

TURNING DOWN THE HEAT

FROM A CULTURE OF PROTEST TO A SEAT AT THE TABLE



A COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVE ON DEMOCRATIC INNOVATION

PURPOSE

Many people are concerned about the **state of our democracy and the quality of public discourse** today. Whether discussing politics, social issues, community concerns, or matters affecting everyday life, conversations can quickly become adversarial. This can lead to political pendulum swings rather than effective decision-making that serves everyone. Despite empirical evidence showing that most citizens agree on fundamental issues, solutions are frequently sabotaged by polarized rhetoric. This initiative addresses a simple but profound question: **How can we turn down the heat** and create conditions for more respectful, thoughtful, and productive public conversations?

PROCESS

The project will bring together leaders of thought from the Greater Victoria area for a cross-sector conversation involving public officials, academics, business, Indigenous and community leaders. This initial in-person meeting will examine the methods and practices of **deliberative democracy**, aided by Information and resources that will also be made **available online** to participants and the public.

THEMES

- **Recent innovations in deliberative democracy**, such as [citizens assemblies](#) in [B.C.](#) and [Ireland](#), collaborative governance initiatives and digital initiatives such as [Polis \(Taiwan\)](#) and [Decidim](#) (Barcelona, Helsinki, and New York City).
- **Indigenous governance and consensus-building traditions**, including [present-day governance in Nunavut](#) and NWT
- **Techniques and methods for navigating disagreement** through inclusive, respectful conversations, for healthier decision-making processes at all levels of society.

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