

Kitchen Table Conversations

Host kit



About Voices for Canberra

Voices for Canberra is a volunteer not-for-profit group aiming to endorse a Community Independent candidate for the federal electorate of Canberra. We are your neighbours, the people you see at the local shops, at the school gate, and around the neighbourhood.

We want better representation. We want to make the electorate of Canberra a champion of Australian politics, where our candidate genuinely represents the aspirations and priorities of the community.

Why Kitchen Table Conversations?

The purpose of these Kitchen Table Conversations (KTC) is to find out what our community in Canberra values, what issues concern us and what we are looking for in our elected representatives.

KTCs are safe places where a diversity of voices is encouraged and where we listen to each other. No voice is right, and consensus does not have to be achieved.

It is an enjoyable process, where important matters are discussed in a way that ensures all voices can be heard.

Responses from each conversation are compiled into a report which will guide the activities of Voices for Canberra.

The Conversation Questions are:

- What do you love about (central) Canberra? Think about the things that you like so much that you want to see more of them.
- What issues most concern you? What could be done about this?
- Do you feel represented by your federal politicians? If not, what would you like to change?
- What do you think makes for a really good political representative?

Timeline

- June-early September 2024: Conversations take place, outputs are sent to hello@voicesofcanberra.org, and new hosts are recruited.
- September 2024: The collated report is made public.

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What is the Process?

The key steps in the Kitchen Table Conversations Process are:

1. You agree to host a Kitchen Table Conversation.
2. You invite friends, family, colleagues and people in your community who live in the federal electorate of Canberra (see map at end of this document) to join you for a Kitchen Table Conversation (see the attached invitation template), and identify a scribe to record the discussion. You might include people who live in the neighbouring electorates of Fenner or Bean; if so, their responses will be recorded separately.
3. You host the Conversation at whatever venue you choose. As the host, you will likely be the chair of the discussion, and find someone to be the scribe.
4. We encourage you to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of the KTC. This recognises and celebrates that we are on Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country.
5. Ask participants to complete the Participants List, as well as the Participant Profile (which is anonymous).
6. With the permission of the group, take a group photo for your own and Voices for Canberra's social media.
7. Go around the group to do brief introductions. Then cover the ground rules (see below in this document).
8. The host then reads out the first question. Each person has the opportunity to answer the question. You may choose to go around the circle, or use a 'popcorn' approach where a person speaks when they are ready (perhaps using a hand raise signal to show they're ready to speak). The host ensures that everyone has the opportunity to answer, if they wish; it is fine if someone wants to pass. The scribe takes notes (and capture any killer quotes). Once everyone has had their turn, move on to the next question.
9. Conclude the event by encouraging participants to host their own event (on the Participant List, they can tick to receive this host kit). The aim is to have an ongoing series of Conversations to ensure a large and representative sample of the community is heard.
10. The scribe types up their notes and you circulate these notes to participants, allowing one week for submission of corrections. You then forward to Voices for Canberra (hello@voicesforcanberra.org) and they gather the findings of all Canberra KTCs into a report.
11. The report is used to gauge the community's interests, concerns and what they are seeking in their elected representative and will be used by Voices for Canberra to guide their activities.

Post-Event Checklist:

Email the following to Voices for Canberra (hello@voicesforcanberra.org):

1. Type up the scribe's report within 24 hours after the event while the conversation is fresh. The host circulates it to all participants for any corrections. After allowing 1 week, send it to Voices for Canberra.
2. Participant List (scan, type up or send a photo).
3. Participant Profile (scan, type up or send a photo).
4. Group photo

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Kitchen Table Conversations Invitation (template)

Dear _____

Please join me and about 8 other people for a couple of hours to share ideas and opinions about what is important to the Canberra community and what sort of elected representatives we want. These Conversations are being organised by Voices for Canberra ([voicesforcanberra.org](https://www.voicesforcanberra.org)) in order to survey the issues of importance in our community and will form the basis for selecting and guiding a Community Independent candidate at the next federal election. Updates on the findings will be shared and a public report will be made available in August.

Date and time:

Place:

The *Kitchen Table Conversation* is a method of engaging the community that enables many small groups of people to strengthen our democracy and our future.

Through semi-structured conversations with our neighbours, friends and work colleagues, we can enjoyably exchange ideas and consider issues of interest and concern to us.

The *Kitchen Table Conversations* approach has recently been used to great effect, and with definite results, in Victoria and New South Wales in the 'Teal electorates.'

For more information about *Kitchen Table Conversations* visit: <https://www.vwt.org.au/projects/kitchen-table-conversations>

I hope you will be able to join us for what I know will be an interesting and enjoyable Conversation.

RSVP to Host:

Name:

Telephone:

Email:

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Kitchen Table Conversations Ground Rules

Meetings with people with good intent can still come unstuck. A simple set of ground rules can go a long way to achieving a productive Conversation. As soon as introductions are over, the host will establish the ground rules and gain agreement from all in the group. We suggest the following.

- We accept that everyone is entitled to have a say, and also to pass
- We will make the effort to listen to one another, not interrupt and wait our turn to speak
- We will try to stay on track, stick to the purpose of the conversation and end on time
- We respect people's right to their opinions even if we disagree
- We will try at all times to be constructive and always be courteous and respectful

Topic questions for the Conversation

- What do you love about (central) Canberra? Think about the things that you like so much that you want to see more of them.
- What issues most concern you? What could be done about this?
- Do you feel represented by your federal politicians? If not, what would you like to change?
- What do you think makes for a really good political representative?

Role of the Scribe

- The essence of people's ideas and opinions recorded briefly, accurately and impartially
- Be careful not to leave out any ideas and opinions -- especially ones you don't agree with!
- If people say the same thing, tick next to what you have already written
- Scribe could check/summarise with the group at the end of each question what they have said
- Whether the scribe does/doesn't participate in the conversation – is up to you
- Discuss your findings with the host straight away to get agreement
- Type up dot-points within 24 hours, indicating multiple responses on the same point
- The host emails the dot-points from your Conversation to participants for any corrections, and after 7 days, to Voices for Canberra

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Kitchen Table Conversations Scribe's Notes (template)

What do you love about Canberra...		
What issues most concern you...		

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Do you feel represented by your federal politicians...		
What do you think makes for a really good political representative?		

