

The Conversation receives a lot of comments each day and you can't read everything. That's why we occasionally end the week with a selection of community highlights: comments we enjoyed or thought interesting. Read on for four comments or discussions I thought worth highlighting.

[In remembering Anzac Day, what do we forget?](#)

Suzy Gneist discussed how she's [approached the history of Anzac](#) with her children:

Interesting article. I have had discussions with my kids, first generation Australians, who see the glaring omissions in the school based promotions of both, Anzac and Australia Day. They have questions as to its relevance, for themselves, for 'real' (indigenous) Australians, for others, like myself, who have come here and have no part in the selective historical references/events. .

They resent the fact that they are expected to conform to a view of both days they do not share - to say/write what the teacher/school wants to hear. I have tried to encourage to be respectful, but truthful and open the discussion on these subjects, but this is understandably viewed as too controversial for them to raise.

The biggest problems I see with both days is the exclusion of indigenous and other backgrounds and the white male dominance model that shows on both days in the actions and rhetoric. We did attend a few community events in the past, but have now stopped as many of the rituals do not seem congruous with our understanding.

As a female migrant of mostly mixed European heritage, there is little to like about the dominant memes of both days, i understand why my kids see no relevance in the current expressions. Maybe it's time for a wider discussion and for these days to evolve.

[Ideas for Australia: Welfare reform needs to be about improving](#)

well-being, not punishing the poor

Olivia Rundle, a senior lecturer in law at the University of Tasmania, [shared her thoughts](#) on Australia's welfare system and how it could be improved:

I'm no public policy expert, but the constant attack on welfare recipients must come at a huge cost to our society. Wellbeing is promoted by meeting basic needs (shelter, food, safety), and supporting autonomy, competence and relatedness (the last three according to self-determination theory). The current policy attitude to people who rely on some income assistance from the government promotes none of these. "Success" of the policy appears to be measured by reduced overall reliance on government payments. This hides the reality of disenfranchisement for many of the people sitting behind the numbers.

I suspect that a universal minimum payment would simplify the system, provide a humane living allowance for everyone, and restore dignity and respect. The need for layers of policing by Centrelink would be rendered unnecessary.

Perhaps more attention could be paid to the other side of the equation - employers and potential employees. What are the challenges that employers experience when employing young or long term unemployed people? What do they need to manage these challenges? What are the skills or supports that employers need in order to do a better job at providing healthy satisfying employment opportunities for people? What incentives are provided for family friendly work arrangements (including flexibility and child care)? What tangible support and incentives are provided to employers to recognise that their staff are human beings who experience ordinary life challenges that affect their ability to fit the "ideal worker" mould? Are employers held accountable for the quality of training and support that they provide to new workers? How is it that so many workplaces are full of stressed, overworked workers - why aren't employers being held accountable for the human costs of their expectation that more work be done by fewer people? What is being done to challenge "churn and burn" practices? What incentives are provided to provide stable, ongoing employment arrangements over casual, unstable, or contracting arrangements?

Boaty McBoatface poll shows how not to do community consultation

Community highlights

Written by The Conversation USA

Craig Thomler provided [more examples](#) of organisations trying their hand at public consultation and how it can be handled well:

It's worth also considering GreenPeace's "name the baby whale" public campaign in the mix, as this demonstrated what was possible when an organisation ran with the public's chosen name.

The baby whale was named "Mister Splashy Pants" in a runaway vote, which then became the focus of a 'You named him, you save him' campaign with extensive merchandising and fund raising activity.

This compares to the City of Austin's naming competition to rename their Solid Waste Service - with the most voted entry being the "Fred Durst Society of the Humanities and Arts." You can read the rest of the story (from 2011) online, but suffice to say it received a far more boring name than that of a former rock star (even after Durst personally backed it).

Naming is a poor substitute for real community consultation and it's to be expected that the public have a bit of fun with the approach, as a rebellion against the staid formal nature of many of our institutions, who struggle to take on a joke.

Anne's point about really wanting public input is important - too many consultations are perceived to be ignored by politicians and bureaucracies, or even corporations, sometimes when this perception is more due to the poor feedback process than tokenistic consulting. People who feel disillusioned with these process provide less feedback and more criticism and are far more resistant to change by government than when authentic consultations with good ongoing engagement support are undertaken.

However organisations also need to learn to play with the public, to accept the 'gotchas' and roll with them, as Greenpeace did. These situations can be an example of a sense of whimsy gone wild, or a test of the consulting organisation's willingness to play along, laugh at itself and show a human side.

Often these tests have a serious undertone - if the community's humour is rebuffed, it can become quite hostile to an organisation it sees as boring, staid, bureaucratic and authoritarian.

If the humour is embraced, even if the proposal is not, the organisation can win reputation (kudos) by demonstrating that while they have a serious purpose they still have a human side.

A good example of this is the response to the 'US government should build a Deathstar' petition a few years back through the US government's petition system, where the response managed to both convey the administration's dismissal of the proposal in a fun and engaging manner that hit all the right Star Wars fan buttons.

Health Check: can people actually multitask?

Finally, Josephine Emery and the article's author, Craig Speelman, discussed the multitasking elements of playing music.

[Josephine Emery](#) :

Is there research on multi-tasking in music? Specifically for me: playing guitar and singing at the same time. I notice I can do either quite well but together they both are downgraded.

[Craig Speelman](#) :

I'm not familiar with any research on this matter, but I am certainly familiar with the issue. As a pianist who likes to sing too, I struggled with trying to do both, mostly as my piano skills were developing (singing came much easier). As my piano skills got better, so did my ability to perform both tasks. It has always been easier if I can conceive of the two tasks as complimentary aspects of the one task, which may be easier said than done. Very familiar

Community highlights

Written by The Conversation USA

songs make the task even easier. But ultimately, you can't beat the power of practice.

[Josephine Emery](#) :

I'd love to know what goes on in the mind of someone sight-reading with a full organ keyboard (inc. feet!) What's fascinating me is the return of my keyboard skills from childhood. Singing is the new learning and I'm using a keyboard for my scales. Haven't touched one in 50 years. My hands seem to have sufficient muscle memory from 50 years ago to always find the right positions for 1 3 5 8. No thinking required. Yes. visualising playing and singing as part of the same task makes things flow better.

Read a comment you thought interesting? Let me know during the week. You can leave a comment below or send me an [email](#) .

Read more <http://theconversation.com/community-highlights-58287>