

Mr Ryan Batchelor MP
Member for Southern Metropolitan
Chair, Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee
281 Centre Road
Bentleigh, VIC 3204

15 September 2025

By email: ryan.batchelor@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Ryan Batchelor MP,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee on 22 August 2025, as part of the Inquiry into Community Consultation Practices. We note that there are no material changes required to the draft transcript shared with us on the 1 September, 2025.

Social Ventures Australia (SVA) is a leading social impact organisation that uniquely combines consulting, impact investment, public policy and advocacy, and innovation to address systemic challenges. This integrated approach gives SVA a deep understanding of the social sector, its barriers, and the creative solutions needed to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable people in Australia. Acting as a partner and convenor, SVA brings together key ecosystem players to co-create solutions, scale successful initiatives, and build capacity across the social sector. Our work spans all life stages – from early years to education, employment, and housing – lifting barriers to access and improving participation.

SVA is committed to meaningful and authentic engagement with individuals and communities. In Australia, 1 in 4 people experience disadvantage through poverty, exclusion, or deprivation – including 761,000 children. Our community consultation principles are grounded in openness and transparency, respect and authenticity, reciprocity of value and learning, and capable and informed staff. These principles guide our work to ensure that consultation is not only inclusive but also impactful.

The remainder of this letter shares SVA's formal response to the questions taken on notice during the Inquiry, using examples where appropriate.

Formal Response to Questions Taken on Notice

Hearing date: 22/08/2025

Question taken on notice

Directed to: Simon Faivel, Director, Consulting, Social Ventures

1. p.41 – Wendy Lovell

- **Question:** Can you tell us if there has ever been a consultation that you have done where a decision has been made and the consultation has actually resulted in the overturning of that decision or a major change being made to that decision? -

- **Simon FAIVEL:** Thank you. The first thing I want to do is take some of that on notice –

Response:

The work that SVA does is fundamentally about making decisions. We do this by using data and information, especially when gathered through community consultation. If consultations provide new insights or differing views than what was hypothesised, these insights and views are captured in lessons learnt and recommendations for future projects and work. This will be highly dependent on when the consultation is taking place and the state of the project or investment.

When working with clients in early stages of a project or investment, there is more of an opportunity to overturn a decision or make major changes. This forms a majority of SVA's work in community consultation.

In a soon to be published SVA report, *Walking the Talk – What government can learn from the KJ Model*, we discuss how Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ) work with the Martu people (the Traditional Owners of a large part of the Western Deserts in Western Australia) to design and deliver programs that prioritise Martu needs in a way that is meaningful and important to them. The alternative is sticking with siloed government processes that are often ill-equipped to address the interconnected and structural nature of inequality. This example describes how significant changes in government approaches and policies can result from appropriate, long-term, consultation with the community, and subsequently change how government departments and agencies work with Martu.

2. P.45 Gaelle Broad

Question: - there are so many different forms of media today. What tools do you recommend using? Is it newspapers, is it social media, is it direct mail, is it door knocking? Are there any tools that have been more successful than others that you see? We also heard earlier how the younger age group – depending on how old you are, but 18 to 24 – is not necessarily engaging sometimes. I think they were referring to surveys, particularly, at the time, but do you have any insights into those practical tools? -

Simon FAIVEL: The first thing I want to do is take some of that on notice, just because I am sure there are some examples from my colleagues that I will be able to bring to the fore.

Response:

The following is a framework for how we, at SVA, think about community consultation, and how it has been exhibited in some recent examples. There are five components to keep in mind

1. **Know your audience.** Different age groups and communities trust different media
2. **Layer tools.** Campaigns combining online + offline methods outperform single channels
3. **Social nuance.** Tone, authenticity, and informality matter (esp. younger audiences)
4. **Direct contact.** Face-to-face, peer-to-peer, and community channels build trust (even for younger cohorts)
5. **Adapt surveys for young people.** Short, interactive or relational approaches work best

The following are some examples of where SVA has seen this work well

1. Evidence for Learning – Teaching & Learning Toolkit (2020 Impact Report)

- **Tools:** National press, social media (Twitter, LinkedIn), and professional learning networks
- **Alignment:** Audience targeting (educators), layered channels, consistent message
- **Outcome:** One of the most accessed evidence resources by Australian schools
- **Reference:** <https://www.socialventures.org.au/our-impact/building-an-evidence-movement-in-australian-education/>

2. Employer Innovation Lab – Young People with Disability (2024–25)

- **Tools:** Employer workshops, lived experience storytelling, pilot workplace changes, evaluation
- **Alignment:** Audience clarity (young people with disability), layered approach, peer-learning, adapted surveys
- **Outcome:** Policy and hiring changes across 8 employers; stronger pathways into work
- **Reference:** <https://www.socialventures.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/SVA-CYDA-Employer-Innovation-Lab-Evaluation-May-2025.pdf>

3. Gunaikurnai Joint Management – Storyline of Change (2024)

- **Tools:** Yarning at community events, stakeholder workshops, visual “storyline” resource
- **Alignment:** Culturally grounded methods (audience), layered engagement, authenticity, direct contact
- **Outcome:** Shared, co-owned five-year strategy, strengthened trust among partners.

Reference: <https://www.socialventures.org.au/our-impact/the-power-of-articulating-your-storyline-of-change/>

Thank you once again for the opportunity to present to the Committee. We look forward to seeing the findings from the Inquiry and the positive effect it can have on government practices and communities.

Simon Faivel

Director, SVA Consulting

