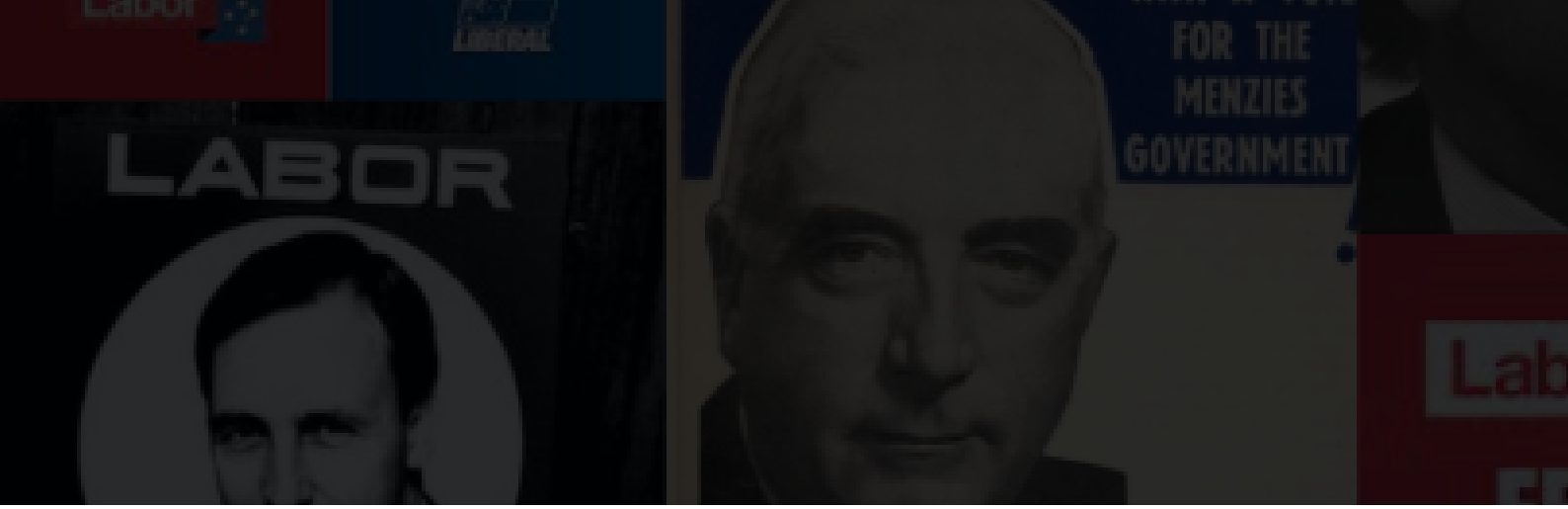
THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA'S TWO PARTY SYSTEM

FUNCTION, FLAWS AND FIXES

DR WILLIAM STOLTZ & DR ZACHARY GORMAN



Contributors

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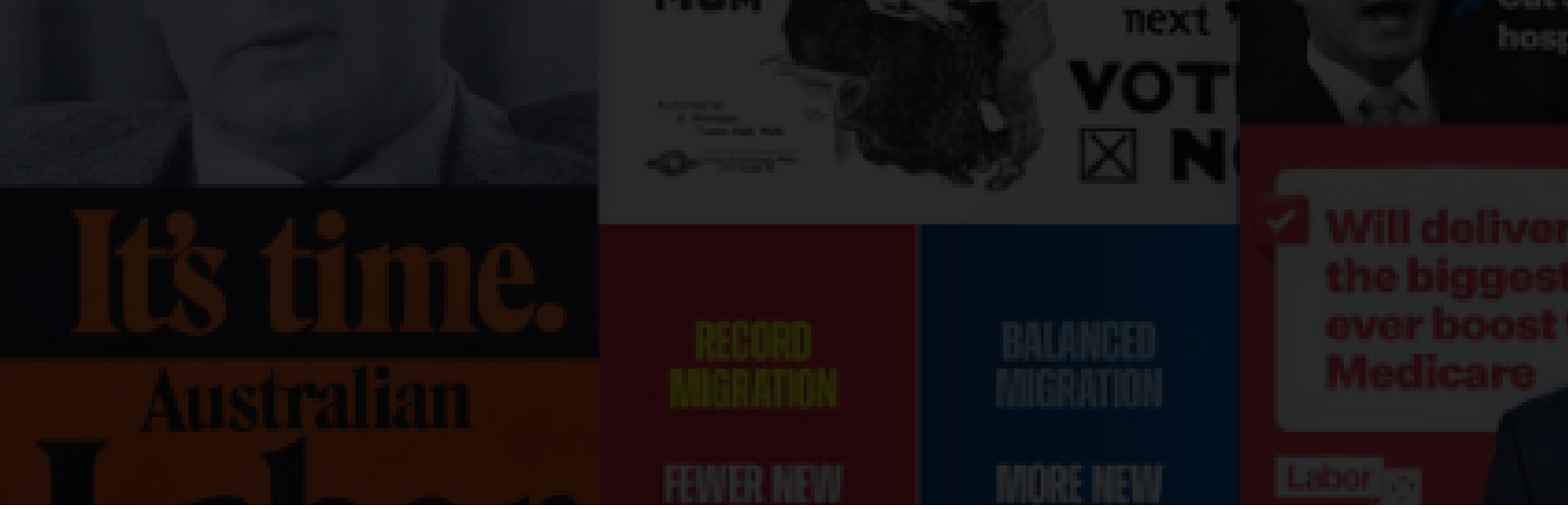
Text by: Dr William Stoltz and Dr Zachary Gorman
Policy Dialogue Event Manager: Christina Parkes
Design and Typography: Victoria Hronas

Robert Menzies Institute
Old Quad, East Wing, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, 3052
https://www.robertmenziesinstitute.org.au
(03) 8344 3411

Robert Menzies
INSTITUTE



Contents

Introduction

The 2025 Federal Election marks a watershed moment in Australian political history. For the first time ever approximately one third of voters gave their primary vote for the House of Representatives to a minor party or independent candidate.[1]

This represents the latest stage in an ongoing and profound reshaping of the dynamics of Australian politics, which has not been halted by temporary fluctuations in the size of the crossbench. Paradoxically, Labor's large majority is accompanied by historic unpopularity.[2] Far from putting an end to third party politics, Labor's large majority was arguably a result of the popularity of independents and minor parties. In 2025, the ALP's total primary vote remained almost two points below where the party had been in their major defeat under Mark Latham's leadership in 2004. Unlike 2004 however, Labor was delivered government via the preferences of a historically large cohort of Australians for whom the two major parties were not their first choice.[2] In this context, following the May 2025 Federal Election, ALP National President, Wayne Swan, warned his party of the need to build a popular machine that can increase the Party's low primary vote, citing that "our membership is ageing and has remained largely static since 2014, despite strong population growth".[3]

By producing a government with a primary vote in the 30s, the 2025 election was more akin to the 1903 and 1906 elections, before the 'fusion' of the Protectionist and Free Trade Parties in 1909 began Australia's transition to the two-party system. When the 1903 election produced three evenly matched parties, Alfred Deakin famously used the 'three elevens' cricket metaphor to suggest that the Westminster responsible government model requires two sides to function properly.[4] The primary vote share of the two major parties at the 2025 Federal Election should prompt us to reflect on Deakin's assessment: what are the benefits of having two major parties? Why are fewer people now voting for them? What can these parties do to reverse the trend?

In 2024, the Robert Menzies Institute convened a gathering of former-parliamentarians, political operatives, pollsters, campaign strategists, journalists, commentators, historians and political scientists. The purpose of the policy dialogue was to evaluate the future of the two-party system in the face of what many thought would be a historic period of minority government. This dialogue included scrutinising how Australia's parties of government arrived at their chronically low primary vote, their future prospects and the plausible pathways for independents and minor parties as they too seek to affect political change at a time when the mandate of the Australian people is both relatively atomised and indecisive. This paper has been informed by the discussions of this dialogue and the insights shared by its

participants. The paper provides the authors' diagnosis of why the two-party system has weakened and outlines recommendations for reversing this decline. These observations and recommendations are the authors' alone, however the authors are greatly indebted to the dialogue's participants, who have enriched this piece through their generosity.

The Case for the Two Party System

Like them or loathe them, Australia's prosperity and security are determined by the decisions of Australia's political parties more than any other variety of institution. This can be easy to forget in light of the displays of power emanating from other parts of society. Workers and businesses generate our national wealth, with business leaders able to mobilise impressive reserves of financial and soft power to influence and shape policy debates. The media, celebrities, and the growing brood of new-generation influencers emanate pervasive cultural power. Modern unions meanwhile preside over billion-dollar superannuation funds and can direct nation-wide industrial action as well as advocacy. Similarly, civil servants, whether they be senior departmental officials, statutory appointees, or national security chiefs can wield impressive administrative and operational power.

Yet, only major political parties with a national focus are tasked with winning and holding government. They do so through exercising two core competencies: *political campaigning* to win a mandate from the majority of voters sufficient to preside over parliament; and *governing*, which encompasses the development and implementation of a national policy agenda or manifesto.

These two tasks of campaigning and governing are almost alien to any other type of institution, meaning they can be little understood, if not maligned, by outsiders. Yet, despite what many might think about those who have made campaigning and governing their vocation, the major political parties that have institutionalised these practices are nevertheless essential to the ability of Australia's democratic system to produce outcomes that are in the national interest and that accord with the will of the people. A political system based around two major parties, whatever its weaknesses, has the virtue of making those who govern uniquely accountable.

This is why Australia's present moment is so significant because the current frailties of Australia's major political parties mean that how these tasks of campaigning and governing are performed – and by whom – will change profoundly if our traditional political parties of government are not able to undertake historic institutional change and reclaim their past pre-eminence. One should not mistake Labor's landslide seat total as such a reclamation, with seats like Bean, Bendigo, Fowler and Fremantle suggesting an ongoing vulnerability otherwise masked by the specific circumstances of the recent election.

Eighty years ago, Robert Menzies led a group of civil society leaders to create the Liberal Party of Australia and forge its coalition with the Country Party (now the National Party).

In doing-so, Menzies and his peers created the modern two-party system with one or other of the Labor Party or the Liberal-National Coalition governing Australia ever since. But it is important to note that the Liberal Party emerged out of a similar moment of crisis in the party system to that which we are currently experiencing. The 1943 federal election saw a then-record number of people stand for federal seats, an increase in candidates made up of large numbers of independents, a range of minor parties, a 'Women for Canberra' movement bearing remarkable similarity to the Teals, and even a 'One Party for Australia' movement which actively advocated for a complete end to the party system.

Criticisms of the allegedly stultifying effects of the major parties are nothing new. It was Menzies who provided a robust refutation of those criticisms, and made a clear case for the necessity of 'great parties', united in a Burkean manner around 'leading general principles of government'. He maintained that such parties not only provide vital ballast to the stability of the political system (the lack of which he claimed had undermined French democracy in the lead up to the war), but were also the best way of ensuring that the voters' voices were heard clearly at the centre of power because the alternative of horse-trading with a crossbench inevitably meant that minority views came to disproportionately shape policy outcomes. In a Forgotten People radio broadcast delivered in 1943, Menzies argued directly against a proliferation of independents:

> 'the ordinary voter has little enough chance to influence government. Once in three years or thereabouts he votes for a candidate for Parliament. If the candidate has a general philosophy of government and a set of political principles, he must indeed be unfortunate if there are no other candidates who share those things and with whom he may join forces in a Party. But if he has no such philosophy or principles, but merely says - "I am an honest man and I shall vote on matters before Parliament as my conscience dictates," - what becomes of the elector... The very idea of four million adult voters in a country like this being so indifferent to the political future of their country that they are content to have no Party principles or Party allegiance, but take 74 random dips in the lucky bag at each election is the height of absurdity'. [5]

Menzies later wrote that "The art of politics is to convey ideas to others, if possible, to persuade a majority to agree, to create or encourage a public opinion so soundly based that it endures and is not blown aside by chance winds; to persuade people to take long-range views." [6]

Institutionalised major parties have a unique ability to embody long range views, because they not only help to produce a more stable political system, but also because they have a sense of continuity and breadth which encompasses all aspects of governing. And if they are failing to persuade voters to think long-term, parties and leaders will achieve nothing by scapegoating the media or the election cycle. It is their own failure to practise their art with the necessary skill and intellect; a failure which is having grave consequences for society.

Part of the impetus for Menzies to form the Liberal Party was the creation of a truly national, member-driven political movement focused on winning government that was not simply the political wing of other powerful institutions that were external to the parliament and unaccountable to the people. In particular, the Liberal Party was designed as a counterpoint to both the Labor Party which acted as the political wing of the union movement, and the United Australia Party, which, in the major states, had become beholden to business-led groups such as the National Union (what The Age referred to as a "secret junta" of Melbourne's business elite).[7] Whether the current major parties have similarly been captured by vested interests, or at least party activists who benefit from prevailing methods and are resistant to change, is an issue that will be touched on in this paper. But the Menzian example sets a clear precedent that given sufficient electoral failure, these powerful impediments can be overcome, and the two-party system revitalised.

The Challenge for the Two Party System

Such revitalisation will almost certainly be needed, as despite their historic pre-eminence the major parties have now been in a condition of electoral and structural decline for almost a decade, with successive polls since the 2016 Federal Election showing between 25% and 30% of Australians routinely preferring to give their first preference vote to an independent or minor party over either of the parties of government.[8,9]

This should not be mistaken as a preference by Australians for minority governments, per se. Australians do not want unstable governments nor weak, hamstrung political leaders. No democratic polity wants this. Yet, the decision of many Australian voters to deprioritise Labor and the Coalition in favour of a variety of protest parties, micro parties, and independents may well yield less stability and accountability either through minority governments, or equally through majority governments whose overwhelming reliance on preferences reduces their ability to claim a clear mandate.

Public trust in Australia's two-party system has dipped sharply over recent elections, undermined by perceptions of factionalism, careerism, and the undue influence of vested interests on the major parties.

There are several compounding factors that have driven this, including an absence of policy entrepreneurialism; bureaucracy as an inhibitor of bold policy; the disintegration of the parties' traditional constituencies; slowness to adapt to changing forms of communication; and voter disdain for some methods of campaigning.

Absence of Policy Entrepreneurialism

This moment in history in particular demands several critical things from Australia's Federal Government that are impossible or exceedingly difficult for minority governments to provide. The nation needs a bold and comprehensive economic reform agenda that can address the converging challenges of technological disruption, worsening geopolitics, an ageing population, and chronic skills shortages in critical sectors. The deterioration of Australia's preferred liberal international order means the need for courage and resolve from Australia's national security leadership is also at a new apogee. Meanwhile, these twin vices of economic decline and national insecurity have placed Australia's social cohesion in a delicate, febrile condition that requires moral leadership if not inspiration from Australia's political leaders. As George Megalogenis has observed, solving our present problems requires a decade of incumbency.[10]

An interesting parallel might be drawn with the challenges raised by the Second World War, which prompted a unique and concerted effort on both sides of politics to produce a comprehensive policy program to meet the challenges of the era. In Labor's case, this produced the 'reconstruction' agenda, responsible for landmark policies like new social services, the broadening of migration, and Snowy Hydro. On the Liberal side of politics, it produced the visionary Forgotten People broadcasts, the Liberal Party itself, and ultimately the pro-enterprise agenda of limited government, tax cuts, the abolition of rationing and controls, and productivity encouragement, that would underpin Australian prosperity through the 1950s and 60s.

In the modern era, for Australian consumers and businesses to have faith that a new economic agenda is coherent and achievable, they must be reassured that, as in the Menzies era, the government which has developed such an agenda will endure long enough to implement it. When it comes to withstanding the insecurities of a more hostile world, Australians need sufficient time to get to *know* those who are leading them in order to be reassured by the courage and resolve of our leaders.

Australians are attuned to where the nation needs to be heading and are hungry for political leadership that will get us there.

Focus group insights from RedBridge Group have captured this desire among Australians for true systemic change. Kos Samaras explains that Australians "are looking for structural, deep reform… not handouts," in response to Australia's persistent economic dilemmas.[11] Historically, Australians from wealthier, more highly educated demographics were considered more in favour of large scale reforms. For example, the goods and services tax (GST) reform was supported by economists and the business community when taken to an election by John Hewson in 1993, but rejected by many Australian households for fear they would be worse off. While the view that big reforms tend to be elite desires may have been true in the past, Samaras explains that RedBridge's recent research indicates that it is among so-called working-class demographics and millennial Australians where the wish for bold reform is palpable. This is due to a sense that aspirations once realistic to hard working Australians – like home ownership, good schooling for their kids, and the occasional holiday – are now entirely out of reach. As Samaras observes, "they want the world to change" yet are being offered very little by either major party by way of compelling, significant policy reform.[12]

This is something of a cultural challenge to how Australia's parties of government approach reform. Australian politics has long been subject to a 'gradualist' tradition of policy change, where reform is ground-out over time in protracted debates that serve to both educate the electorate and land on a compromise position where the major parties, civil society groups, business, and the public can all 'live with' the outcome. The GST is emblematic of this gradualism, with the Gorton Government first considering the idea of a flat rate consumption tax in the 1970s – almost thirty years before it finally came into effect.[13] Other examples include the National Disability Insurance Scheme (formal consultation began in 2008, fully implemented in 2020);[14] the floating of the Australian Dollar (first proposed by the Reserve Bank in 1966, floated in 1983);[15] and compulsory superannuation (the process for economy-wide implementation began in 1983, mandated in 1992).

In so many of the instances of Australia's most significant policy changes, it has taken our political system a decade or more for the major parties to bring them to fruition. The major parties' tradition of policy gradualism is maybe one of the reasons for stagnation in their primary vote and the expansion of the crossbench, as voters signal their frustration that Labor and the Coalition are not driving change fast enough to respond to the needs of the time, nor making compelling cases why voters should support them. It is something some independents have begun exploiting, leveraging the fact they are unbound to party room consensus-building to extol whatever policy proposals they wish. An example of this policy entrepreneurialism is demonstrated by Allegra Spender, the Teal independent Member for Wentworth, who recently published a comprehensive tax reform green paper as part of an ongoing tax policy development process in collaboration with business, unions, and other civil society stakeholders.[16]

While it is sometimes said that the problem of major parties forming long term policies is attributable to a relatively short federal election cycle, it is not the sole factor. State governments that have moved to four-year fixed terms have arguably been afflicted by a similar absence of policy bravery as their Federal counterparts. Indeed, the Australian Constitution provides something of an in-built mechanism to combat the potential drawbacks of our short election cycle. The ability of incumbent governments to call an early election, at a politically opportune time, allows them to consolidate their grip on power and gain a mandate for major reforms that might have seemed too bold to propose from opposition. Of the three longest serving Australian prime ministers (Menzies, Howard and Hawke), all three went to an early election after their first term, in a deliberate attempt to implement at least one signature reform. And Menzies, as the record holder, did so on three separate occasions (1951, 1955, 1963).

Notably, even with the issues identified in this paper, the record of every party elected to government since 1931 having achieved a second term, remains intact. So time in office is not necessarily the cause of the policy malaise, although a high turnover of prime ministers and accompanying internal party divisions is likely a contributing factor. This in turn, to use Menzies's framework, can be traced to the tendency of parties with weak governing philosophies to divide into factional groups, which become unduly focused on internal political advantage rather than values-aligned policy directions.

Bureaucracy as an Inhibitor of Bold Policy

Adjacent to exercising policy entrepreneurialism is the requirement to have an effective plan for managing and getting the best out of Australia's bureaucracy. Regardless of a government's ideological persuasion, their capacity to implement their policy agenda will be highly dependent on the effectiveness and efficacy of the Australian Public Service (APS). In 1999 the Howard Government undertook a large-scale reform of the Public Service Act, designed to strengthen the key values underlying the public service and give departments greater flexibility in meeting the policy and administrative needs of government. However, thus far both major parties, particularly the Liberal-National Coalition, have neglected the task of further reforming the APS. The changes required are unglamorous and, predictably, even technocratic. The instinctive response of both major parties to rely increasingly on ministerial staff for policy advice and to politicise the senior service has become counter-productive to making the civil service itself match-fit. Dennis Richardson, one of Australia's longest serving and most accomplished mandarins of the modern era, noted upon his retirement from the APS that Australia's civil service should be subject to a royal commission to identify ways to modernise its structure, employment conditions, as well as the incentives of its performance and operations.[17] One of the curiosities of the APS is that its organisational hierarchies have remained

largely unchanged since they were last reconstituted in the 1970s. The division of labour and delegation of authorities remains aligned to a model of senior executive leadership (notionally appointed by the responsible minister), a cohort of mid-level executive leaders, and a third cohort of officers responsible for the bulk of the APS work generating policy advice and/or implementing policy directions. The politicisation of senior APS roles has been restrained compared with the United States where several levels of the hierarchy of most agencies and departments are selected by the White House.

Albanese becoming the first prime minister since John Howard to win a second election highlights how the multi-term longevity that was the norm of past decades, has become the exception. Albanese faces the difficult political challenge of translating his parliamentary majority into increased popularity. The magnitude of this challenge is why Labor's current parliamentary majority should not be assumed as a foundation for enduring stability. Indeed, faster cycles of shorter periods in power, including early elections and double dissolutions, should still be expected. In this environment the relationship between the government and the public service is likely to change, especially long held norms restraining the politicisation of the public service. Shorter times in office and more volatile parliamentary compositions should be expected to generate a greater predilection for governing via executive fiat and via the installation of partisan or ideologically faithful loyalists in the leadership of the APS who will focus on implementing the government's agenda in the time available. This will mark a significant shift in the culture and conduct of the APS.

Some may well recoil in horror at the prospect of an American-style politicisation of our traditional Westminster-style impartial public service. But it is an understandable, if crudely self-interested, consequence of our likely more volatile political future.

Whatever the risks of politicisation, such a development would not necessarily be electorally unpopular. For the portion of the Australian population that feels over-taxed, over-regulated, or ignored, they may be quite favourable to hearing a politician promise to bring to heel aloof, Canberra-centric technocrats by installing officials who will "get on with implementing the will of the people." Whatever the approach, electoral success is likely to follow the party which can demonstrate a compelling theory for improving and directing the public service towards the nation's needs.

It must be noted that this concern is not a novel one. The ministerial staff system introduced by Whitlam and secured by Fraser was an attempt to achieve more effective political direction of the public service while shielding the APS from politicisation (Whitlam being concerned that an APS that had served the Coalition for 23 years would not adjust adequately to the setting of new priorities). This system arguably helped facilitate the more aggressively reformist policy agenda Australia experienced during the 1980s and 90s. However, the effects of this injection of outsider viewpoints appear to have worn off, as ministerial staff have gradually proven

to be focused on the conservative task of retaining office, over utilising that office to enact necessary change, thus exacerbating an existing negative tendency within the major parties.

It should equally be noted that questions have recently been raised over the high levels of politicisation that the public service is already experiencing at the state level. In December 2023 the Victorian Ombudsman released the second part of a report into the 'Alleged politicisation of the public sector'.[18] This found that while the incumbent Labor Government was not stacking the public service with political appointees, its ability to offer 'frank and fearless' advice was being eroded, in favour of a culture of secrecy which gave undue weight to the political repercussions of decision making. Hence, while the assumption may be that the public service can hold back the reform agendas of governments, it is equally true that the risk-aversion of those governments (and the major parties constituting them) can likewise restrict the public service's ability to facilitate outcomes which are in the public interest, further undermining faith in the political system as a whole.

Disintegration of the Parties' Traditional Constituencies

Truly national politics arrived with the coming of Federation in 1901. For the first time the totality of the Australian people were represented in a standalone Federal Parliament. The Labor Party had an exceptional advantage in this national context. Across the geographic and cultural divides of Australia's respective States, many Australians were engaged in trades, manual labour roles, and technical professions that were subject to heavy unionisation.

Many unions, which eventually operated on a national level, supported collective bargaining and strongly advocated for protectionist policies to limit foreign goods and labour. Throughout much of twentieth century, the Labor Party, as the political wing of the union movement, drew support from a distinct group of Australians involved in union activities. These individuals often identified with the blue-collar trades where they spent most, if not all, of their working lives. However, in the modern era fewer Australians work in blue-collar trades. This shift has led to a decline in union membership as more Australians are employed in white-collar and service industries where unionisation is less common. Additionally, the globalisation and liberalisation of the Australian economy has reduced the appeal of protectionism. Consequently, fewer Australians view the collectivism of the labour movement as a solution to the problems of economic and social issues. Despite this, the Labor Party has seen relative electoral success recently, partly due to the consistent support of preferences from the Greens and other minor parties. For the Coalition, however, their constituency has historically been more amorphous; drawn from a cross section of Australians who have found a classical liberal philosophy of government appealing due to its emphasis on limited government, freedom of enterprise, freedom of

speech. This less class-centric, values-based appeal to Australians proved successful with the small business owners, salaried workers, and home-makers that Robert Menzies famously described as the "forgotten people" precisely because they did not neatly fall into a class-conscious, organised social grouping, but rather constituted the broad middle class.[19] In particular, the Liberal Party resonated with women who found themselves outside the vocational tribes that drove the politics of their male counterparts by virtue of their being homemakers and community organisers or from being still comparatively locked out of many forms of employment. As a result, an unusually high proportion of the early Liberal Party membership was women, drawn in no small part from the Australian Women's National League whose members and organisational structures were amalgamated into the new Liberal Party. The modern-day Liberal Party, however, no longer boasts this high female membership. Quotas are suggested to boost the number of women in preselection, aiming to enhance their representation in the Party and attract more female members and supporters. However, a quota mechanism has yet to be successfully integrated into the Party's typically democratic candidate selection process.

The Liberal Party also had to contend with internal ructions over whether the so-called philosophy of government at the heart of the Liberal Party should place greater emphasis on classical liberalism, conservatism, or indeed nationalism. This competitive tension at the core of the Liberal Party's 'broad church' has at times created public disagreements or divisions that have alienated certain voters and in-turn created confusion among others as to the policy priorities of the Party.

While the traditional voter bases of each major party are distinctive, changes in Australian society pose for each an existential question of 'who do we represent?' In Labor's case, the large expansion of Australia's property-owning middle class associated with the Menzies period, has meant that the ALP can no longer rely on its traditional working class and union base to provide enough support to form government. Hence, since Whitlam onward, the party has been increasingly focused on winning over a socially progressive section of the middle class from the Coalition. However, as that process has expanded over the years, it has revealed increasing tensions and even outright contradictions between the views of the traditional base and Labor's new constituency. This was seen in the results of the Voice referendum, but it is equally at play in the politics of climate change. On climate, affluent progressives are more inclined to support short term economic pain in exchange for perceived long term environmental benefits, whereas more cost-sensitive constituencies can be less able to bear that pain. It should also be noted that while Labor's union ties remain strong, progressive activists are more likely to join and become politically active within the party than their working-class counterparts, hence the drift away from traditional positions has only become more powerful with each passing year.

Up until recently, the Coalition had been able to capitalise on Labor's woes, such that

at the 2022 election it won the 10 seats with the lowest average household income – a complete inverse of the traditional political paradigm.[20] But it has equally been disturbed by the new 'post material' desires of traditionally blue-ribbon seats, where asset inflation has undermined the appeal of the aspirations incapsulated in Menzies's Forgotten People speech. The fact that a majority of Liberal Party branches and donors are often still concentrated in what are now Teal independent seats, adds to the tension between new and old constituencies.

Since 'rusted on' voters are an ever-declining proportion of the electorate, the task of persuading the electorate has never been greater. In particular, at a time when stabilising a falling primary vote seems more achievable than raising it, harvesting preferences is an increasingly essential aspect of winning government. A task made more difficult for the Liberal Party, as right-of-centre minor parties are significantly more fractured. Hence, even though cumulatively One Nation, Trumpet of the Patriots, the Libertarian Party, Family First, People First, Katter's Australia Party, Australian Christians, and the Shooters and Fishers received a House of Representatives primary vote similar to that of the Greens, the Coalition did not receive as consistent a preference flow as Labor received from the Greens and independents.[21] The fact that a greater section of the electorate is 'up for grabs', is likely to increase volatility in the electoral cycle.

Crisis of Communications

The rapidly evolving, technology-driven communications landscape has increasingly become less permissive for politicians and consequently affected the major parties' ability to campaign effectively. Digital communications have driven the atomisation of audience's information diet into evermore niche selections of media as individuals are able to curate bespoke diets of digital, print and social media. Broadcast messaging, through legacy print, television, and radio media is unable to impact audiences as effectively as narrowcast social and digital media.

Curiously, while social media has displaced its competitors in its capacity to attract and hold audiences, it is the least trusted form of information available to Australians.[22] However, rather than translate into a resurgent consumption of traditional, more trusted media, audience trust is transferring to 'charismatic communicators'. These public personalities build large loyal audiences by creating compelling and entertaining content that typically spans multiple forms, with podcasting, blogging, and video creation the key tools for their reach.

Such charismatic communicators are difficult for traditional political campaigners to engage with because content they produce must sustain its authenticity to ensure its reach and impact, which means these communicators and their audiences are highly resistant to being stage-managed or shaped. That said, politicians can have success

in this space if they are willing to accept the sometimes unscripted, free-wheeling nature of a communications medium where journalistic and editorial checks are rarely in place. For example, Donald Trump's interview with podcaster Joe Rogan allowed him to reach approximately 40 million people and extemporise in a three-hour open format that would rarely be available in traditional broadcast media.[23] In Australia, Labor front-bencher and Member for Sydney, Tanya Plibersek, has been interviewed by controversial YouTuber Jordan Shanks.[24] More recently, Leader of the Opposition Peter Dutton recorded with Olympic diver turned podcaster Sam Fricker while Prime Minister Anthony Albanese prioritised interviews with the satirical Betoota Advocate and influencer Abbie Chatfield.[25]

Major party politicians and their campaign strategists are already seeking to engage with these 'new' communicators and produce their own, similar content.[26] Given the persistence of the atomisation of the Australian information environment, the major parties will need to continue adapting long-established methods and strategies of 'broadcast' campaigning for a 'narrowcast' world. This transition will not be easy as evidenced in strong criticism of the Coalition's social media marketing campaign and 'meme' strategy during the 2025 election campaign.[27]

On the positive side, the longer format of podcasts and articles unrestrained by print length, offers a new opportunity to explain complex ideas and policies that would not fit neatly into a traditional news soundbite. This offers the modern politician the chance to produce something akin to Menzies's famous radio broadcasts, which paved the way for much of the early Liberal Party's philosophical coherence and success.

For all the challenges of the new media landscape, it also presents opportunities to escape the limitations of traditional media which have contributed to the increasingly narrow nature of the major party's electoral pitches.

Presidentialisation of Campaigning

Under Australia's political system, voters elect the representative for their local electorate while the Parliament, especially through the party caucuses, selects the Prime Minister as the head of the government. That, however, has not prevented the major parties from running highly presidential-style campaigns that place their leader at the centre of national campaigns. Robert Menzies and Gough Whitlam each capitalised on this style of campaigning by leveraging new media to place their personality front and centre of their parties' bids for government. More recently, Kevin Rudd's presidential-style 2007 election campaign arguably shifted the approach of the major parties thereafter.

Contrasting himself to John Howard's waning Coalition government seeking its fifth term in office, Labor's campaign focused heavily on showcasing Rudd as an affable if dorky technocrat who would be a safe pair of hands. While Howard continued to prioritise his favoured medium of talk-back radio, Rudd's team ventured to place him in the new 'info-tainment' medium of light news programs that focused as much on the messenger as the message. This was typified by his appearance on the new late night comedy news program Rove.[28] The apparent success of this presidential campaign, along with the viral sharing of content via social media, accelerated the use of vitriolic character assassinations against the prime minister and alternative prime minister respectively as a deliberate tactic of campaigning. Examples range from then Opposition Leader Tony Abbott speaking to a rally at Parliament House where he repeated the crowd's cries to 'ditch the witch' in reference to Prime Minister Julia Gillard, to the more recent 2022 Labor campaign which centred its strategy on stoking animosity towards Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

While campaigning that 'plays the man not the ball' can be effective and arguably played a significant role in ensuring the scale of Dutton's recent defeat, it is often cited by Australians who have become disaffected with the major parties for deliberately placing voters in the position of having to choose between the perceived 'least worst' leader rather than well-developed policy platforms.

While the 'presidentialisation' of campaigning is not a new phenomenon, parties have grown increasingly reliant on it over time. Parties have used a presidential-style campaigns as a crutch to avoid articulating major goals or values - positions that might provide opponents with larger targets to attack, but which also offer more evocative banners to attract supporters. If, as seems likely, the growing influence of independents and minor parties reduces the extent to which politics is viewed as a simple choice between two mutually exclusive options, the ability to rely solely on attacking one's opponent will gradually diminish. Even from the basic electoral calculus that drives much party thinking and strategy, the need for a positive and policy-driven appeal is likely to increase. This was demonstrated in the Coalition's inability to achieve a swing against the government, despite an extended cost of living crisis that the Opposition made central to their campaign.

Recommendations

As a means for Australia's parties of government to attempt to reverse their decline, this paper proposes four recommendations that should help to modernise, democratise, and generally strengthen these important institutions. These recommendations focus on what these major parties can do within themselves, rather than what institutional reforms they might undertake in relation to the codified democratic institutions in which they operate, namely the Federal Parliament and the Australian Constitution. These recommendations relate to how the parties can

rejuvenate policy entrepreneurialism; improve political communications and modernise party membership; how they can encourage and institutionalise more regular renewal; and how they can better democratise candidate selection.

Rejuvenating Policy Entrepreneurialism

The major parties can undertake a number of internal reforms to inculcate a better culture of policy entrepreneurialism. Peak bodies and external think tanks could be asked to present white papers to party leaders on policy problems and how these bear on the values promoted by party philosophies. At their respective divisional levels, the parties could create more direct linkages between member-driven policy committees, party room policy committees, and related parliamentary committee members. External, non-member experts could also be invited onto those party committees charged with policy development.

However, currently the most pertinent blocker to the major parties bringing more fulsome agendas before electors is the prevailing belief among campaign administrators that on balance, detailed and ambitious policy manifestos create a 'large target' for opponents to exploit. This is especially the conventional wisdom when parties are campaigning from opposition and can see paths to victory based on exploiting community discontent toward the incumbent, rather than trying to mobilise enthusiasm for the alternative government.

It is probably true that 'small target' campaign strategies have in recent times helped oppositions win elections; or perhaps more accurately, they created improved conditions for governments to lose them. Yet the major parties need to recognise small target campaigning, typically paired with ad hominem attacks on opponents, is ultimately damaging the two-party system as disdain for this type of campaigning paired with an absence of compelling policy is turning voters towards independents and minor parties. 'Small-target' policies deprive a party of a credible mandate and suggest, indeed, a lack of capacity to make a compelling argument for policies that address major problems. As discussed, the major parties have a common purpose to develop their core competencies to run winning campaigns and to govern. Yet the former task seems to have overtaken the later, to the extent that developing a stronger agenda for government is discarded entirely if there is a perceived risk that too many policies may hinder immediate electoral prospects.

To improve their proficiency as engines of policy ambition that can garner renewed community support for the parties-of-government, party leaders need to insist on campaigns that not only win them government but that generate genuine community mandates for the policy reforms the country needs. To this end, major party candidates and parliamentarians need to see the task of building new constituencies for policy changes as one and the same with building support for their party.

Institutionalising Renewal

A recurrent criticism of Parliament, and the two-party system in particular, is that there are too many career politicians whose prolonged tenures are preventing necessary renewal of the voices and ideas featured in our national politics. In contrast, the early Liberal Party was notable for its large cohort of '49ers', a group of members made up largely of ex-servicemen from a variety of backgrounds, who all entered Parliament simultaneously with the doubling of the House of Representatives at the 1949 election. This gave the Menzies Government an injection of talent and energy that its successors have often lacked.

The electoral impact of renewal was vividly demonstrated in the recent victory of the Canadian Liberal Party over the Conservative Party, where the incumbent Liberals were able to reverse their seemingly insurmountable decline in popularity through the selection of Mark Carney to replace outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and mount a defence of Canada against US President Donald J. Trump.

Australia's dearth of member turnover has arguably contributed to concerns that Parliament does not adequately comprise the variety of experiences, skills, and worldviews required to satisfactorily represent modern Australia. This is especially so when a high number of the transitions that do occur hand safe seats to former political staffers or union officials, who have little experience of the real-world economy or life outside of politics. Meanwhile, renewal of the parliamentary ranks is arguably made more difficult in Australia due to the relatively smaller size of Australia's parliament in comparison with other Westminster democracies. While we should expect resistance from those whom it would negatively impact, major parties could explore mechanisms to better institutionalise the renewal of their parliamentary ranks,[29] including by placing additional conditions on the number of times a sitting member can receive re-endorsement by the party for the same seat.

Many democracies have constitutional provisions for term limits, which would prove problematic in Australia's Westminster system where leaders of the government and cabinet members are drawn from the legislature, not to mention the challenges of winning constitutional referenda in Australia. Nevertheless, these overseas examples show that democracies can effectively deploy types of term limits as a renewal mechanism. At the executive level, term limits are in place in a range of democracies including Brazil, France, the United States, Poland, and South Korea. Term limits for legislators are in place in Mexico, the Philippines, and within the United States, where sixteen states have limits. Meanwhile, most democracies apply a mandatory retirement age (typically 70) for senior judicial appointments with a similar effect as term limits (although notably[30] Menzies opposed the introduction of such limits when it came to the High Court of Australia).

These term and age limits have the effect of standardising institutional renewal, checking the power of public officials, and inculcating stability by making succession more predictable and easier to plan, something each of the major parties would benefit from. Another factor is that medical science is continuing to expand both the longevity and cognitive vitality of many, including professional civil servants, especially in wealthy countries such as Australia. Renewing the parties' political ranks in a managed way is therefore likely to become more necessary to draw in next generation leaders who would previously have succeeded their elders more rapidly through natural attrition.[31]

Parties already impose a range of conditions on candidates receiving endorsement that are additional to Constitutional requirements, such as gender quotas and targets as well as minimum periods of party membership. The Labor Party's continued endorsement of serving parliamentarians is also conditional on those members not voting against the Party's agreed position in parliamentary votes. The Liberal Party may have more philosophical difficulty with the idea, given their commitment to local control (otherwise known as the principle of subsidiarity).[32]

For the major parties, as they are operating at both the state and federal levels, the effect of limiting endorsement could be to rejuvenate the parties at both parliamentary systems as politicians would have an incentive to move between the parliaments should they wish to continue their political career.

The precise limit on re-endorsements should be a subject of debate if the reform were to be advanced, and factors like the whether the member were the current leader of the party would need to be accounted for. However, considering recent retirements in 2024 by Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham (18 years) and Hon. Paul Fletcher MP (15 years) a term limit equating to approximately fifteen years in office would appear to be a sufficient period for an effective parliamentarian to have a rich and impactful tenure spanning multiple projects for their electorate, several Parliamentary roles and a number of senior Cabinet appointments.

Term limits on party candidates would be a matter, generally, for party organisations, not parliamentary parties, and would require recognition by the broader party memberships that they are a reasonable approach to refreshing the parliamentary teams. If the intention of term limits is to try to loosen the grip of vested interests and activists on the party, one can expect that those interests will fight to defend their positions. However, the respect which successful past leaders hold among the party faithful gives them a unique ability to apply pressure in favour of change, should they be convinced of the benefits of a given reform.

Opponents of limits often argue that they undermine expertise. Governance,

they contend, is a complex endeavour requiring years of experience to master, as exemplified in the career of Menzies himself, who was widely viewed to have been a much-improved prime minister in his second stint in the job. While this is a valid concern, at this low point in the major parties' electoral appeal the benefits of renewal outweigh the risks of losing institutional memory. Moreover, staggered limits across parliamentary cycles could mitigate potential disruptions, ensuring that experienced legislators remain in place to guide new members. Ultimately, term limits would compel both major parties to cultivate a steady pipeline of talent, fostering a culture of mentorship and innovation that strengthens the two-party system.

Primaries

Another major criticism of Australia's major parties, especially by the Teal independents, is the limited participation of outsiders in candidate selection. Neither Labor nor the Coalition parties open participation in their preselections to local constituents who are not party members. In an Australian context, this means a paid member of an association, bound by an agreed set of rules, and with the ability to restrict membership based on those rules. This can be contrasted with the United States, where party affiliation involves self-identification and registration, often in an extremely public and searchable fashion. A range of other requirements also restrict which party members and party officials can be involved in selecting candidates.

In past eras, large local memberships and strong branch organisations within electorates once provided Labor and the Coalition with a healthy system where the local party infrastructure was representative of, and aligned to, the concerns and mores of each electorate. However, this has changed as rapidly declining party membership has generated a disconnect between local party branches and the large electorates for whom they are selecting candidates.

Why those who currently enjoy the benefits of tightly controlled pre-selections would abandon that control, again raises the question of overcoming vested interests that exist within both major parties. But, as suggested in the opening, the Menzian example of overcoming sordid business control of the UAP, suggests that given electoral failure of sufficient magnitude, such interests can be made to give way. Indeed, already in the New South Wales and Victorian Divisions of the Liberal Party, there have been moves towards a 'plebiscite' model of preselection, that gives the ordinary party member a direct say in who their candidate should be. This has led to large preselection conventions in many electorates, that do serve to energise the party faithful and restore faith in the preselection process. However, its impact on membership numbers has been limited, and concerns about a disconnect with the broader electorate remain. Hence, the major parties should consider experimentation with a primary system, potentially in which a combination of party members, officials, and local constituents select candidates. There is building support for such a reform,

and even occasional experiments since 2001.[33]

Primaries have proven effective in other democracies, particularly in the United States, where they encourage broad public participation in the political process. Although the laws and regulations governing primaries do vary immensely between American states, reflecting various levels of openness, particularly when it comes to the involvement of 'unaffiliated' voters. They also restrict participation to registered voters, but given Australia's system of compulsory voting, a restriction based on citizenship would suffice here.

The rights of party members would need to be protected in such a primary system, potentially by giving member votes greater weighting than non-members. The use of primaries could be particularly effective in those electorates where local party membership has substantially declined to the point where member-based preselections are typically replaced with party administration picks.

Ideally non-member constituents would also 'register' as being aligned to the party on the US model and meet other requirements to prevent disingenuous participation, like a minimum period of having resided in the electorate. To make such party affiliation publicly available would run counter to Australian traditions of political privacy, but this would act as a strong check on disingenuous participation, which would otherwise be lost without a membership fee. A primary system would therefore be administratively complex and ideally involve a degree of oversight and support from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and its state counterparts. This would not be unprecedented, as the AEC has overseen high-level elections for Australia's trade unions for over fifty years.[34]

The introduction of primaries for Federal candidates could help Labor and the Coalition reconnect with their voter bases, ensuring that candidates better reflect local values and priorities.

One might assume that this would also provide greater opportunities for someone who had not been a staffer, and instead accumulated real-world experience, to break into politics.

Some critics argue that primaries could increase factionalism, as external groups might seek to influence the process. However, there is little evidence that the current closed-off system is tangibly inhibiting the growth of factionalism. Others worry that the logistical complexity and cost of primaries could strain party resources. However, these challenges can be mitigated through clear rules and transparency measures, including the involvement of the AEC. A more philosophical criticism, particularly as primaries function in the US, is that they undermine freedom of association, by inhibiting the parties' ability to control their membership and govern themselves, and

thus dilute the very concept of what a party is and stands for.[35] But as long as paid membership remains a precondition standing for preselection, a successful hybrid of Australian and American models might be achieved. The long-term benefits of primaries—enhanced engagement with democracy, improved candidate quality, and stronger grassroots networks—far outweigh these potential drawbacks.

Modernising Communications, Outreach and Membership

Major party candidates will continue to have to be creative, experimental, and persistent in their use of digital communications, with a focus on 'narrowcasting' to key demographics through methods like podcasting. Yet, because of the low levels of trust Australians have in social media, the most impactful forms of communications are likely to arise in the real world. This means using persistent, highly visual campaign methods that not only showcase candidates' messages but also create a visual permission structure for disaffected voters who have turned to independents. This way, they can feel comfortable returning to the major parties because they see 'people like them' doing that the same. The challenge with achieving this impact is recruiting. The major parties' capacity to reach voters is directly dependent upon their capacity to recruit proactive volunteers who will provide their time, money, as well as their community and professional networks to their chosen party.

This brings us to the related issue that the parties need to improve and modernise the nature of party membership itself. Parties could consider reducing their membership fees (typically over $100 per year for non-concession adults), introducing more flexible payment methods, introducing recruitment incentives as well as recruitment targets for parliamentary members and senior office-bearers. When the Liberal Party was founded, there was a hope that high membership fees would help the party become self-sufficient, and less reliant on powerful donors who might expect policy favours in return. But given the expensive nature of modern campaigning, membership fees do little to cover the costs, and act primarily as an inhibitor on participation. There is a clear precedent demonstrating the benefits of taking the low-fee route, in Liberal Party predecessor the Liberal and Reform Association, which boasted 70,000 members in New South Wales alone as of 1904, and was consequently very successful in securing the support of 'middle Australia'.[36] While high membership figures were once universally considered something to boast about, these days the incentive is often to reject membership applicants, so as to protect factional control over a given branch. This has become easier, because the consistent decline in membership on both sides of the divide, means that your opponent is less likely to raise the issue.

However, expanding the number of members while improving the value of party membership also needs to be linked to reconnecting political activism, and therefore party membership, with Australians' professional identity and association. Put simply,

for working Australians party affiliation needs to be seen as professionally advantageous. This can be achieved in a number of ways. Leadership endorsement of parliament as a public service and the privilege and honour of contributing to the community in this way is probably essential. Robert Menzies consistently pointed to this aspect and decried regarding parliamentary service as a 'job'. Engagement activities, like recruitment events and social gatherings could be organised around party-aligned networks targeting distinct professions as well as citizens in the wider community. This would create conduits for parties to better understand and advocate for particular vocational groups whilst also bringing professionals together in networks that may benefit mentoring and professional development. Parties should also continue to find new ways to empower members with distinct participation privileges. One of the main benefits of party membership was once seen as the social and networking opportunities it provided. And while civic participation has declined across all sorts of voluntary organisations due to a complex range of factors, parties have arguably done little to recapture the warm and friendly atmosphere that used to draw in people with no ambition of seeking office for themselves. Above all, people tend to become involved in politics because of a belief in contributing to the well-being of their community, and historically, as Menzies pointed out, a philosophy that shows how this may be done is both motivating and unifying.

If primaries provide a more democratic method for the general population to participate in the selection of the candidates in their electorate, the canvasing of members to select the party leader is another innovation that can help guard against the parties becoming captive to narrow sectional interests whilst also making membership more appealing. Following its defeat at the 2013 election, the ALP conducted a ballot for the federal leadership which for the first time included the canvassing of a portion of general members of the party.[37] Similar processes are in place in other Westminster-style parties like the UK Labour Party, UK Conservative Party, Canadian Liberal Party and Canadian Conservative Party. In the case of Canada, the open process of the Canadian Liberal Party in 2025 allowed Mark Carney, who did not even hold a seat in parliament, to be chosen to succeed outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The Liberal and National parties do not currently select their leaders in this way, but doing so would arguably make the prospect of taking up membership more appealing. Perhaps more importantly, the major parties' decision to adopt member-inclusive leadership ballots would create a check against the type of rapid and untransparent leadership changes that preoccupied the major parties between 2010 and 2018. Indeed, Labor's federal leadership ballot was introduced as a response to internal and public criticism of the untransparent manner in which successive prime ministers had been removed from office. The potential trade-off of leadership primaries is that they would expose party divisions and introduce a protracted process at times when swift unification around a new leader may be more favourable. However, given the presidentialisation of campaigning, member-selected leaders arguably have a

stronger basis for building trust with voters who are tired of being told that they are voting for a certain prime minister, only to have that choice overturned by a leadership spill.

Conclusion

If reform initiatives like those proposed in this paper are not at least attempted, then the eventual disappearance of one of, if not both of the current major parties should be regarded with seriousness. In the case of the Coalition, the transition of the Teal movement into a party of their own should be seen a as particular possibility. Conversely, the party that most swiftly embraces and implements initiatives for structural and cultural reform stands to benefit from a significant first mover advantage. This is especially the case for the introduction of primaries as these reforms would make the party more representative of their constituents, compel them to be more engaged with electorates, and create pathways to turn this engagement into membership growth.

This paper should not be interpreted as being supportive of the Coalition or the Labor Party as the major parties. As we know, realignments occur from time to time, often at moments when the two-party system breaks down in a national crisis – in wartime or economic depression. Rather, this paper supports the value to our democracy and national interest of parties-of-government that develop a vision for the country, seek to be truly nationally representative and to exercise the core competencies of campaigning for a mandate and using that mandate to govern. In theory, a major party additional to Labor and the Coalition could emerge. The rise of a third party-of-government to displace one or both of the present two is not impossible but would seem unlikely. For one, any new entrant would have to establish a truly national infrastructure and membership base. Doing so from scratch would be exceedingly difficult and costly. An alternative is for a major change to take place in the electoral bases of the existing parties, altering their fundamental character. Such a change can lead to a new policy focus, or a renewal of traditional directions. As the Labor Party split of 1955 shows, the creation of new parties is more likely to have the effect of diminishing both the old and the new party, depriving each of a viable pathway to government for some time. Such a new party would also presumably not be immune from the same external, social and cultural factors that have inhibited the current major parties from regaining their past success. Articulation of a policy-relevant philosophy remains the most plausible mechanism for maintaining unity and promoting change.

Appendix
Dialogue Attendees

Professor Frank Bongiorno AM
Professor of History, Australian National University

Natanael Bloch
EU-Australia Emerging Leader Alumni, Political Advisor, Co-founder of the Europa Voice podcast

Barrie Cassidy
Chair of Old Parliament House (Museum of Australian Democracy)

Jack Cook
Managing Director of Campaigns at Quotex

Georgina Downer
CEO, Robert Menzies Institute

Dr Stewart Gill OAM
Master of Queen's College, The University of Melbourne

Dr Zachary Gorman
Research Manager and Historian, Robert Menzies Institute

Anne Henderson AM
Deputy Director, The Sydney Institute

Professor David Kemp AC
Board Member, Robert Menzies Institute

Professor Mark Kenny
Director, Australian Studies Institute, Australian National University

Brian Loughnane AO
Director and Chairman, Menzies Research Centre

Professor Tim Lynch, Professor of American Politics, The University of Melbourne

James Mathias
Deputy Executive Director, Menzies Research Centre

Charlotte Mortlock
Executive Director, Hilma's Network

Jack Piggott
Head of Campaigns - Australia, CT Group

Dr Scott Prasser
Public Policy Analyst & Commentator

Toby Ralph
CEO, The Ad Department Pty Ltd

Dr Charles Richardson
Scholar and Media Commentator

Paul Sakkal
Federal Political Correspondent for The Age and Sydney Morning Herald

Kosmos Samaras
Director, RedBridge Group Australia

Dr Margaret Simons
Honorary Principal Fellow, Centre for Advancing Journalism, University of Melbourne,

Professor Rodney Smith
Professor of Australian Politics, University of Sydney

Dr William Stoltz
Visiting Fellow, Robert Menzies Institute

Professor Paul Strangio
Emeritus Professor of Politics, Monash University

Associate Professor Ben Wellings
Associate Professor in Politics and International Relations, Monash University

Innes Willox AM
Chief Executive, Australian Industry Group

Rachel Withers
Freelance Writer

Footnotes

1 According to the vote count as of 9 May, the major parties received 66.97% of the primary vote https://tallyroom.aec.gov.au/HouseStateFirstPrefsByPart y-31496-NAT.htm

2 https://results.aec.gov.au/12246/results/HouseStateFir stPrefsByParty-12246-NAT.htm

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5 Robert Menzies, 'The Party System' Broadcast, 15 January 1943.

6 Robert Menzies, *The Measure of the Years*, p. 8.

7 https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/205974815?searchTerm=national%20union

8 https://australiainstitute.org.au/post/there-is-no-such-thing-as-a-safe-seat/

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11 https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/partyroom/could-dutton-win-minority-government-/104737610

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13 https://treasury.gov.au/publication/economic-roundup-issue-3-2012-2/economic-roundup-issue-3-2012/leslie-bury-from-treasury-to-treasurer

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15 https://unreserved.rba.gov.au/nodes/view/88861

16 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xQHRYNLk2LGAKSQUPdhPnrNQyDyhXRLp/view?usp=sharing

17 https://www.themandarin.com.au/81812-verona-burgess-dennis-richardson-royal-commission-job-of-the-australian-public-service/

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19 https://www.menziesrc.org/the-forgotten-people

20 https://theconversation.com/census-data-shows-poorest-seats-voted-coalition-byelections-or-polls-from-four-states-186115

21 11.56% compared with the Greens' 11.74%. According t o the vote count as of 9 May https://tallyroom.aec.gov.a u/HouseStateFirstPrefsByParty-31496-NAT.htm

22 https://www.statista.com/statistics/888557/australia-confidence-in-social-media-news/

23 https://www.newsweek.com/will-trumps-joe-rogan-interview-help-win-white-house-analysts-verdicts-1978481

24 https://youtu.be/BzMrZykvCO4?si=JhlydRMzEjPerZcw

25 https://podcasts.apple.com/za/podcast/peter-dutton-running-for-prime-minister-of-australia/id179427567?i=1000681767502

26 https://www.theage.com.au/politics/federal/modern-day-talkback-radio-the-liberals-video-deluge-is-part-of-a-plan-20250108-p5l2qr.html

27 https://www.crikey.com.au/2025/05/06/2025-election-cringe-liberal-party-memes/

28 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2007-11-19/rudd-makes-pitch-to-young-voters/729516

29 Australia's Federal Parliament is proportionately smaller relative to the number of voters because Australia's electorates encompass a larger number of voters. Electorates in the United Kingdom and New Zealand aim to cover approx. 70,000 voters and Canada's aim to cover approx. 80,000 voters while Australia's cover upwards of 100,000.

30 Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.

31 https://www.theaustralian.com.au/health/an-agebomb-is-about-to-go-off-in-australia/news-story/967d02363dad7d23ed08f651dec80e43

32 https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politicslatest-payman-doubles-down-vows-to-keep-voting-by-conscience/livecoverage/82005b47dc92e68c19e0289358d004ea

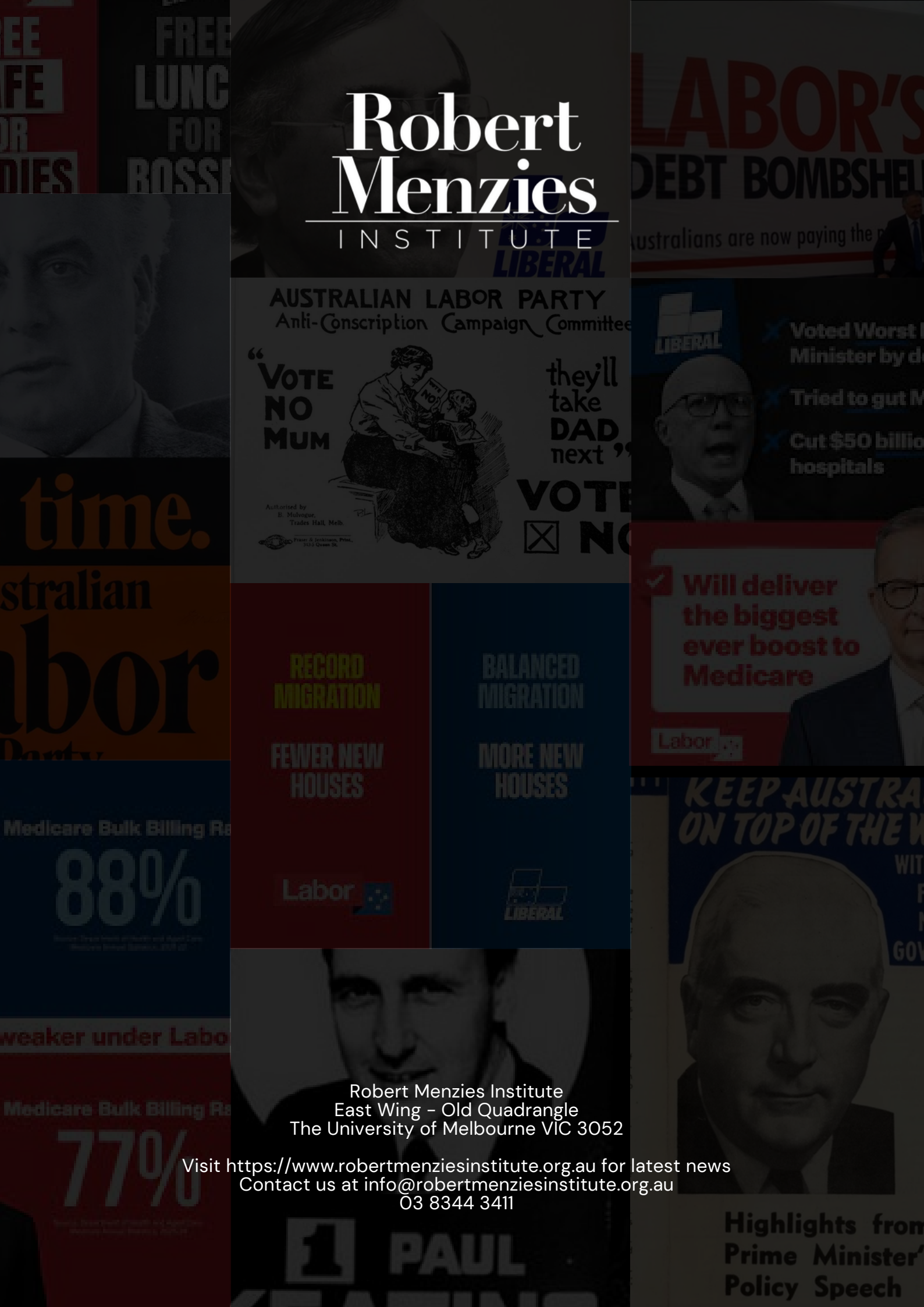
33 https://www.unswlawjournal.unsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/34-3-11.pdf

34 https://www.aec.gov.au/ieb/files/ieb-serviceplan.pdf

35 https://www.unswlawjournal.unsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/34-3-11.pdf

36 Zachary Gorman, *Sir Joseph Carruthers: Founder of the New South Wales Liberal Party*, p. 230.

37 https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/Research/Quick_Guides/202223/PartyChangesChallenges#:~:text=The%20election%20of%20the%20Leader%20of%20the%20Labour%20Party%20must,%25%20of%20the%20total%20vote).



Robert Menzies Institute
East Wing - Old Quadrangle
The University of Melbourne VIC 3052

Visit https://www.robertmenziesinstitute.org.au for latest news
Contact us at info@robertmenziesinstitute.org.au
03 8344 3411