



HOSTING

a conversation about
australia remade

hosting a conversation about Australia Remade

Choosing to host a conversation about Australia Remade is a powerful way to take this vision out into the world. We live the ideals of Australia Remade when we talk about the future we want, reaching to understand one another, build community, discover collective wisdom and inspire hope. If we want flourishing communities we know that we need to “think critically, build relationships, nurture creativity and listen to different perspectives” (Pillar 6 of Australia Remade).

So why not host a conversation inspired by Australia Remade - with family, friends, neighbours and/or colleagues - in your workplace, with your family and friends, in your group; informally in your living room or more formally at a town hall.

This guide gives some steps you can take, a few sample programs, facilitation notes and a few links to other excellent resources. Please take what is helpful and ignore what is not. Spark off these ideas and use your own creativity to spice them up and make your own conversation plan that fits best with who you are and the group you want to talk with. And if you would like to talk through your ideas and get some assistance sorting out what you want to do and with home please send us an email - info@australiaremade.org.

think first about purpose

If this conversation is exactly as you hoped it would be ... What would have been achieved together? What would you and the people who attend be thinking and feeling during and at the end your conversation? Hopefully you are creating space for people to imagine the best that Australia can be and you are open and welcome to the diversity of views that might surface.

find someone to work with and co-host your event

Reach out to other groups in your area to find co-hosts and other participants. One of the main goals of A24 is to build power together between movements and across the diversity of people in our communities to create the world we want.

choose a topic and plan the program

It would be great if you can host at least one conversation about Australia Remade as a whole. Here is a [sample program](#) for inspiration. Or you may want to design a program that starts with participants identifying their personal vision and connects these with Australia Remade. Here is a [vision workshop program](#) you can adapt. And if neither of these appeal and you want some questions you can ask to prompt your thinking the tool [Questions for discussing Australia Remade](#) is available at www.australiaremade.org.

pick a location and set the date

What type of conversation do you want to have? Will it be over a meal or not? What is the best venue to create the atmosphere you want? Can people get there by public transport? Is there wheelchair accessibility?

invite people

How many people you invite depends on the style of conversation you want to have and your confidence in facilitating the conversation. The conversation may be more interesting if you invite people from a diversity of backgrounds and points of view. For a small group conversation 7-10 people is ideal. Larger groups are great too, but you may want to have more time and find ways for people to talk in smaller groupings before contributing to the larger group discussion.

have the conversation

How you [start the conversation](#) is critical; so you create a positive tone right from the start, one that respects and encourages the participation of everyone present. Remember that running a conversation in a way that aligns with the ideals within Australia Remade is an excellent way to start working for the world that you want! [Group guidelines](#) can be suggested at the start. Then let the conversation go, following your plan, trusting that in every group interesting and thought-provoking ideas will be shared. And finish the conversation well, so that people leave feeling inspired and energised. And should you need them below are some [tips for dealing with tensions and difficulties](#).

connect with A24

We would love you to know what you are doing, so [get in touch](#)! This will help us learn and adapt the tools, and give your example (with permission of course) to inspire others. Other ways you can connect your conversation to the bigger movement is:

- Prepare a sign-in sheet with emails and add a check box asking people if they also want to be added to the A24 mailing lists. Then send those details to us at info@australiaremade.org.
- Invite participants to endorse Australia Remade (by visiting www.australiaremade.org) during your event and/or collect physical signatures on a signup sheet that you can send to us after the event.
- Take photos. It's great to have a record of the event and with permission you can send them to us at info@australiaremade.org for posting on the Australia Remade.

sample program

Timing	Session
5 minutes	<p>Acknowledgement of country</p> <p>The critical first pillar of Australia Remade imagines an Australia where 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures are celebrated at the very heart of what it means to be Australian'. Starting the meeting with an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the area is unifying, significant and a tangible way of recognising the history of this land.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Open and welcome</p> <p>See below for tips on how start the meeting well.</p>
20 minutes	<p>Round 1: Go around the group. Each person speaks briefly on the first questions without anyone else giving feedback or a response.</p> <p>First questions: What do you like most about Australia Remade? What parts of it are you most excited about? How does it make you feel?</p> <p><i>Tip: It may be useful to give everyone 2 or 3 minutes to talk with a neighbour first before opening for the first go-round; this often helps people to be able to contribute in a larger group.</i></p>
20 minutes	<p>Round 2: Go around the group for a second time. Each person adds to their comments on the first questions or moves on to the second questions below, without interruption.</p> <p>Second questions: What do you currently see happening that gives you hope that we can bring about change of this magnitude in Australia? What would it take to create the change?</p> <p><i>Tip: Again you may invite people to talk to a person sitting next to them first, giving 2 or 3 minutes for this</i></p>
40 minutes	<p>Open dialogue: Now the conversation is opened up, so people can go back and forth.</p> <p><i>Tip: Use the general rule that no-one speaks twice until everyone who wants to has spoken once.</i></p>
20 minutes	<p>Final round: Go around the group again asking each person to say briefly what challenged, touched or inspired them and one thing they may do differently or a next step they may take as a result of the conversation.</p> <p><i>Tip: An alternative if you have more time is to get each participant to write one key insight on a large sticky note and place it on the wall so that everyone can see the ideas over a break, say for coffee and dessert. When you come back from the break discuss the common ideas.</i></p>
5 minutes	<p>Closing: Thank everyone for their participation and say a few words about any common themes you heard and what inspired you. Give a hopeful call to action and remind people that there are more resources available on the Australia Remade website</p> <p><i>Tip: Finishing the conversation well is really important. People need to leave the room knowing your positive view about what happened and feeling like they were a valued part of the conversation.</i></p>

vision workshop program

imagining the Australia we want and working with Australia Remade

Group size: this can be done by a small or larger group of people

Timing: 1 – 2 hours

Resources: a room, marker pens and post its, copies of Australia Remade

Rough outline of the session:

- Acknowledge country and open the meeting and welcome participants. See below for tips on how to start the meeting well
- Help people to relax and get ready for visioning - 'Stop, close or lower eyes, sit quietly, take deep breaths or otherwise do whatever you do to stop the busy-ness of your mind'
- Now invite people to take a few moments in that more relaxed state to 'imagine that you have woken up in the Australia of your dreams' - what would be happening? What do you see and feel?
- After 2 – 3 minutes in the imagining state ask people to open their eyes and grab some post its and write down 3 or 4 of the most important things they were imagining.
- Together sort everyone's ideas into themes – put like ones together
- Now distribute Australia Remade. Give about 5 minutes for people to read it.
- Have a conversation: Look at the group's themes and the ones in Australia Remade. Start with questions like: What is similar and different? How can we use Australia Remade to lift and inspire hope and action for a better future?

To see how we used a similar process to create Australia Remade – check out [The Making of Australia Remade](http://www.australiaremade.org) (available online at www.australiaremade.org).

starting the conversation

Never underestimate how important the start of a conversation is! It is time for the host(s) of a conversation to welcome people in, warmly and with excitement that they have come. And a chance for the host to model the sort of communication that enables people to trust one another and feel able to contribute with an open heart and mind.

Here are a few essential parts to the opening. Allow about 10-15 minutes for the opening and mix the following up in whatever way you think makes best sense.

Welcome people as they arrive and when you begin the conversation

Get people talking: Everyone should introduce themselves, so their voice is heard right away and everyone begins to relax into the room. Besides giving their name, ask one easy, and non-threatening, get-to-know-you question (why you came, something good from the past week, something you want everyone to know about you). Tell people this is a speed introduction and ask that people take no more than 1 minute to answer. And then the host can go first to model this.

Clarify the purpose and the program: Talk about why you are having this meeting and what you are hoping to achieve. Don't hold back from speaking from your heart and your humanness; this will make things go better. Also give everyone an idea how the conversation will run.

Talk about how you want the conversation to go: Introduce the Group Guidelines. You can do this formally and have copies available or just invite people to have the conversation in the way described in the guidelines. It is best to be explicit, however, to help people enter into a productive discussion.

group guidelines

Contribute: your thinking and experiences.

Speak from your heart and personal experience. Be in the conversation not a spectator to it. Your ideas are important contributions to the collective thinking.

Listen: listen deeply to each other

There is as much to be gained from listening as there is from talking; often more. Listen to understand, to learn, to be influenced, to get new thoughts yourself.

Connect ideas: look for patterns and deeper questions

The best conversations arise when we listen for what is coming up in the 'centre' of our conversation; not from different agendas but from what is new when we put everyone's thoughts together.

Curiosity: Seek to understand rather than persuade.

Listen and be open to hearing everyone's points of view. Ask questions that clarify what you heard (Here's what I heard . . . is that what you mean?) and help people to dive deeper (Can you say more about that? What led you to that view?)

Open-mindedness: Suspend judgement as best you can

There is no right, no wrong. Kindness and generosity open a conversation up to new possibilities. Judgement and attack shut people down or cause people to defend their ideas.

Brevity: Go for depth but don't go on and on

Everyone here is important. Remember to keep your comments similar in length to others; if you normally talk a lot, hold back whilst others who are less comfortable find the courage to speak.

tips for dealing with tensions and difficulties

People who run (and attend) groups worry about three types of common group difficulties: the conversation goes way off-topic; some people dominate to the exclusion of others; people may fight or get angry with one another.

A conversation about the future of Australia is very likely to surface some form of tension, and you should be ready and open to this. Often it is from the tensions and differences that new possibilities and energy emerge. To deal with differences and chaos in the room in the way that respects all human beings is an active part of creating Australia Remade.

Set it up from the start: At the start of the conversation, when you are going through the group guidelines, ask the group to self-regulate the best they can. And then ask for 'permission' for you to interrupt the discussion if you feel it is going off-topic or getting too heated or if someone is taking too much of the air time.

Model in your every action: What the hosts do is critical. If you have to stop the conversation, do it gently and with respect. Refer people back to the guidelines.

Breathe and take your time: Interrupting people when you don't really need to will make the conversation stilted and may scare-off people's contribution. Have faith in the group and intervene sparingly.

Welcome difficulty: Remind people that we can and do get beyond differences if we keep at it and treat one another with respect. Suggest some questions that people can use (maybe have these listed on butcher's paper hanging in the room):

- Would you be prepared to say some more about that? I want to understand your point of view.
- Can you share a bit about any experiences that led you to that view?
- What I heard you say that I appreciated is ... What I heard that challenged my thinking is ...

These types of questions can transform a frustrating and disempowering conversation to one where the diversity of ideas and thinking in the group is harnessed for everyone's learning.

Take a break: If things are heated and you can't get it on track, take a break. This helps you as the hosts to think of what to do next and gives everyone a breather and a chance to refresh and come back to try again.

Stay hopeful: If, despite all best efforts, the conversation can't be made productive again – don't despair. Find the gems in the meeting and summarise these at the end (whilst also acknowledging the difficult parts).

There is no shortage of information on the web to help you plan and facilitate a good conversation. Here are some good links.

- Resources for 'harnessing the collective wisdom and self-organising capacity of groups of any size': <http://www.artofhosting.org>
- Free resources on hosting a world café conversation (also resources you can purchase at a reasonable cost): <http://www.theworldcafe.com/tools-store/hosting-tool-kit/>
- Accessible tools produced by Training for Change, a training and capacity building organisation for activists and organisers. <https://www.trainingforchange.org/tools/>
- Great facilitation tools developed by 350.org <https://trainings.350.org>
- Tools for a hosted conversation held in a public setting and open to anyone: <http://www.conversationcafe.org>
- Tools specifically designed to help Americans connect across divides, but relevant to having conversations in Australia about the most contentious issues too: <https://www.livingroomconversations.org>

www.australiaremade.org



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