

The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

George Thomson
Chair
September 9, 2006

Ontario's Citizens' Assembly

Agenda

Part One – Getting Started

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. The Assembly: Overview & Introduction
3. The Secretariat
4. The Public Observers
5. The Chair of the Assembly
6. The Importance of the Assembly's Work
7. Schedule and Timelines: Working to a fixed deadline
8. The Consultation Phase
9. Logistics
10. Making the Process Work

Part Two – Working Together

1. Mandated Procedures
2. Proposed Rules of Procedure
3. Shared Values

Part One: Getting Started

1. Welcome & Introduction

- The uniqueness of the Assembly
- First time in Ontario
- Assembly is a reflection of our province
- Engagement with guaranteed influence
- A new way to practise our democracy
- An issue of fundamental importance

2. The Assembly

a. Committed to the task

- The decision to respond
- The selection process
- Giving real time to learn, consult, decide

b. Who you are:

- 50% male and 50% female
- geographic representation

Your Age Profile

Age Cohorts

	18-24	25-39	40-54	55-70	70+
Ontario's Population	12%	29%	30%	17%	12%
Citizens' Assembly Members	11%	22%	31%	24%	12%

- Some of you told us where you were born:
 - In Canada:
 - 50 in Ontario, 8 in other provinces
 - England, Germany, Malta, Sri Lanka, Italy, Serbia, Ghana, Nigeria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, Philippines, Dubai, Greece and Korea
- The languages you told us you speak:
 - English, French, Urdu, Maltese, Dutch, Tagalog, Bengali, Hindi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Italian, Portuguese, Tamil, Arabic
- You range in age from 18 to 70+



metallurgical engineer * retired high school principal * student of peace & conflict studies * hospital worker * retired payroll & benefits administrator * banking team leader * cellular phone store manager * retired bus driver & merchandiser * software company account manager * senior technology project manager * homemaker * retired high school teacher & dental office manager * retired accounting professor * labour & employment lawyer * college teacher * business school graduate * artist & Reiki practitioner * retired public servant * union administrator * childcare provider * retired personnel manager * sociology sociology student * research scientist * aspiring corporate lawyer * retired public school teacher * retired industrial engineer * * floral wholesale account manager * retired data entry clerk * radio dispatcher * revenue collection supervisor * land use planner * customer service representative * Indian café partner * forklift operator * retired English teacher * retired university university career counsellor * federal public servant * continuing care provider * counsellor for abused women & children * construction worker * semi-retired registered nurse * biology & psychology student * teacher * childcare provider * aerospace aerospace industry worker * history student * professional actor * retired English and science teacher * customer service representative * retired computer services employee * secondary school student * pest control business owner * journalist and and public servant * retired criminologist * information technology specialist * journalism student * health care instructor * private school teacher * medical transcription student * long-term care facility worker * quality assurance analyst * information information technology coordinator * retired MP assistant * entrepreneur & former shop teacher * community and school council volunteer * freelance translator * senior banking application developer * financial analyst * cake decorating student * hotel night auditor * retired school teacher * city building inspector * insurance broker information technology specialist * retired retired information technology manager & programmer * business student * civics teacher * home daycare operator * high school teacher * retired business owner * retired information technology specialist * licensed plumber * printing business owner owner * furniture designer * semi-retired realtor * finance supervisor * research assistant * software application & business process specialist * producer & writer * pharmaceutical company employee * former banker * database manager * retired real real estate appraiser * carpentry apprentice * retired newspaper editor * caregiver * retired social worker * retired mine employee * psychology student * childcare provider * hotel guest services representative * retired teacher * entrepreneur * content editor for legal publisher *

**You reflect well the diversity that is
Ontario**

**An assembly of citizens, not the
representatives of particular citizens**

The Secretariat Team



Kelly Burke



Karen Cohl



Carole Brosseau



Tiana Pollari



Carol Fleming



Michael MacKenzie



Mark Lyons



Jonathan Rose



Barry Koen-Butt



Jennifer Gough



Huma Pabani



Rick Yee



Dahlia Klinger



Susan Pigott

3. The Secretariat

Role:

- To facilitate and support your work
- To enable you to learn, consult, deliberate
- To support your work, not to do your work – ensuring this is your decision

Role in Proceedings



Karen Cohl
Executive Director



Jonathan Rose
Academic Director



Susan Pigott
Executive Lead, Citizen Engagement

Facilitators



Sarah Newman



Michael MacKenzie



Mark Lyons



Alice Ormiston



Kristin Skinner



Gordon DiGiacomo



Louise Hayes



Marielle Bérubé¹³

Public Observers

4. The Public

- Public and media are welcome to observe plenary sessions

5. The Chair of the Assembly

Role:

- Preside over meetings
- Prepare rules of procedure
- May choose deputy chairs (unlikely)
- May not vote unless a tie (unlikely)

Performing that role:

- The Chair serves the Assembly
- Getting you to your decision
- Getting you there on schedule and on time
- Keeping you as excited, committed, passionate as you now are
- Keeping you on mandate
 - The way we vote, how votes are counted, number and size of ridings, the size of the Legislature
 - VS.
 - campaign financing; parliamentary procedures, etc...

Quel est notre mandat?

- D'évaluer le système électorale actuel de l'Ontario et différents systèmes électoraux;
- De faire une recommandation sur si l'Ontario devrait conserver son système électoral actuel ou en adopter un autre;
- Enfin, l'assemblée termine ses travaux et présente au ministre un rapport en français et en anglais qui contient ses recommandations au plus tard le 15 mai, 2007.

It isn't over until it is over

- Don't take positions too early
- Avoid fixed positions; remain open to new ideas
- Learn and listen before deciding
- Decisions can be revisited until the final one

6. The importance of the Assembly's work

a. Electoral System

- How our votes are translated into seats in the Legislature
- Its relevance to Ontario in 2006

b. A New Model of Citizen Engagement

- Process as important as the result
- Engagement to rebuild interest in democracy
- A direct and powerful citizen voice
- Considering and deciding a complex but basic element of our democracy

- **A unique form of engagement:**
 - Time to learn
 - Consensus through dialogue
 - Direct access to the electorate

If we make the process work, we will have succeeded, whatever we decide

7. Horaire et dates limites: Nous travaillons vers une date spécifique

- le 15 mai, 2007: Un rapport qui contient nos recommandations sera remis au ministre
- Si l'assemblée recommande l'adoption d'un système électoral différent, ce système doit être décrit d'une façon claire et détaillée

What does this mean?

- We know our report is due on May 15, 2007
- My role as chair – keeping you on schedule
- Overlapping stages
- Working groups / advisory committees
- Review of draft documents, not drafting by committee
- Keeping up; using technology; learning with and from one another
- The holiday break is important

8. The Consultation Phase

- Must start before learning phase is over
- Limited time

What does this mean?

- Begin addressing it today
- Some limit on number of public meetings
- Early, creative planning
- Approving a consultation document
- Unique approaches to citizen engagement

9. Logistics

- Surveys – The importance of feedback
- Open Assembly; recording the process
- La traduction simultanée
- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters
- Chair and Secretariat always reachable

10. Making the Process Work

- It will take time to learn; it will look hard before it looks easier
- Ask for whatever it takes to make it work for you
- Seek help early if having difficulties
- No alternates contemplated after this weekend
 - stick with it
- Be active learners – teaching and helping one another
 - we support your learning
- Informal time important
 - Time management

- Consider Working Groups on Electoral Systems issues:
 - Parties
 - Representation
 - Stability of government
 - Gender
- Consider Procedural Advisory Committees:
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Consultation submissions
 - Planning for deliberation
 - Structure and content of report
- Have fun

- The power of adults coming together to learn and decide together
- The incredible experience and knowledge contained in this room

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

**Any comments or questions from
Assembly members?**

**Questions ou commentaires des
membres de l'assemblée?**

Part Two: Working Together

1. Mandated Procedures

- Majority vote
- Open assembly meetings
- Smaller subgroups need not be open to the public
- Simultaneous interpretation on request

2. Proposed rules of procedure

- Common sense and reasonableness
- Organized but informal process
- Regular open forums or question periods
- 50% quorum
- Chair summarizing consensus decisions – Assembly members may request a vote
- Voting: show of hands – secret ballot possible
- Chair, with Assembly, to decide when a vote is final
 - Until then, nothing is final
- Decisions recorded through meeting notes

- Discussion groups each weekend – membership changes
- Voluntary working groups and advisory committees
- Open Assembly meetings
- Observers observe only
- One open discussion group – voluntary
- Assembly may create larger private discussion groups
- Rules of procedure may be reviewed and reconsidered

Proposal:

The rules of procedure be adopted, recognizing that they can be changed or added to as our work progresses.

3. Shared Values

- Modelling a unique style of citizen engagement
- How we get to our decision will enable us all to support it
- How should we conduct ourselves and what do we expect from each other?

Developing a list of shared values

- How we will 'walk the talk' and support one another
- Small group discussion of most important values, most important attitudes and actions
- Build a list – A shared code of conduct