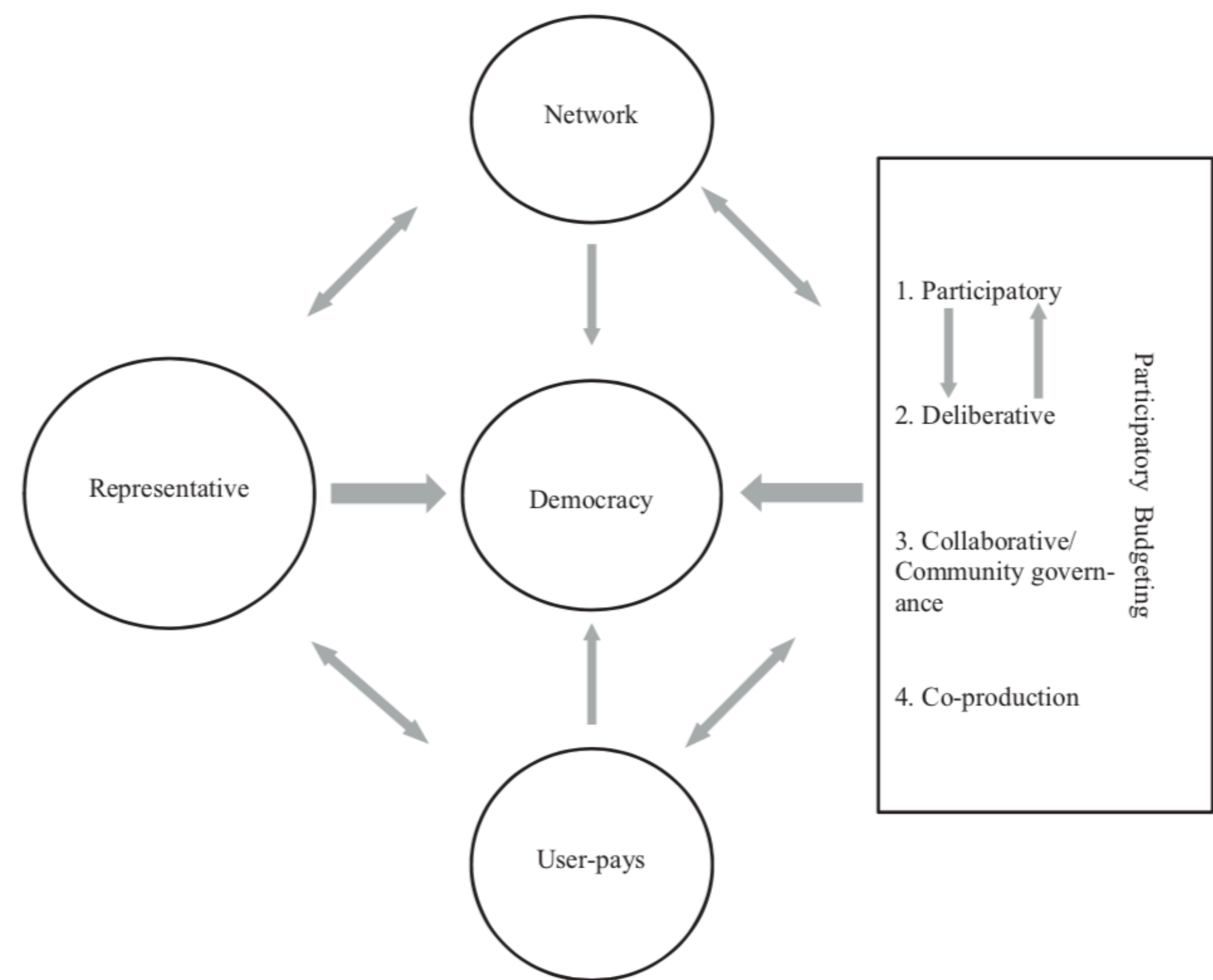
(Stoker 2004, p.122)



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# Types of Democracy in Local Government



Source: Christensen and Grant (2016) adapted from Haus and Sweeting (2006) and Grant et al. (2014:7-8).



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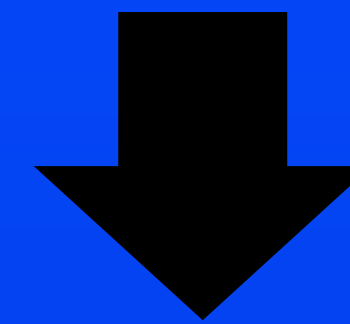


## **Local Government (Best Value Principles) Act 1999**

208B(e) Council must develop a program of regular consultation with its community in relation to the services it provides

## **Local Government (Democratic Reform) Bill 2003**

“community engagement is implied rather than explicit”  
(Grant and Drew 2017, p. 229)



## **Exposure Draft Local Government Act**

8(d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making



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## Research Questions:

What external conditions and authorising environments enable participatory governance practice?

What internal organisational structures and cultures support participatory governance practice?

How can these enabling conditions, structures and cultures be developed and actively embedded in government agencies?



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# Local Government Act Reform

“As the level of government closest to the people, councils have both the opportunity and arguably the responsibility to enable participatory democracy”  
(Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016, p. 60)

**Local Government Act Directions Paper:**  
Require councils to undertake a deliberative community engagement process before adopting a four-year council plan

11 directions referred to a “deliberative community engagement process” without providing a definition of what this inferred





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## Democracy in Local government

‘In exercising local choice or in expressing local voice, a local authority is justified by the fact of local election ... In the election the citizens choose councillors to speak and act on their behalf – that is the starting point for local democracy’

(Stewart 1991, p. 27)



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## Authorising Environments

‘empowered participation may demand unrealistically high levels of popular commitment, especially in contemporary climates of civic and political disengagement’

(Fung & Wright 2003, p. 33)

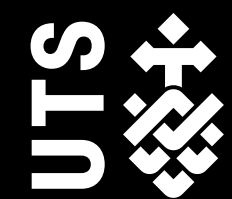


## Authorising Environments

‘the state-local power nexus given that much of the reserved powers remain with the state governments.’  
(Aulich 2009, p. 50)

‘local governments appear poorly placed to assume the type of leadership required to advance participatory governance.’  
(Aulich 2009, p. 56)

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## Organisational capacity

Much of the work of deliberative democracy has been conceptually, rather than practice, focused and therefore has failed to detail or evaluate institutional designs to advance values of deliberation and citizen empowerment.  
(Fung and Wright 2001)

Key institutional design features:

- Administrative and political devolution of power to local action units;
- Centralised supervision and coordination
- Ability to transform existing state institutions

(Fung and Wright 2003, p. 20)



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## Organisational capacity

The greatest shift in role in a service integrated approach to co-production is that of the public service. No longer are they the “experts”. Their role is now that of steward ensuring an equitable distribution of resources, boundary spanner and educator and innovator ... [this shift] requires a different approach with diverse skills and abilities.

(Dewey et al. 2019, p 18)




## What will participatory governance practice look like in Victorian local government by 2021?

In 2021 all 79 Victorian councils will develop their first Council Plans and Budgets under the conditions of the new Local Government Act which mandates that they are developed ‘in collaboration with community’ within a set of prescriptive community engagement principles.

How they each approach this task remains to be seen.

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