The Australian Democrats are back and ready for election 2019

Australian Democrats

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AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ARE BACK

The Australian Democrats party has been registered by the Australian Electoral Commission this week, just in time to contest the upcoming federal election.

The party has not had Parliamentary representation since 2008 and officially lost its registration status in 2015 due to declining numbers. However, increasing frustration with the direction of politics prompted remaining Democrats as well as new members to pull together and rebuild.

Party President Elisa Resce remembers that when she first joined, at her very first meeting there was a motion to wind up the Party. “Everyone considered this for a while, but then said the same thing - they can’t see any other group representing what the Australian Democrats stood for, that voice is missing, that voice is needed.

“That sentiment has only grown stronger in recent years when we’ve seen such incredible disillusionment with the major parties due to internal fighting, leadership challenges, obstructionist and dishonest game-playing, and more generally, a growing us vs. them culture in political conversation which is causing real damage,” says Ms Resce.

“That’s what has driven us, more and more - watching all this and thinking, look at what’s missing, we have to do something.”

Ms Resce says the Party is run entirely by volunteers - the new leadership team is made up of teachers, lawyers, farmers, and accountants, from both ‘left’ and ‘right’ of the political spectrum - but more and more people are jumping on board, because they want to see change. While Ms Resce is based in South Australia, the leadership team is made up of members from QLD, NSW and VIC, who work together using phone link-ups. Members in WA have recently connected and are forming an active branch, and the leadership team hopes to support members in NT, ACT and TAS to do the same.

“We come from different backgrounds and in some cases have different views,” says Ms Resce, “but what unites us is the common goal - we want to see respect, integrity, and ethics in Parliament. We want to see Parliamentarians looking at the evidence and finding the best solutions possible. We want Parliament to model that different perspectives can and must be talked through to be able to get to an outcome - we have to work together.”

The Party has undergone a complete restructure, including broadening its focus to purposefully bridge the urban / rural divide both in culture and in practice by merging with rural focus party CountryMinded in November 2018.

Learning lessons from the Democrats’ past, the overhaul has been driven
Australian Democrats

COMMON GROUND, NOT MIDDLE GROUND.

There's never been a more important time for a political force committed to finding common ground - a party that is willing to engage all sides of the political spectrum, to evaluate all ideas against the evidence, and to concepts of collaboration and cooperation so that this country can move forward together.

If we can agree on the destination - an Australia that is economically responsible, environmentally sustainable and compassionate and community-focused - then let’s talk to one another, and plot the course together.

Everyone who has knowledge to share is invited to contribute. Our leadership team also wants to hear from those who are not members, but who have important information to share - community groups, individuals and even other political parties. Each and every member is actively invited to have a say in shaping policies.

We actively look for evidence to guide decision-making, whether that be expert research or first-hand lived experience. But most importantly, policies should always be guided by the people for whom the policy is going to affect the most.

A good idea is a good idea, regardless of which ‘party colours’ it is wearing (or not wearing). The Australian Democrats are committed to supporting good ideas, no matter where they come from.

The Democrats have already undertaken a rigorous candidate recruitment process through a commercial HR firm and expect to announce a campaign team shortly. They have foreshadowed a strong campaign on energy, climate and political accountability.

Ends.

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MEDIA PACK

Please note the following are the leadership team of the Australian Democrats.
Candidates will be announced shortly.

ILISA RESCE - Australian Democrats National President

Lisa is a 44-year-old high school teacher from South Australia. She has lived and taught in rural communities but now teaches in the northern suburbs of Adelaide.
She also has a background in sexual health education and spent 3 years working with three NAPAC units and screening for the schools education team, with a specific focus on partnering with Aboriginal communities and schools.
Lisa has been leader of the party since 2017.

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PETE MALLER – Australian Democrats Deputy National President

Peter runs a farming and grazing enterprise in northern NSW near Boggabilla with his wife Claire. He also provides agronomy, finance and broader agricultural consultancy services to industry.

He has an extensive background in industry and community advocacy, and leadership roles in the grape industry. More recently he has been advocating for meaningful action on climate change mitigation and proactively promoting opportunities in regional communities in renewable energy projects.

He founded the CountryMinded party which merged with the Australian Democrats in 2018.

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