ToP AUSTRALASIA

Turning conversation into meaningful, productive action.

Technology of Participation (ToP™)

Practical facilitation methods, refined over more than 50 years

Why groups need ToP

Groups and organisations of every size face constant change. Staying effective depends on processes that draw on people's thinking and ideas, build shared understanding and commitment, and grow leadership at every level. The Technology of Participation (ToP™) is a body of practical methods, knowledge and values built for exactly this, used across business, government and community.

Align around purpose

Bring a group to a shared understanding of what it is working towards.

Lift team productivity

Make good use of everyone's time, with a clear path from conversation to result.

Spark fresh thinking

Tap the ideas that no single person in the room would reach alone.

> *What struck me most was how the process brings out the combined wisdom of everyone in the room. People who'd usually hang back end up contributing, and the group gets to ideas no one would have reached on their own.*
>
> **Gufran Mohammed, participant in a ToP workshop**

Curious how ToP could support your practice?

Hear about upcoming courses, intro sessions and facilitation tips.

Register your interest

Four foundational methods

Four methods sit at the core of ToP. Each gives a group a clear path from where it is to where it wants to go.

The Focused Conversation Method

A four-step conversation that moves a group from what is known, through reactions and meaning, to a decision. It is a journey from the surface to the depth of a topic.

- **Objective** *Observe*
- **Reflective** *Associate*
- **Interpretive** *Think*
- **Decisional** *Act*

The Consensus Workshop Method

Takes a group from a shared task, through many ideas, to a consensus everyone can stand behind. New relationships between ideas reveal fresh insight.

- **Context**
- **Brainstorm**
- **Organise**
- **Name**
- **Reflect**

Strategic Thinking and Planning

A series of four-hour stakeholder sessions that blend science and artistry, moving from a shared vision to a plan the people implementing it have built themselves.

- **Focus Question**
- **Practical Vision**
- **Underlying Realities**
- **Strategic Directions**
- **Action Plans**

The Action Planning Method

Turns a strategy, project idea or initiative into a focused timeline, with measurable accomplishments and clear responsibilities.

- **Victory Circle**
- **Strengths & Weaknesses**
- **Practical Actions**
- **Timeline**
- **Slogan or Logo**

Why it works

Five principles

1. **Participation**
   Everyone's thinking is genuinely expressed
2. **Inclusiveness**
   Every perspective has a place in the room
3. **Creativity**
   Tap the creative edges of a group's thinking
4. **Collaboration**
   No one person or group has a monopoly on good ideas
5. **Action**
   Move thinking and discussion into committed action

Doing, knowing and being

Doing
Process tools for facilitating collaborative thinking, planning and decision making.

Knowing
Conceptual models for leading change in behaviours, structures and cultures.

Being
Understandings that help integrate a facilitative approach into everyday roles.

The rhythm of a ToP session

Open with purpose *"purposeful focus"* ▶ **Divergent thinking** *"multiple views"* ▶ **Shared context** *"common ground"* ▶ **Convergent thinking** *"new possibilities"* ▶ **Close with commitment** *"this will make a difference"*

How ToP can support your practice

- A tested path from scattered ideas to a decision the whole group owns, in small groups and large workshops.
- A clear separation of process and content, so you can focus on how the group works while participants own what they decide.
- Methods you can learn in a short course and use straight away in meetings, workshops and planning sessions.
- A shared language and a community of accredited practitioners across Oceania and beyond.
- A pathway to ToP facilitation certification.

A long history, a living community

The Technology of Participation grew out of the work of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), an international non-profit network concerned with the human factor in personal, community and organisational development. Its network spans more than 30 countries, and its people have worked with local communities, government agencies, businesses and corporate groups for over 50 years.

1960s
ICA is established

1980s
The methods are gathered under the ToP umbrella

Since
Books published, methods applied across sectors

Today
Accredited practitioners deliver training and certification across Oceania and beyond

Your ToP community in Australasia

Accredited practitioners deliver ToP courses and facilitation across Aotearoa NZ, Australia, India, China and the Pacific.

Facilitate Aotearoa *NZ / Australia*
Michelle Rush, Nicholas Williams
www.facilitate.co.nz

Smart Meetings *Australia / China*
David Jago
www.smartmeetings.com.au

Kinnogene *Australia / China*
Tom Schwarz, Sharon Li
www.kinnogene.com.au

COrE Creators *Australia / India / Africa*
Kevin Balm, Shruti Ambegaokar, Pankaj Bhargava
www.corecreators.com

Enliven Dialogue *Australia*
Sherona Parkinson
www.enlivendialogue.com.au

Creating Eternity *Australia*
Karen Newkirk
LinkedIn profile

See how ToP could fit your practice

Hear about upcoming courses, intro sessions and facilitation tips from the ToP Australasia team.

Register your interest

or follow us on **LinkedIn**

The Technology of Participation (ToP™) is the intellectual property of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA).