

Voice 4

Indi

REFLECTIONS

From the public meeting in Benalla held in November 2013

This document outlines the feedback provided at a public meeting held in Benalla in November 2013. Participants were asked to comment on what they value about Voice for Indi that can direct activities in the future.

Voice for Indi is a response to the need for reenergized but respectful political debate and provides a process to connect the community's voice to our elected representatives.

Voice for Indi is an incorporated not-for-profit voluntary community organization. Formed in 2012 by a group of twelve residents of North East Victoria, support ballooned to almost seven hundred people during the 2013 Federal election, all with a desire to redirect political focus back onto our region and to strengthen relationships between the community and government.

Voice for Indi's overarching goal is to help develop an active 21st century democracy based on positive civic engagement, respect, and innovative ideas. Voice for Indi generates constructive conversations about politics and democracy in our communities, knowing that doing so helps develop grassroots visionary

leadership that will ultimately deliver for our region.

This is achieved by:

- encouraging all people to have access to, and an engagement with the political process, irrespective of their political allegiance
- supporting young people who are new voters to have genuine opportunities to participate in their democracy
- providing an environment to encourage a range of strong and competitive political candidates

Voice for Indi is committed to values that ensure its transparent and honest actions and decisions.

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INCLUSIVENESS AND EMPOWERING DIFFERENT VOICES

reconnecting with the true meaning of democracy • having a voice representative in politics • road trips to where people live • makes people feel they matter • felt included and valued • empowerment through participation and contribution • views were heard • people could confidently put issues forward and be taken seriously • first time people had been asked what they thought through kitchen table conversation, door knocking, meetings • interested connected and staying involved • we were invited to participate • freedom to engage as we choose and express creativity • enabled skills • v4i needs to actively engage with people of all positions • empowering us to make our voices stronger and heard at all levels across all platforms • everyone's contributions accepted • everyone could get involved at a range of levels • difference voices enfranchised • individual strengths were utilised and were personal initiatives • learnt the important of diversity with young people • extend the time frame next time • really valued the engagement of young people and appreciated their contribution • created community • diversity was valued • inclusiveness • diversity of views • valuing diverse opinion • inclusive of people of all ages • we felt like a community • older people were inspired by younger people's involvement • young and old people felt heard and listened to • inclusiveness • meeting likeminded people • feeling welcome • everyone found a role regardless of skills • empowering to make a difference • inclusive participation creating engagement and belonging • respectful conversations • being heard • reconnected with what it is to be Australian again • flat structure, non-hierarchical • inclusiveness • respectful



The V4i process was inclusive, welcoming, respectful and empowering. It created a diverse community of differing ages, viewpoints and skills, who were invited to participate, have conversations, get involved and be creative. People were asked what they thought and were listened to respectfully. People saw the strength of diversity and inclusiveness and the importance of respectful engagement.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

confirmation of where v4i stands politically with federal, state and local • national interest and scrutiny



There is national interest and scrutiny on what occurred in Ind.

MAINTAINING OUR VALUES

across the generations • living out the values • values statement: permission and containment • review and test current principles and values • maintain core principles and values • valued v4i underpinned everything we did • the call for respect • values are aligned with a broad range of people • building and maintaining trust • respect for other views • maintaining respect as a discipline • keep creativity, trust, V4i with values, little bit of chaos, fun and food, celebration



The V4i core values statement gave people permission and the discipline to build and maintain trust and respect for others views and a framework for engagement.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

people discovered it was important and okay to take risks, ie: door knocking, having conversations with friends • we started a process of resilience building • we learned where the boundary of Indi is • active learning • learnt how the political process of preferential voting work • education events held in Wodonga about the voting process and distribution of preferences • process of election inspiring and educational • process • worked in Indi, what about elsewhere? • keep learning about the political process and effective use of this process • reaffirmed confidence in a democracy and political systems/processes • learned about the process and that it's simple to follow • we have become skilled campaigners • learning about political process and our own communities • preferential voting system • scrutineering • translating interest into action • education and political system processes relevant and appropriate



The V4i process created opportunities for people to learn about our local area, take risks, have conversations, build resilience, translate interest into action and learn the practicalities of the political and election process. New skills were forged, confidence gained in individual and community involvement and a reaffirmation in the democratic process.

BRAND

ensure V4i get the views of the electorate and also disseminates information from Canberra – a two way information exchange • merchandise created connections – added value • open conversations • high profile • visibility of the campaign • very well orchestrated campaign • managing stumbling blocks • campaign had its own positive persona • making our electorate a living entity/identity



The V4i branding, logo, posters, t-shirts and orange gave a sense of belonging, was very visible, created connections and helped shape the campaign.

VALUES AND FUTURE

converted from pessimism to optimism • this time my vote counts • sense of hope for the future • supporting a viable alternative • hope • courage to move • courage to articulate • change is possible • working together hope and possibility • we were useful • ability to make a difference • ordinary people can create change • transformation of our own self perception • ability to make a difference – away from party politics and outrageous behaviour • adapt model to meet future needs • challenge of maintaining the model and to keep the momentum • very loose structures with achievable values and goals • coordinated information flow with Cathy through maybe bi-monthly forums • being open and flexible to new ways of doing things – keep it fresh • maintain and increase momentum



There was a sense of hope for the future and awareness that change is possible. We learned that by working together with courage, respect and with achievable goals, ordinary people could make a difference.

FUN, EXCITEMENT AND FRIENDSHIPS

excitement • we felt good and gave off good vibes • we met more like-minded people • we met more people! (not always like-minded) • proud to be involved – to put on orange • gained new friendships with like-minded people • excitement and enthusiasm, gradual build up in local media • positive attitude • Oxley party evidence of this • existing networks as basis • new networks arising • open door – easy for people to join in • creating new friendships, contacts, acquaintances in the region • we like the good energy we see - we'll vote for it • fun in politics • keeping it fun and creative with snap rallies and singing



Meeting new people, like-minded or not, networking our old friendships being creative, having fun, working together with excitement and enthusiasm and making it easy for new people to join in created a great visible energy that others wanted to be part of.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

the younger constituents • social media • engagement of good communication – 2 way • use of emotive effective language e.g. grassroots, community, Cathy is local, local, reasons for living/proud of country • importance of regular communication • an open communication to our member in Canberra • having a range of communication tools to cover all needs • importance of social media • connection between people • expats • older people became engaged and up skilled • we learned how to tweet • social media helped with communication – 2 way • e-mails and ITC – face book and messages – keeps people up to date • outstanding use of social media • getting to a wide range of people through a variety of communication methods • promotional media versus social media very important and always positive messages • social media • cross generational • “tea and scones” campaign and social media • need for respectful competition • importance of agreed foundation of issues indentified through conversations • commonality of issues across Indi • issues, not personality • engagement/policy discussions not politics • constructive and respectful political discussion regardless of who is the member for Indi • politics was pleasant not hostile • absence of aggression • safe environment to talk about politics • non-adversarial • use social media is important • placed based communications and engagement



A wide range of people, old, young and expats, across the electorate were connected, informed and engaged through a variety of regular communication methods. It was a safe environment, for constructive and respectful political discussion. There was an outstanding use of

social media that encouraged youth to be involved, older people to learn how to use it and allowed access to the media.

FINDING A LOCAL VOICE FOR LOCAL ISSUES

learn - we need the right person • walk the talk of V4i values • strength of candidate • local • family • gained voice in Canberra • local voice • community links • champions • local presence very important • do more of the same • the importance of keeping voice for Indi • Formal process place based to raise issues such as disability and mental health • focus on local



We need a local voice with strong community links who can walk the talk of V4i values.

THE FUTURE

data analysis to engage more people as it really was narrowly won • tapping into some talent with young people • getting people with young families involved via mentoring • this group here today is essentially the middle class, we need to go to other communities or organisations that support them • being heard engages people of all ages and demographics • people are willing to work hard when they see and feel a hope for change and the benefit • gains community, home, inclusivity, despite political background • future common ground having a character global commitment

to big ideas, visionary building structure to ensure • don't push agenda supporting the vulnerable • recognising disempowered groups within our electorate • building their capacity to have a voice • utilise the institutions in existence to tap onto their concerns and needs • increase connectivity within community so that each person feels worthwhile and valued in society • getting the engagement of lower socio-economic and vulnerable groups



There is a need to be inclusive, to connect and engage with disempowered groups, young people, lower socio economic groups to build their capacity to have a voice. Being heard engages people of all ages and demographics and they are willing to work hard when they can see a hope for change and benefit. We need to support big ideas, visionary thinking and connect the community so that each person feels worthwhile and valued.