

# **Strengthening Amnesty International's Democracy Consultation Packs 1 and 2**

## **Amnesty International Aotearoa New Zealand Feedback**

### **General comments arising from the consultation**

Overall Amnesty International is a member based organisation and this is the basis to its democracy. Amnesty is about the freedom of individuals to join and commit themselves to stop grave abuse of human rights. Above all this freedom to be engaged and participate must be highlighted and protected in any discussion on strengthening democracy.

AIANZ welcomes this opportunity to provide feedback on Consultation Packs One and Two on Strengthening AI's Democracy. The general response of AIANZ stakeholders was positive, although a minority suggested that the consultation documents:

- ⊕ Were pitched at too high a level; and
- ⊕ Would have benefited from more detail, including reference to the progress or otherwise of the One Amnesty project that was discussed at the last ICM. The collaborative approach, in joint effort and responsibility, that arose out of the last ICM could provide an important indicator of whether such a collaborative approach will be successful for AI in other areas (e.g. governance).

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### **1. Do you believe that the Overall Approach to AI's democracy captures the essence of what AI should practice in this area?**

In general, the overall approach presented by the ICSD covered the core tenets of an effective and meaningful participatory democracy. AIANZ stakeholders endorse wholeheartedly the principles articulated by the ICSD as guiding AI's approach to democracy. The overall approach to democracy presented was widely considered as representing an ideal approach to democracy in the movement.

Indeed we received much feedback expressing the view that the principles articulated such as optimal transparency, optimal efficiency, cooperation between Sections and the IS could 'go without saying

## 1.1. Mission and Impact Focus

*“We support a mission and impact focus as, in short, there is no point AI having an effective governance and leadership system if we are no longer focussed on ways to actively promote and defend human rights!”*

The principle that like all activities undertaken by AI, the primary purpose of AI’s democratic governance system should be to further AI’s mission and increase our positive impact for human rights was endorsed without exception by AIANZ members.

Ensuring that AI’s governance is mission and impact focussed was often considered the number one requirement of all its functions by our members. In keeping with this belief we received much feedback reinforcing that any reform of AI’s democratic governance system and processes should not detract from AI’s core purpose, namely promoting and defending human rights. This is of particular importance when AI enters a period of restructuring and reform.

Similar sentiments were also expressed in terms of the need for AI’s governance to ensure the best use of resources available to the movement. It is seen as a fundamental requirement of AI’s democratic governance to ensure our strategic plan enables us to focus our work in order to get the best results possible from the limited resources we have to draw on. At all times and in all areas AI must be focused on who the action is going to help. The relationship of all decisions to AI’s mission and expected impact must continue to be clearly articulated from the outset and, we suggest, assessed at the end. Ultimately the criteria used to judge any and all of AI’s actions should be end effectiveness in bringing about positive change in human rights terms.

## 1.2. Rights Holders, Diversity and Gender

*“It is crucial AI continues to be wary of thinking that we already know what beneficiaries concerns are, what they need, and how we can most usefully help them”.*

The proposal outlined in the ICSD consultation documents around opening up AI’s decision-making process to ensure the participation of rights holders or beneficiaries are in general seen as an extremely sensible and desirable development in AI’s governance. In particular seeking to ensure more involvement from those in the global 'South', including rights activists, and beneficiaries of AI’s work is considered an important step.

In the feedback we received from members many considered it important that we ensure that AI's democracy is such that local and indigenous people have their own voices and that our approach ensures their perspectives are heard and taken onboard. Some expressed the view that ensuring this principle is adhered to in AI's democracy is particularly important if we are to avoid being perceived as telling such groups what is 'good for them' and speaking for them without their participating in our decision-making in a meaningful way. It is crucial AI continues to be wary of thinking that we already know what beneficiaries concerns are, what they need, and how we can most usefully help them. Allowing meaningful participation by rights holders is seen as vital to avoiding these traps. Ensuring participation and accountability are important elements when taking a human rights approach to any issue.

However although endorsing the proposal to include meaningful input from rights holders in AI's democratic governance, our stakeholders also identified potential difficulties in implementing this principle in practice. In some instances it is suggested that obtaining meaningful input from rights holders may be hard to achieve for a number of reasons.

Adopting a principle declaring that AI will include beneficiaries in our decision-making and ensure their participation in our Global AGM is highly desirable. However, this relies on credibly identifying these beneficiaries. Given that AI works on such a diverse range of grave human rights issues, affecting a diverse range of people, this can be challenging.

Other members identified a much fundamental issue around AI's identity in the following way; AI began and has developed as a way for individual people to take action on behalf of other individuals who are victims of human rights abuse. This is the basis of AI's identity. This is the point of difference between AI and many other human rights NGOs. This direct action of one individual on behalf of another is AI's fundamental strength. As such the organisational arrangements and the governance of the movement must continue to be focussed on serving these people – our members, our activist base. A related concern held by a small minority of AIANZ members is the potential difficulty posed to the movement should any beneficiary group attempt to hijack AI decision-making or policy development processes for their own ends.

In order to address these issues we suggest that the ICSD develop a specific, practical map outlining how beneficiaries have the opportunity to participate within AI's democracy, and present these to the movement.

On balance, despite a number of difficulties having been raised, the feedback AIANZ received from stakeholders is overwhelmingly in support of the inclusion of input from beneficiaries in AI's decision-making and governance. However we endorse the idea that it is the members who make up our movement - and the general public of the world who take action for human rights through AI - who must remain at the centre of AI's decision-making and governance.

### 1.3. Transparency and Accountability

*“AI has no reason to be anything less than enthusiastic about...embracing these principles in all that we do”.*

Once again the principle of ensuring transparency and accountability at all stages of AI’s democratic governance was overwhelmingly endorsed by AIANZ stakeholders. It was noted that in the world around us there is growing scrutiny of NGOs to assess their accountability, transparency, governance and effectiveness, Given that, it is imperative that AI have these principles as central tenets of our democracy and governance. Many members expressed the view that AI has no reason to be anything less than enthusiastic about this, indeed we should be embracing these principles in all that we do.

Overwhelmingly the feedback we received strongly agreed that in all areas of AI there needs to be a strong accountability system in place to hold decision-makers responsible for the outcomes of their decisions.

## 1.4. Quality Participation

*“AI needs to ensure participation is easy and attractive”*

Increasing the richness of our decisions, quality of our consultations, and the wisdom of our decisions through ensuring high quality movement-wide participation in AI's democratic governance was strongly endorsed by our members. Improving our channels and methods of communication to facilitate this quality participation was identified by a significant majority of members as an essential development in order for this to principle to be realised. Also maintaining recognition within the system of the desirability of consensus where possible was seen as important.

Our members rejected outright the argument that the decision making process is too technical and AI's membership is too ill-equipped or ill-informed to participate meaningfully in AI decision-making. Certainly in the case of AIANZ, our membership is highly qualified to participate in all AI's discussions and decisions. Indeed it was suggested that often a large percentage of our membership is better qualified to participate in the decision-making process than our elected governance representatives who end up bearing the load.

The majority of feedback we received strongly supported enhancing the quality of participation by members. To make this happen we suggest AI needs to ensure participation is easy and attractive to people, so that more of our members and external stakeholders take part in our democratic processes. The recent online consultation for the next ISP was seen as a valuable step in this regard.

Although the feedback we received strongly supported the notion that the diverse voices of AI's activists are critical to AI's democracy and must be able to participate in a meaningful way, it was also widely noted that under any circumstances even with best practice systems and processes in place only a relatively small percentage of the movement's membership will ever realistically have the desire or the means to participate in the democratic process. This is why the focus on quality participation as opposed to the rate of participation is important.

The final point we make with regard to the principle of quality participation is the need for AI to consistently review and enhance its communication with members if we are to be successful in this regard. Feedback from AIANZ members indicated they felt that AI's communications to members must be clear and concise. The emphasis must be on ensuring AI is accessible to all members of society not just AI's traditional supporter base.

## 1.5 Effectiveness

*“The principle of effectiveness was seen by many AIANZ members as the most important consideration that ought to guide AI”*

The principle of effectiveness was seen by many AIANZ members as the most important consideration that ought to guide AI. The importance of AI being true to democratic ideals was also upheld, but in general ensuring the movement is effective was seen as paramount. Indeed finding a way to combine democracy and effectiveness is roundly endorsed as being key to AI's future success.

The issue of timeliness of AI's response to developing events is increasingly important to AI's relevance and credibility as an independent source of information. Given that AI's credibility is central to its identity and ability to bring about change, timeliness of response needs to become another hallmark of AI's effectiveness. To this end some stakeholders encouraged organisational changes to ensure that AI's leadership makes fast, efficient decisions, responding to crisis situations.

However others noted that a balance must be maintained to ensure the democratic nature of decision making is preserved in general. The majority of feedback we received accepted that democratic decision-making that emerges from a robust process is inevitably a little slower than might be ideal but that this was tolerable because it is good to be quick but better to be right.

Grassroots consultation may not always be appropriate and embracing the principle of effectiveness acknowledges this. In order to guarantee effectiveness it is vital AI leaders at both national and international levels are fully empowered to make decisions and respond to unfolding situations as necessary. We suggest AI ought to agree democratically on our priorities and authorise certain people to act responsibly on that basis. If there are crucial issues which need decisions made quickly such as in response to an imminent human rights crisis this should be able to happen.

When proper accountability measures are in place we should have no problems relying on the judgement of our leaders to make appropriate decisions to ensure AI maximises our global impact for human rights. A crucial element of this is ensuring that our membership trust and support our leadership. Of course the risk with this approach is that in – when essential - bypassing consultation we deprive ourselves of the benefit of our collective wisdom and experience. AIANZ would not like to see our governance get to a point where our leaders were expected to make quick decisions on major issues for the movement, however we believe they should be empowered to do so in human rights cases where necessary.

## **2. Do you believe that the key areas listed are those most in need of change in order to strengthen AI's democracy?**

*"it may be that perhaps many of the key areas requiring change in the eyes of the ICSD are not seen as needing change at all by the wider movement".*

Many of our members gave us feedback that they are not aware of the existence of many of the organisational issues and problems identified in the consultation documents. The fact that those whom our governance serves (our members) are not aware of the "problems" identified in the consultation materials is useful feedback

It suggests that there needs to be a more detailed explanation of the perceived problems and key areas requiring change. Evidence to document and support the assertion that an area requires change would be helpful. Feedback received from AIANZ members suggests that some of the key areas the ICSD identifies as requiring change could equally be perceived as realities that are unavoidable for the movement and may not need to be viewed in a negative light.

### **2.1. Poor decision-making culture and process limit AI's potential impact**

Although a large proportion of stakeholders did not consider that a poor decision-making culture existed in AI, others did consider that this is an area where improvement is possible. Best practice is embraced by many multinational corporate entities and other civil society groups. Many AIANZ stakeholders endorsed that the standards of best practice as practiced by leading corporate multinationals and as articulated by leading academics must guide the standards AI sets for itself in all areas including governance. Other responses to the identification in the consultation documents of decision-making culture requiring change in AI were largely centred on the perceived need for AI to change the nature of the discussions underpinning our decision-making. This feedback characterised existing culture as in need of increased transparency. AI must support a culture and processes which embrace the vigorous contestability of ideas.

### 2.1.1. Focus on AI's mission and intended impact

*“Specific attention was drawn to the impact on the movement of the tension between AI Sections and the IS”*

The references in the ICSD discussion materials to the problems arising from significant attention being focussed internally at the expense of our focus and ultimate impact externally were picked up on by our stakeholders. Specific attention was drawn to the impact on the movement of the tension between AI Sections and the IS and the underlying debate around reforming AI's organisational architecture in order to centralise power and control at the international level or to continue with the current arrangements whereby AI operates as a collective of autonomous national entities.

Again a large group gave us feedback that they did not see AI as being overly internally focused at the expense of our mission and impact. However those AIANZ stakeholders who did agree that this is an area requiring change couched their feedback in terms of the debate around the desirability of increased centralisation of AI organisationally or continued autonomy for Sections. Feedback often attacked the proposition that these two positions must be presented as a dichotomy and in doing so made a contribution we suggest is important for AI to take onboard. Although this issue is not something the ICSD has specifically sought feedback on, it was an area which we received strong comment on from AIANZ members and as such we include it here.

Points raised by those in favour of AI moving to centralise control in the IS include; moving AI closer to the model used by other multinational NGOs, eliminating bilateral agreements between wealthy AI sections in the global North and poorer groups in the South which currently totally bypass the IS.

Key arguments in support of autonomy for sections included; the need to ensure that individual sections and their leadership maintain the ability to speak out and take action independently of the IS when it is necessary to maximise AI's impact and relevance in specific countries and regions. It was noted by some that at present it appears that leadership in individual sections is hamstrung when it comes to ability to respond independently to events, instead seeking to defer to the IS to communicate AI policy and positions. The need for sections to be relevant in their own societies and the evolving nature of human rights underpin support for organisational decentralisation. In addition support also stems from the Eurocentric nature of the IS- giving AI reports titles like AI Spring Report into Torture is unnecessarily alienating to those in the global South.

On balance we suggest AI needs to strike a balance between autonomy and centralisation in order to maximise the benefits of both in terms of human rights impact. We suggest that it is incorrect to make the claim that

organisational power is located at the national level at the expense of global impact. It seems that largely this claim is made without evidence being offered to support it. In our view it is only illusory power. Fundamentally AI's power lies in being able to focus the attention of all 2.2 million plus members on one campaign to bring about change. Normative common goals can exist alongside a degree of autonomy in action by sections. Increases in impact must be achieved without putting AI's greatest strengths at risk. Removing or overstating the autonomy currently experienced by sections could fundamentally change the way AI works.

Taking this as their starting point other AIZNZ members rejected the need to choose one model or the other and referred to a notable conclusion arising from the last ICM, the almost universally supported rejection of the stark juxtaposition of centralised power against power distributed amongst autonomous sections. The consultation document entitled "Results of Earlier Assessments" distributed by the ICSD shows how this dichotomy has constantly been presented to AI by external experts and consultants assessing our governance. The ICM has rejected both of these positions at each end of the continuum and rather expressed its overwhelming preference for a collaborative approach drawing on the strengths of each and embracing cooperation.

In the past the Secretary General has sent Section Directors on a course run at Harvard University to be exposed to and learn from best practice as emerged from the experiences of large, complex multinational corporate entities. The conclusion arising from all this experience was the rejection of the perception that organisations must choose either of the two options that are presented as a dichotomy. Rather best practice was to reject both centralisation of control and total autonomy among constituent parts and instead to embrace collaboration and cooperation between entities.

A final and crucial area that needs to be addressed in order for the movement to be fully focused on AI's mission and intended impact is the "them against us" mentality perceived to be evident in the relationship between some Sections and the IS. Any suggestion that a culture of distrust exists within AI globally must be dealt with without delay.

### **2.1.2. Clear definition of roles in discussion, consultation and decision making**

*"...confusion between executive and governance roles in AI appears to be widespread and frequent"*

A large percentage of our members gave us feedback that they were unaware that this was a crucial issue facing the movement. Others however agreed with the assessment that confusion between executive and governance roles in AI appears to be widespread and frequent. Some went on to note that

although this situation may not be surprising at the level of national Sections it should not be occurring at the international level where clear policy exists explicitly delineating governance and executive roles and setting out clear responsibilities for both.

AIANZ agrees that a key area requiring change is the definition of governance and executive roles within the movement with particular reference to our democratic process. We suggest a guiding policy of this nature should be provided by AI's international leadership and implemented in all national Sections. This needs to include a clear statement to guide the relationship between national Boards and Directors/CEOs of National Sections. Given that a clear policy of this nature exists at the international level it should be relatively straightforward to extend this to all levels of the movement.

Ensuring that the implementation of AI decisions is left to the professionally staffed executive is an important and beneficial step for the movement. However if this policy is to be successful it needs to be accompanied by the appropriate sharing and distribution of resources with particular attention paid to the differing contexts and requirements of each individual section to enable the staff of all national Sections and structures to effectively carry out their roles and ensure that all areas of AI's operations are in keeping with the standards of global best practice. This is an important qualification to such a policy being extended to all national Sections. It is vital that any such policies are flexible enough to work within the differing contextual needs of all Sections, for example in newly developing Sections and structures where the same people may be filling both governance and executive functions.

### **2.1.3. Strengthening the quality of AI's internal dialogue**

*"...the current standard of AI's internal dialogue is such that there are strong barriers to widespread participation and engagement and consequently our democracy loses some of its richness and is less robust"*

This is the key area requiring change identified by the ICSD that AIANZ stakeholders were most aware of and universally supportive of. Many expressed the view that the current standard of AI's internal dialogue is such that there are strong barriers to widespread participation and engagement and consequently our democracy loses some of its richness and is less robust than it could otherwise be. We suggest that as with all other aspects of AI's governance the standards of corporate best practice in internal dialogue and communication among stakeholders throughout the decision-making process should be the standards AI employs.

Many AIANZ members expressed the view that these perceived failings in our internal dialogue were again evident in this consultation. Although this was not a view held by the majority of participants a significant minority deemed the consultation materials inaccessible on account of verbosity and complexity

and thus prevented widespread and meaningful participation in the process among our membership. A significant factor underpinning this response is the requirement of a considerable amount of institutional knowledge in order to be able to understand comprehensively and engage substantively with the issues being discussed.

Looking forward to future consultations we suggest that an effort is made to address these concerns in order to effectively open up future consultation processes to a greater proportion of our membership. It seems that there is a distinct disconnect between the consultation model and language used by the IS and the model and language most accessible and preferable to a sizable element of our membership. This has emerged as one of the most significant difficulties facing AI's grassroots style of democratic governance. We are hopeful that the proposed Global Forum will go a long way towards addressing these concerns.

We also would like to comment on the value of strengthening the quality of AI's internal dialogue in relation to addressing any perceived lack of participation in AI's democratic processes by our membership. In summary it appears that AI's democracy is one of a silent majority and a vocal minority. Although the overwhelming opinion of our stakeholders is that participatory democracy and decision-making borne out of movement-wide consultation is fundamental to AI's identity and success going forward, only a very small proportion of our members choose to engage in consultation processes. This leads us to draw two conclusions. Firstly, although the vast majority of our members do not participate in consultation processes they value the fact that they have the opportunity to have meaningful input into decision-making, regardless of whether they actually choose to engage with these opportunities or not. Secondly it suggests that our members are comfortable leaving the small proportion of members who do choose to engage and actively have input to represent their interests and to steer the movement in its decision-making.

We suggest that low rates of participation and engagement do not need to be viewed as reflecting negatively on the quality of AI's internal dialogue, democracy and governance. One factor to take into account is that a significant proportion of members who choose not to participate actively consider AI is travelling along well enough as it is without their involvement and thus there is no need for them to become more actively engaged. Another factor to consider is the likelihood that a vast majority of AI members simply consider their part in the movement to be limited to giving a financial contribution, signing a letter on behalf of a prisoner of conscience occasionally, or whatever applies in each individual's case. Many members genuinely don't want to be involved in AI's internal discussions and we need to respect that.

That is not to say better internal dialogue and greater member participation in our democracy is not desirable, but simply to acknowledge that we need to be realistic about the levels of participation it is possible to achieve. In taking steps to strengthen AI's democracy we also need to reassess what AI means

to our members and re-evaluate our expectations of them and their expectations of governance and executive within the movement. Amnesty attracts activists, and not all activists are interested in the internal workings of the organisation. We must not harass them to make a contribution that they find boring and frustrating when there is so much to be done in campaigning and fundraising. It seems that best intentioned efforts to increase, reinvigorate, or strengthen democracy may run into the underlying reality that the governance systems and processes AI already has in place are sufficient and functioning in a way that allows our most active and interested members to meaningfully contribute.

#### **2.1.4. Strengthening AI's leadership**

*“At the most basic level the vigorous contestability of ideas is what AI must embody”.*

Strengthening AI's leadership at both international and national level is something that AIANZ stakeholders strongly endorse. Two distinct comments emerged from feedback we received. The first centres on the need to systematically undertake recruitment, leadership development, and succession planning, and the second centres on the need for those in leadership roles to be encouraged to display bold leadership.

It is recognised that AI is a highly complex, global organisation and it is essential that the movement ensures our leaders are highly qualified and possess a well balanced range of expertise and experience. It was suggested that all new national Section Directors should receive much greater induction and training. Section Directors need to be provided with the security of having access to basic information and advice if this system is to be successful. Much work will need to be done to facilitate this and AIANZ's experience may provide useful learning.

The second issue we identify as underpinning the need to strengthen AI's leadership is the need for bold leadership from the centre. Sometimes, it may appear that the IS leadership wants Section representatives to make a clear statement of direction which could then serve as a guide for the direction the IS leadership would take the movement. AIANZ membership felt that the IS leadership should make a strong, clear statement on which direction they believe the movement should go and this should be the starting point of discussion. Feedback received suggested that this later approach is favoured within AIANZ. The IEC must not be afraid to show leadership and should embrace the role of “pushing the envelope” and prompting the movement to consider new positions and react to proposals. At the most basic level the vigorous contestability of ideas is what AI must embody.

## 2.2. Lack of transparency and accountability creates distrust and limits AI's ability to learn and develop

*"[AI must] ensure our democratic process is as transparent as possible and has clear lines of accountability which all involved are aware of".*

The majority of the feedback AIANZ received indicated that stakeholders were **not** aware of any significant lack of accountability and transparency within the AI movement. However, feedback fully endorsed taking steps to ensure our democratic process is as transparent as possible and has clear lines of accountability which all involved are aware of.

### 2.2.1. Securing transparency at all stages of decision making and implementation

*"Securing transparency at all stages of decision making and implementation is seen as a fundamental requirement of AI's democracy"*

Securing transparency at all stages of decision making and implementation is seen as a fundamental requirement of AI's democracy and activities. We received strong feedback focussing on both perceived deficiencies in AI's decision-making process and AI's track-record of implementation.

In general it appears that most of the "grumbles" from AIANZ members are about **implementation** of decisions, rather than the movement's governance. There is frustration that change doesn't always "stick" within AI.

There is a perception that AI decision-making may be driven by a small group within AI's global leadership and that robust, broad based support does not always underpin these changes. Some members expressed an opinion that a small group within AI's global leadership had "captured" policy making and were driving through changes according to their own agenda. Indeed this very consultation around strengthening democracy in AI is perceived by some to be a response to these concerns about who is driving policy within AI.

### Establishing democratic control and accountability

*"...systems and processes [need] to be put in place before we can reasonably expect the highest standards of control and accountability."*

As with many of the other areas identified by the ICSD as requiring change, establishing democratic control and accountability was not an issue AIANZ members considered as needing urgent change. However, overwhelmingly our members support these principles being put at the centre of AI's democratic governance.

We suggest it is not appropriate to be overly critical of AI's elected governance representatives and the systems that are in place to guide AI decision-making when the global AI movement does not have an effective movement-wide consultation forum through which we can ensure transparency and control.

A second issue is also the possibility that people who voluntarily give up their time to fill governance roles in AI do not have sufficient organisational support and training. Consequently, some consider it unfair that the same level of accountability should be demanded of our voluntary governance as we expect of our professional executive. The real issue for AI is a perceived lack of support, guidance and resourcing for our voluntary governance representatives.

## **2.3 Combining democracy and effectiveness**

*"The proposition that democracy and effectiveness are somehow mutually exclusive is considered a false dilemma for AI."*

It is clear from all the feedback we received that AIANZ members agree with the assertion of the ICSD that there is no choice to make between democracy and effectiveness. The challenge for AI is to develop our systems and processes to enable us to enjoy both democracy and effectiveness in all that we do.

In questioning the implication that being democratic works against effectiveness, many stakeholders argued that any perceived conflict is perhaps, merely an issue of timeliness. That is to say, time taken to make decisions can work against rapid response to problems.

Many of our members observed that democracy is increasingly rare in contemporary society, where decision-making is often shrouded in a murky mix of power struggles and vested interest. This is one reason given why AI's culture of participatory democracy should be preserved; this model provides an example of an alternative way of decision-making in marked contrast to the transfer of power away from individual rights holders and communities many observe in the world around them.

## **3. Do you believe that the key elements of the proposed new governance model would contribute to strengthening AI's democracy?**

On the whole, feedback from AIANZ members indicated the new governance model looks good and therefore we support the adoption of the proposals. However although supportive, in general most of those members who gave us feedback on the proposals expected only modest improvements in AI's overall democracy and governance to result. The exception to this is the proposed Global Forum which is anticipated to result in significant benefits for the movement.

It was observed that the transitional phase would have to be managed very carefully. Reforming the governance model of a global movement of more than two million people is a complex undertaking and it needs to be treated accordingly. For all the shortcomings of the current model and processes, our existing arrangement has held together and served a very large and diverse movement for many years and caution must be foremost in our minds as we undertake this transition.

### **3.1. Global AI Forum**

*"...an initiative such as the proposed Global Forum is something which many of our stakeholders feel has been needed for a very long time"*

An online platform to facilitate movement-wide discussion and IS led consultation as an important component underpinning decision-making is overwhelmingly supported by our stakeholders. Indeed an initiative such as the proposed Global Forum is something which many of our stakeholders feel has been needed for a very long time.

Much of the feedback AIANZ received in response to the ICSD consultation materials identified issues and perceived weaknesses in our democracy which may be directly traced to the absence of an accessible, global communication space which allows our stakeholders insight and oversight of the decision-making process as well as enabling active participation and engagement in AI's discussions, consultations, and decision-making.

Ensuring that there is an appropriate, effective and meaningful forum for movement-wide discussion of and consultation on all issues and particularly significant policy and strategic decisions is of paramount importance. This would play a key part in facilitating much greater contact and dialogue between our governance and our governed.

In terms of a contribution to the development of the proposed Global Forum, aspects identified as being particularly useful include; the use of ongoing live discussion boards on many divergent threads where people can post their own thoughts and read and respond to others, the ability of an oversight body to monitor, moderate and stimulate discussion, and access to past discussions in the form of archives. Due to the instantaneous and connected

nature of the Internet the Global Forum has enormous potential to increase the connectedness of AI activists and members globally which can only serve to strengthen our movement. In order to enable the Global Forum to be as successful as possible great care needs to be taken to ensure it is well structured and easy to use for all AI stakeholders. The most obvious barriers identified include language and lack of access to information and communications technology.

The proposed Global Forum should incorporate the necessary tools to ensure AI's leadership is able to bring the movement with them when making decisions. With a healthy discussion and consultation system in operation AI's leadership will always be aware of what the movement thinks. Also through their own contribution AI's leadership will be able to flag up coming issues and decisions to be taken to ensure the movement is aware and prepared to contribute.

### **3.2. ICM – Global AGM**

*“[The Global AGM] would in our view serve to enhance the functioning and effectiveness of AI's highest governance body.”*

Feedback from AIANZ members with regard to the proposed Global AGM was positive however as noted previously, in general most feedback anticipated only modest improvements in AI's overall democracy and governance to result.

The main reasons AIANZ stakeholders are in favour of the proposed Global AGM include providing the opportunity for rights holders and partners to participate. This was seen as an important advantage from which AI would benefit. Certainly the inclusion of these voices at this level of AI's governance would be beneficial in terms of enhancing AI's effectiveness but also our credibility and legitimacy. Other significant improvement the proposed Global AGM would deliver over the existing ICM is the lengthening of terms of office which would considerably enhance continuity and the increased frequency of meetings. All these factors would in our view serve to enhance the functioning and effectiveness of AI's highest governance body.

The only concerns which emerged about the smaller, more frequent, more focussed version of the ICM is the intention to limit the functions it is responsible for and to leave other functions of the ICM to other meetings and spaces. We suggest that the ICSD needs to formalise this and specifically articulate which functions will be excluded from the Global AGM and to exactly which other meetings and spaces these functions will be reallocated. This is essential to ensure the structure of the organisation is sufficiently robust to leave the AGM to deal only with strategy, policy and emphasis or the whole system may stall.

### **3.3. IEC – Global Board**

*“The problem that will be faced by the Global Board is not a new one, it is a continuation an issue that has dogged the IEC, not enough people want to fill these positions and serve in this role.”*

As with the proposal to replace the ICM with a Global AGM, feedback from AIANZ members with regard to the proposed Global Board was generally positive even though only modest improvements in AI’s overall democracy and governance are anticipated.

Key benefits identified as arising from the proposal to replace the existing IEC with a new Global Board that were noted in the feedback we received included; provision for greater representation and participation of a wider range of AI stakeholders, achieving more continuity of Board members through providing for longer terms of office and staggered membership renewal which is anticipated to improve traction and allow members to become more effective; and finally having a more stringent selection criteria to ensure a greater balance of expertise on the IEC is also seen as beneficial.

A barrier to AI realising the anticipated benefits of instituting the new Global Board as outlined was also drawn to our attention. The problem that will be faced by the Global Board is not a new one, it is a continuation an issue that has dogged the IEC, not enough people want to fill these positions and serve in this role. There are many disincentives IEC or Global Board members face such as the significant commitment of time, and the lack of remuneration. These factors serve to limit the number of interested candidates. Proposed changes to the composition of the IEC and higher requirements for entry are likely only to exacerbate this problem by excluding or deterring even more potential candidates. An obvious method of incentivising service on the IEC would be to offer improved remuneration packages in acknowledgement of the demands of the role. If such an approach was adopted it is likely AI would be able to pick and choose from a far greater field of suitably qualified candidates than is currently the case. This would make it far more likely AI would be successful in achieving the proposed improvements of having a higher level of entry to the Board and to be able to ensure a balance of high standard expertise.

### **3.4. National AGMs and National Boards**

*“Moving to bring national Sections into line with the international organisation in terms of ensuring the uniformity of terminology and governance structures at each level is desirable. “*

Moving to bring national Sections into line with the international organisation in terms of ensuring the uniformity of terminology and governance structures at each level is desirable. The advantages of doing this are well set out by the ICSD. However we suggest that some flexibility needs to be maintained to allow national sections to use terminology that is most appropriate within the national cultural and linguistic context. Also scope ought to remain for sections to use terminology in keeping with any overarching strategy the national organisation has undertaken to use. For example in the case of AIANZ choosing to call its National Board its Governance Team is part of a wider organisational strategy to foster a team approach to management.

A fundamental requirement of AI's governance is to ensure Boards at both national and global level regularly undertake succession planning and at the same time review the expertise and skills of board members and identify any additional expertise or skills required for the board to ensure best practice governance and oversight of the movement.