

Citizens' Assembly

Work Programme Item 4: The Manner in which Referenda are held

Weekend 10

Detailed Conversation Starters: Facilitators and Note Takers

General Instructions for Roundtable Discussions following presentations:

- Hear from everyone and as you do, enforce the ground-rules, firmly and with good humour. In particular, encourage people to be respectful of others and to share the airtime.
- Remember that the speakers are available for any questions or clarifications if required during the discussion. The Secretariat is also available for any clarification.
- Spend the last 5-10 minutes recapping the conversation to ensure that the key points are captured for inclusion in the table summary.
- As members may still be nervous/ uncomfortable with speaking in the public Q&A session on this topic later, you should also capture the top 3 questions which emerge in the discussion, and should be prepared to ask them on behalf of the table if called upon to do so by the Judge.
- Complete the standard feedback template sheet based on the last 5-10 minutes of conversation. Retain the feedback sheet for collection at the end of the discussion.
- Please remember that the roundtable discussions in the afternoon (after sessions 3 & 4 and 5 & 6) must include discussion on possible issues arising for the Assembly's recommendations and for inclusion on the draft Ballot Paper and time needs to be set aside for this.

Saturday Morning

Sessions 1 and 2: Referendums in Ireland- History and outcomes to date and Legal background and process

The purpose of this round table discussion is to:

- help members understand the information they have heard
- embed that knowledge and to document key themes arising from the conversation.
- capture the key questions which emerge during the discussion.
- Remember to use the last five minutes of the session to recap the discussion and agree with the Members what keys you might ask on their behalf (if required)

You'll have **25 minutes** for this part of the meeting.

Conversation Starters/ Suggested Questions to guide discussions:

1. How well do you understand the process for amending the Constitution?
2. How does this account of how referendums are held correspond with your own experience?

Saturday Afternoon

12.10pm Sessions 3 and 4: Referendum Campaigns: Legal Regulation *and* Referendum Campaigns: Impact of regulation on the media

The purpose of this round table discussion is to:

- help members understand the information they have heard;
- embed that knowledge and to document key themes arising from the conversation;
- capture the key questions which emerge during the discussion;
- reflect on what issues, if any, might be included in on the ballot paper;
- Remember to use the last five minutes of the session to recap the discussion and agree with the Members what keys you might ask on their behalf (if required).

You'll have **50 minutes** for this part of the meeting.

Conversation Starters/ Suggested Questions to guide discussions:

1. What has your experience been of the information you have received in the run up to referendums?
2. What role does the media play during a referendum campaign? What do you think of the regulations currently in place for different media during a campaign?
3. What role does the Referendum Commission play during a referendum campaign? What do you think of the regulations governing its operation currently during a campaign?
4. What role does the Government play in a referendum campaign? What do you think of the regulations currently in place in relation to spending public funds during a campaign?
5. In what way are private donations to referendum campaigns regulated in Ireland? What do you think of these regulations?

This session will also be used to obtain feedback from the members on the issues they want to see included on a ballot paper.

Ballot Paper Discussion:

1. Are there any issues in particular which you have heard from either of the speakers which you would like to be able to vote upon tomorrow?

Saturday Afternoon

3.45pm Session 5 and 6: Voter turnout, super referendums and repeat referendums and Citizens initiatives and direct democracy

The purpose of this round table discussion is to:

- help members understand the information they have heard;
- embed that knowledge and to document key themes arising from the conversation;
- capture the key questions which emerge during the discussion;

- reflect on what issues, if any, might be included in on the ballot paper;
- Remember to use the last five minutes of the session to recap the discussion and agree with the Members what keys you might ask on their behalf (if required).

You'll have **45 minutes** for this part of the meeting.

Conversation Starters/ Suggested Questions to guide discussions:

1. How do you think voter turnout can be improved?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantage of super referendum days?
3. Do you think citizens initiatives are a good idea? Do you think there should be any restrictions on how they should be run?

Ballot Paper Discussion:

1. Are there any issues in particular which you have heard from either of the speakers which you would like to be able to vote upon tomorrow?