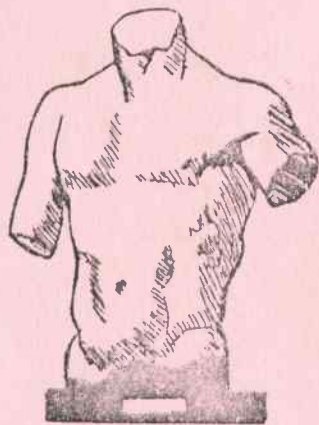


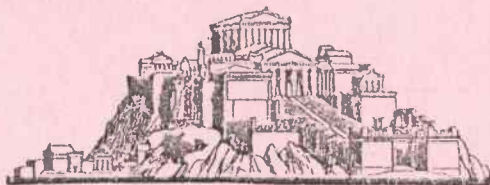
# IMPACT VOTING

HOW THE ANCIENT GREEKS GOT THE  
EAR OF THEIR POLITICIANS

Yes! There IS  
something we  
can do!



AN ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT  
PUBLICATION





# **IMPACT** VOTING

This booklet prepared and published by  
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Australia's government system is supposed to be one of the best in the world. We have been voting at elections for about 150 years, and we have never had bloodshed, revolution, or a coup.

We were the first country in the world to give women the vote. Australians vote their representatives into a Parliament traditionally belonging to the people. There is no room for tyrants or dictators who imprison or murder their opposition.

We still have refugees arriving from countries where it is impossible to get three meals a day - much less a vote.

Many would say Australia has got it made.

But something is terribly wrong. A lot of Australians distrust politicians. More and more say there are no real choices at elections. Many feel their vote is no longer effective for choosing what they really want.

This was clearly confirmed in the top article on the opposite page. Comments from the man or woman in the street are generally more earthy and robust, when it comes to politicians.

Another article, four years earlier, shows why. The Liberal Party acknowledged the feeling in the electorate about politicians, and the general mood of pessimism and frustration (see the article at the bottom of the opposite page).

But it translated this discovery into support for its programme at that time - introduction of the G.S.T., abolition of tariffs protecting Australia's industries against foreign competition, and selling Telecom into private ownership.

## Public lacks confidence in democracy: commissioners

By ROY ECCLESTON

PUBLIC confidence in Australian democracy is in disarray because State governments have failed to uphold the Westminster system and maintain the trust of the electorate, according to some of the nation's most respected royal commissioners.

In a series of interviews with *The Weekend Australian*, the commissioners warn that the increasing power of executive government over parliament and the unwillingness of some politicians to take responsibility for their actions has undermined public respect and made governments less accountable.

The claims were rebutted by several prominent political figures, including the Premier of Queensland, Mr Goss, and former NSW premier Mr Nick Greiner, who claimed governments were now more accountable than ever.

But the former head of the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission, Sir Max Bingham QC, said he believed the political process was in transition and the Westminster system — in which the executive is responsible to the parliament and ministers take responsibility for the performance of their departments — was no longer followed.

Mr Peter Brinsden QC, one of three

commissioners in the WA Inc inquiry, said the main difficulty was "too steadfast adherence to the party, to the detriment of one's independence as a parliamentarian".

He said this "seems to be the basic cause of the problem throughout the Westminster system".

The former South Australian Supreme Court judge who headed the State Bank of South Australia royal commission, Mr Samuel Jacobs QC, said Australians "talked glibly about the Westminster system, but we don't practise it".

"To a large extent we've got executive government, parliament is a sham ... I just observe the fact that the man in the bus thinks all politicians are bloody idiots."

Mr Jacobs said the concept of ministerial responsibility meant very little today.

The chairman of the CJC, Mr Rob O'Regan QC, believes his commission and the Independent Commission Against Corruption in NSW act as powerful deterrents to the re-emergence of the scandals that beset several States in the 1980s.

Crisis in our democracy — Page 19

*Weekend Australian*, October 30, 31, 1993

## Libs identify voter despair

PRIVATE Liberal Party research has underlined the need for bold policy decisions which clearly differentiate it from the ALP.

The research, outlined to Liberal and National Party MPs in Canberra yesterday, shows an emerging despair in the electorate, and a belief that economic problems cannot be solved by a gradualist approach.

It will be seen by the Opposition as vindication for its recent policy decisions for a consumption tax, virtual abolition of tariffs by 2000 and privatisation of Telecom.

The director of the Liberal Party, Mr Andrew Robb, told MPs yesterday that the research showed widespread

pessimism, disillusionment and — a relatively new development — resignation. There was anger, particularly against politicians.

The research also says there are high stress levels among men who believe they are falling their families, and among women who want to stay at home but for financial reasons have to work.

Significantly for the Opposition, the mood of those surveyed is judged to be for deliberate and significant action.

The research suggests people believed they had continually had their expectations built up, only to find the promised rewards for sacrifice did not materialise.

The top 10 issues identified by the research are tax, interest rates, inflation, jobs, living standards, the size of government, the national debt, welfare payments, immigration and the environment.

— ROY ECCLESTON

*The Australian*, October 12, 1990.

Australians made it quite clear what they thought of these policies when Mr. Hewson led the Coalition at the election. The Liberals snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

They were just not listening!

The same situation can be found in other countries as well. Good, representative government does not exist any more - even though the structures of our parliaments and councils are the same as they were a hundred years ago.

Some politicians have put their finger on the problem. Former Liberal and founder of the Australian Democrats, Mr. Don Chipp, wrote in 1991:

"The first speech newly-elected MPs hear is from their Party Whip, which goes something like this:

'Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Canberra. I have only one thing to say to you. You will, from now on, forget that rubbish you talked about during your election campaign about serving your electorate. Now that you are here you will think, act and, most importantly, vote as the party dictates.'

It is a practice which forces politicians into adopting double standards."

Sunday Times, April 12, 1992.

Mr. Chipp was right. Parliamentarians in earlier times, in Britain and Australia, would have fiercely resented being compelled to vote a certain way. From Edmund Burke at Westminster to Alfred Deakin and Sir Henry Parkes in early Australia - they would have 'roasted' a Party Whip who tried to interfere with their belief in right and wrong. Parties at that time were free associations where the duty of honest representation came first.

The present situation is a sell-out, described by a former South Australian Liberal leader like this:

"Australians were apathetic about politics because they knew election promises would not be kept once politicians were in office, the outgoing South Australian Opposition Leader, Mr. Olsen, said yesterday . . .

"There's a recognition - even a resigned acceptance - that the promises made in policy platforms will be disregarded as soon as the question of which party should govern is settled," he said. . . .

"We have tended to regard the public's interest as things only to be taken out of the cupboard and dusted off when there is an election . . ." (end of quote).

*The Australian,*  
January 9, 1990.

Many know these statements are true. All sorts of ideas have surfaced from frustrated electors - the most common being to start a new party. Dozens have got off the ground, only to founder through lack of funds, personality clashes, greed and jealousy, or simply falling into the same trap as others.

The great Australian scientist and former South Australian, Sir Mark Oliphant, suggested in 1976:

"First of all, let's eliminate politics as a career. Let's put a limit to the time a man can spend in Parliament as a Member, so that people are prepared to speak openly and honestly about what they believe and what they feel is for the benefit of the people - and not just be whipped into the party line. . . ."

*The Australian,* December 1, 1976.

## Politicians' vows 'made to be broken'

By JIM DELLA-GIACOMA

AUSTRALIANS were apathetic about politics because they knew election promises would not be kept once politicians were in office, the outgoing South Australian Opposition Leader, Mr Olsen, said yesterday.

Mr Olsen called for the gap between promise and action to be closed when he addressed the 22nd National Convention of the Young Liberals in Adelaide, one of his last official duties before resigning at the end of the month in his plan to fill a Senate vacancy made available by the retirement of Senator Tony Messner.

"There's a recognition - even a resigned acceptance - that the promises made in policy platforms will be disregarded as soon as the question of which party should govern is settled," he said.

Even with a host of policies and a well-run campaign the Liberals, under Mr Olsen's leadership, had missed out on Government by one seat in South Australia's November State election.

Mr Olsen said politicians from all parties must accept the blame for public apathy as maintained involvement of the public in the political process had not been encouraged.

"We have tended to regard their (the public's) interest as things only to be taken out of the cupboard and dusted off when there is an election," he said.

In an address designed to rally the young recruits of the Liberal Party at a low point in the party's fortunes, Mr Olsen predicted the Coalition would win the coming federal election.

The Federal Opposition spokesman on Treasury matters, Dr John Hewson, will speak at the conference this morning, followed by the Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition, Senator Chaney, tomorrow.

*The Australian,* 9/1/90.



So we need some fresh thinking - and action - if we are going to get Australia's democratic process back on its feet!

The key to the whole thing is the voter. While he or she is prepared to remain a passive victim, the manipulation will continue. An active minority, on the other hand, could break the spell.

## Impact Voting

'Impact Voting' is an idea with a better chance of working than anything we've heard before. But, like all good ideas, it can only succeed when a small number are sufficiently determined to make it do so.

There's a famous play by the playwright Aristophanes, from ancient Greece, about a State that had got itself into the same situation of corrupted power and cynicism we see today.

It was the women who finally forced the necessary changes. Led by a housewife from Athens, Lysistrata, they issued an ultimatum. The men of ancient Greece were told that, until major changes were made, there would be a nationwide condition of enforced chastity.

Until they mended their ways, they would remain in a state of perpetual celibacy!

For a short time the male population regarded the threat as a huge joke. After all they were, were they not, irresistible? The blood of the Olympians ran red in their veins!

But Lysistrata and her sisters held firm, and were deaf to all entreaties.



# Ladies, what a carry on up the Acropolis

**THEATRE** / Peter Hall's controversial staging of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* leaves **Charles Spencer** looking behind the masks

**T**HE anarchic sexual high spirits of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* seemed to have seized some of the women in the Old Vic audience before Peter Hall's rumbustious production had even started. Tired of queuing for the Ladies, they marched boldly into the Gents. Attempts to remonstrate were met with hoots of derision, and I began to understand how the male boobies in this gloriously bawdy ancient comedy must have felt. For those, like myself, only familiar with Greek tragedy, *Lysistrata* (411 BC) is a revelation.

It makes the Carry On films seem like Chekhov. During the production's pre-London run in Liverpool about a dozen people walked out each night, mostly chaps. Ancient Greeks were clearly made of stronger stuff.

The plot has a splendid simplicity. *Lysistrata*, an Athenian housewife, has had a bellyful of the city's war with Sparta, so she hits on the ingenious idea of calling a sex

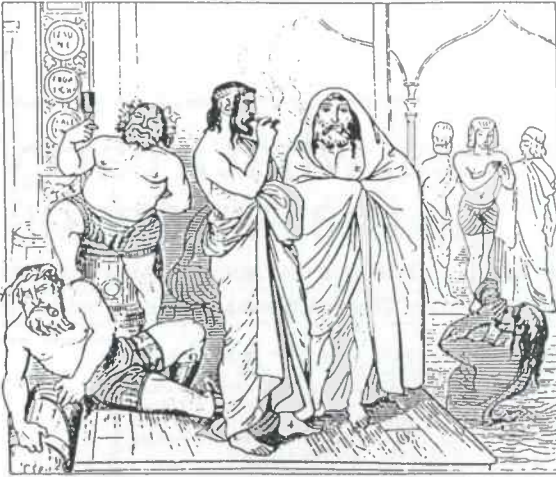
strike. The men won't get their oats until a peace is settled. Meanwhile, the older women occupy the Acropolis so that the men can't get their hands on the treasure needed to finance the war.

Review of recent London production of *Lysistrata*. (Aristophanes, Greek playwright, 448 - 385 B.C.)

Acknowledgment:

*The Guardian Weekly*, U.K.

Laughter gave way to indignation. Greek heroes were not so easily intimidated. Numbered in their ranks were the Stoics of Sparta and the endurance-runners of Marathon! If the worst came to the worst, they could always conduct a lightning raid on neighbouring territory - the Sabine women were charming, were they not?



*"Zeus! Where will it end? Next they'll want the vote, quotas, and affirmative action. . . !"*



*"Just tell dear Socrates, darling Aristotle and sweet old Plato to be philosophical for a while. . . "*

But Lysistrata and the swelling ranks of womanhood were unmoved. Chastity became a weapon more terrible than any spear. No laughter rang in the streets of Athens any more.

Frustrated Greek heroes sought other diversions. Aristotle and Plato argued interminably about philosophy. Pythagoras doodled with mathematical equations throughout the long and lonely nights. Hippocrates designed oath after oath.

But their hearts were not in it! And finally, enough was enough. A message of capitulation was sent to Lysistrata that the required changes would be made.

To their outraged dismay, the offer was not enough. "We need more than promises," cooed Lysistrata and her formidable army. "Do it first, and we'll talk afterwards."

Ashen-faced and grim, the men finally made the required changes. They shook their heads and said it would be the end of the very democracy the Greeks themselves had invented.

"We've always done it this way," they told each other in their bathhouses and the public bar of the Acropolis. "How could women be expected to know how the real world works?"

But the end of the world, somehow, seemed less threatening than a prolonged extension of sexual sanctions. Every feminine demand was finally met, and ancient Greece lived to fight another day!

We can only imagine the exultation when sanctions were finally lifted! The Senate at Athens was immediately adjourned. Plato and Aristotle forgot all about philosophy, and hurried home to a resumption of marital bliss.

Lysistrata and the women of Greece were much too

smart to play their men at their own game by competing for power. There was no demand for "quotas" in the Senate, or for affirmative action. Why go through such essentially-male inanities, when there were far better ways to get what they wanted?



## Voters have sanctions

We are not for a moment suggesting, you'll be glad to hear, a twentieth century repeat of Lysistrata's "chastity-led recovery".

But there is a vital principle giving us a clue to what might be possible in another direction. Instead of "conditional sex", why not "Impact voting"?

Consider the sequence Lysistrata and the women of Greece adopted:

First, the country was in an unholy mess, without any sign of improvement.

Second, the "decision makers" were too preoccupied with their own ambitions and interests to make any changes. They didn't believe the ordinary people could do anything about it.

Third, one group of citizens - in Greece's case the women - denied the decision-makers a particular favour. Note carefully, they didn't lay out a technical programme

or try to seize power themselves.

The simply said "No!" to the decision-makers until they got what they wanted. Favours would be restored when the changes were made.

Fourth, they refused to accept promises. They wanted results. There had to be a public demonstration of change before normal relations were resumed.

Now, suppose a group of voters worked together to achieve the changes we need - using their vote instead of the threat of chastity?

Before any possibility of working together, each person would have to make a decision - a personal commitment to oneself - just as each woman had to make a personal decision in ancient Greece before she could join with others.

There was no way Lysistrata could force each woman how to act. It had to be voluntary commitment from each one. Those who made false commitments and then compromised let the whole project down.

Far better never to start, then start without the conviction to carry on.

The personal promise each person would have to make to himself would be something as follows:

*"I am now making a personal decision to withhold my vote from any and all candidates until I get at least ONE change which I think would benefit Australia."*

Such a decision is one only YOU can make as a personal commitment to yourself, your children, your dependents and your country. Nobody has the power or right to make it for you.

"A fat lot of good that would do!" you might argue. "It would simply mean attending a voting booth to record

an informal vote. The politicians wouldn't even notice, and would carry on as before!"



And you'd be right. Your action would be no more successful than the lady in ancient Greece who decided to take her particular action by herself.

Nevertheless, each woman had to make her own decision before being able to

join with other women to make it effective.

One can imagine Lysistrata saying at each assembly of the A.W.A. (Athenian Women's Association):

"Don't join unless you really mean it. It's all or nothing. We stick together or we don't start. If anyone is personally attacked, we will defend each other!"

## The present situation

Every three or four years Australians allow themselves to be divided into warring factions by elections. For a few weeks we are assailed morning, noon and night by candidates who want our votes. T.V. advertisements warn every few minutes of the horrendous results of getting our votes wrong.

The cost is enormous, and is increasingly funded by the taxpayers.



Notice - none of them ask you what YOU want. They only want your vote, NOT your ideas.

No candidate runs advertisements asking, "*What are the policies YOU want me to represent in the Parliament?*"

Can you remember being asked at elections" "*What are your preferences on foreign ownership? Or interest rates? Or levels of immigration? Or the education of your children? Or governments and councils borrowing money which you have to repay?*"

Without even thinking about it, candidates assume you only have the right to pick the team - not the game they're going to play!

To keep your mind off the game, attention is increasingly diverted to the personalities of the team captain, or party leader. Whether it is Whitlam versus Fraser, Fraser versus Hawke, Keating versus Hewson or Howard, a huge amount of media concentration is spent on the statements, image, family, background, business interests, age or temperament of one or two individuals. The same perversion can be seen in other countries.

For a long time now people have been the raw material of corrupted politics and the power game. As W.S. Gilbert (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame) wrote in his comic light opera *The Mikado*:

*"I often think it's comical  
How Nature always does contrive  
That every boy and every gal  
That's born into this world alive,  
Is either a little Liberal  
Or else a little Conservative!"*

In Australia, there's many a citizen who votes Labor or Liberal (not to mention National or Democrat) ". . .



*because Dad always did. . . "*

This has allowed parties to change. Where once they were a loose association of individuals who agreed philosophically, they are now a machine which penalises any Member who does not obey the Party Whip.

A recent A.B.C. programme on parties in Britain revealed how Whips actually kept a personal file on every Member, containing any information on his private life or finances which could be used to enforce his obedience to the party!

Although this is a criminal interference with the conscience and integrity of a representative, the same situation, to varying degrees, prevails in Australia.

As an unconscious acknowledgment that this is the truth, once in a blue moon a party will allow its members to have a "conscience vote"; usually on an issue with little bearing on the general party programme. For an all-too-brief moment a little integrity enters parliament - to be banned almost as soon as it appears!

Again this was summed up by Gilbert in *The Mikado*:

*"When in that House M.Ps divide,  
If they've a brain and cerebellum too,  
They have to leave that brain outside,  
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to."*

The result is that tens of thousands of Australians no longer trust their politicians. Poll after poll - including local polls run by our Association - show majorities of up to 80% having no faith in politicians or the promises they make.

There is now a genuine frustration with the political process. Some have joined parties at branch level hoping to change things, only to leave in disgust at the inertia and compromise. Others have started new parties, or tried to promote independents.

The results have not been encouraging! The path of recent years is strewn with the corpses of new parties that have flourished briefly and then died.

The sub-conscious hope behind these oft-repeated efforts has been that we need the votes of 51% to get into power and change things.

We have got to face the fact it's a forlorn hope! Most of those who cling to it and keep going through the



motions have not realised that they are asking something of their representatives they are not prepared to apply to themselves - honest voting.

## A Union of Voters

Suppose three or four hundred electors in one electorate who have got the picture decided to apply to their votes the principles the women of Ancient Greece applied to sexual relations?

Before any possibility of success, each would have to make a personal commitment, something like this:

### ***THE COMMITMENT OF AN IMPACT VOTER***

- I BELIEVE** - *that my vote is a privilege gained for me by those in history who strove to ensure that freedom of choice for each person about government policy was the hallmark of a free nation.*
- I BELIEVE** - *that my vote is a means whereby I may express a choice on issues, as well as choosing my representative.*
- I BELIEVE** - *that my choice on issues and policies has been made ineffective by constraints placed on the conscience and freedom of my representative at council and parliamentary level.*
- I BELIEVE** - *that, as a result, I have been reduced to choosing the lesser of two evils; and that I*

*should start to place conditions on my vote to change this situation, so that voting becomes meaningful again.*

**I BELIEVE** - *that the responsibility for granting or withholding my vote is MINE and MINE only; and that no-one can lawfully direct me how to vote.*

**I BELIEVE** - *that committing myself to becoming a conditional **IMPACT VOTER** will mean a change from voting in fear to voting in faith for Australia's future.*

**I BELIEVE** - *that, while keeping my right to vote as I wish, I can associate with others who feel as I do to make IMPACT VOTING more effective in regaining my freedom of choice; and that I will commit myself to such an association, while retaining the right to withdraw when and where I deem it appropriate.*

There are now a lot of people who can agree on such a commitment, no matter what their previous position or voting background.

Suppose that four or five hundred people who had reached such an agreement decided to form an Association working together - again, like the women of Ancient Greece?

Obviously, they are a diverse group who had previously voted for a variety of candidates or parties without getting anywhere. None of them will surrender personal responsibility for the way they vote - nor should they be required to.

But because they want to make their personal

commitments effective, they have come together in association to find just one condition - one essential change they all agree on and will apply - to make that commitment mean something.

Effective changes come one at a time, and the longest journey starts with the first step.

A public announcement is made - perhaps in the form of an advertisement in the local paper - something like this:

**"WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH!"**

The undersigned voters in the Electorate of Willamakanka are from widely differing voting backgrounds.

They are, however, agreed that Australia is in such trouble; that so many have lost faith in the integrity of their political representatives; that so many promises have been broken; that the behaviour of those in parliament is so bad; that the future heritage of Australians (including our children) is so uncertain; that there is such a lack of representation for what people really want:

**THAT WE HAVE INDIVIDUALLY DECIDED TO UNITE IN WITHHOLDING OUR VOTES AT FUTURE ELECTIONS!**

However, we ARE prepared to cast our votes on **ONE CONDITION.**

Candidates wishing to avail themselves of our votes, and to represent us with integrity, should contact this Association to identify and discuss the **CONDITION** we have collectively agreed on:

**SIGNED:**

*John Smith, Jack Brown, Mabel Green etc. etc..*

The name of EVERY individual in the Association should appear; and all should help fund it. Done this way, it should cost no individual more than \$2. Every member of the Association should get a copy of the proposed statement prior to publication, and be asked to personally endorse it with a signature.

We're talking about personal responsibility!

Most people faced with such a challenge would much prefer not to be involved. But they have now got to face a hard truth. None of us can expect a member of Parliament to stand up and be counted - to risk media criticism, pressure from his party and possible loss of endorsement - unless we are prepared to do the same!

So a lot of people will bow out at this stage. They may grumble about what's going on; but they don't *really* want to do anything about it. There's always an excuse. They haven't got enough time to do such an idea justice; it might affect their business; or they're worried about what neighbours, fellow church members or the club might think.

If you want a social club, a "fuzzy-feelin'" club or a back-scratch association, the bigger the membership the better you'll feel.

But if you are really out to change things, you're better off without the silent members and the faint-hearted. Lysistrata wouldn't have got off the ground if her fellow-women worried what the neighbours were thinking!

Our estimate is that about one-in-twenty-five, or 4 percent, are prepared to really stand up and be counted.

That 4 percent is what we're after; and 4 percent, working together with dedication, is enough to turn Australia round. Therefore, an association of voters who

really mean business should be confined to those who will stick their necks out!

Now the loss of four hundred votes is a matter of grave concern to any person seeking election, In a "blue ribbon" seat it is serious; in a marginal seat it is crucial. It would be enough to lose quite a few existing members their majorities and their seats.

In the weeks prior to an election candidates only have one word in their vocabularies - "Votes". They door-knock tirelessly, kiss babies, shake hands, fawn on the media, and character-assassinate their opponents!

If a candidate wants those four hundred votes badly enough - and believe us, he DOES! - he will, sooner or later have to contact the Association.

*"What is the requirement of your Association to release the four hundred votes in my direction? I am by far the best candidate, much better than the other dishonest and dangerous individuals who are standing."*

The candidate will be treated with courtesy and firmness. He will be invited to a meeting of the Association, where he will be told about the condition that goes with the vote of the members.

He will be told the meeting may be videoed, and will certainly be recorded on audiotape. The media will also be invited.

He is under no compulsion to attend; but if he does not do so he will almost certainly forfeit the votes he wants.

The candidate now has a major dilemma. The whole art of his game - and he may not have realised this consciously himself up to this point - is to avoid getting pinned down on issues.

*This is unfair!* He has worked very hard to get party



endorsement. He has signed the pledge: *"I will abide by party rules and instructions, voting as I am told, at the risk of losing my party nomination if I deviate. My conscience is no longer my own! Who do these voters think they are?"*

On the other hand, it's not much good obeying the Party Whip if he loses the seat.

What to do?

A lot of phone calls will probably be made to party HQ. New surveys will be conducted, and assessments made. If the party thinks it can survive without the four hundred, it will probably decide to attack. A self-righteous press statement will be issued:

*"A grave threat to the democratic process has been uncovered in the electorate of Greater Willamakanka. Subversive elements are attempting to hold the voters to ransom by intimidating candidates! The Impact Voting Association represents nobody, but is attempting to browbeat voters and candidates!"*

The faint-hearted may be a little intimidated, but if they stick to their guns, they will find their Association getting stronger, growing to perhaps five hundred or six hundred. A lot of people see through this type of misrepresentation, which is now counter-productive. It becomes a case of "all publicity is good publicity."

The candidate who needs those votes, however, will sooner or later agree to meet the Association - whose members are, after all his potential voters.



## Courtesy and firmness

When he finally meets the Association, he should be treated with every courtesy, but also with firmness and determination. There may only be twenty or thirty present. This is the reason for the taping of the meeting. Many members cannot take time off, or travel long distances, but want to hear what went on. The candidate is assured that any member of the public who wants a tape will get a copy. It is assumed the candidate wants his views as widely circulated as possible.

In reality, this is not usually the case. But the candidate will hardly be likely to admit it.

If he objects to being recorded, the meeting should immediately be terminated.

If he agrees, the meeting goes ahead. The candidate is introduced to those attending. The objectives of the Impact Voting Association are read out.



The candidate is informed that the Association does not require him to make a speech about his own policies. That's a matter for individuals to decide on. The Association's purpose is to outline, as briefly and clearly as possible, the ONE condition that members are agreed for

the granting or withholding of their vote.

It may be any of dozens of possibilities:

- ◆ the introduction of citizens' right to initiate referenda that are binding on government;

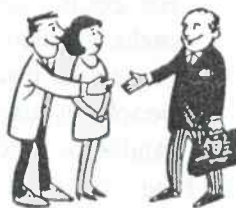
- ◆ a limit to direct and indirect taxes, and some choice on how taxes are spent;
- ◆ a limit to the number of bills put through parliament annually;
- ◆ the re-introduction of protection for Australian-owned industries;
- ◆ a national referendum on immigration;
- ◆ a ceiling on interest rates for bank loans;
- ◆ an end to the foreign takeover of Australian businesses and assets;
- ◆ a social wage for non-working mothers;
- ◆ an end to means testing of pensions;
- ◆ etc., etc..

There are dozens more simple policies which would unite people across normal party and sectarian divisions. It would be up to each Association to determine its preference.

Finally, the candidate can only say "Yes" or "No" to the condition. If "No", the meeting ends, with regrets on both sides.

If "Yes", the candidate should now be invited to speak for, say, ten minutes on the steps he will take to publicise his commitment, both BEFORE and AFTER voting day.

The steps need to be pretty convincing! The suggestion that he *"will take it up in the Party room"* is unacceptable. There is no way for voters to know whether he has done so or not. The secrecy of the



Party room is a poor substitute for public accountability.

Here are some suggestions on the commitments he could make:

- (1) He could put an advertisement in papers in his local area announcing his commitment to the proposal; (a sitting member is given a large electoral allowance for such expenses).
- (2) He could guarantee to make his next speech in Parliament or Council on the issue, to be followed by the movement of a Private Members Bill.
- (3) He could write a "letter-to-the-editor" outlining his commitment to the proposal. This would cost him nothing except a postage stamp.
- (4) He could put the proposal in all his printed campaign literature.
- (5) He could give a commitment to favour his conscience over his Party if the issue ever came to the vote in Parliament.
- (6) He could undertake to provide regular monthly briefings to the media in his electorate on progress he is making once he has been elected.
- (7) He could, with the co-operation of his electors, make a video for distribution.
- (8) He could provide research material for interested people in his electorate.

A candidate undertaking to represent an electorate should be under no illusion that token assent is in any way acceptable. He is offering to accept a full-time position to carry out the wishes of thousands of people, and must be prepared to fight tooth-and-nail to do so.

## What if he reneges?

People often say, when presented with such concepts:

*"But how are you going to trust your candidate to do what he says? We all know how glibly promises are broken. How can you suggest your candidate, if elected, is going to be any different?"*

The short answer is, "We can't." But this leads to the most important aspect of all. Unlike a new party, an Impact Voting Association cannot stop working as soon as an election is over. Broken promises must be publicly confronted.

Imagine, six months after an election, another newspaper advertisement, again signed by hundreds of electors:

### ARE WE BEING BETRAYED?

In a public meeting prior to the last election the undersigned Impact Voters were given a solemn, public, recorded undertaking by the current Member, Mr. .... that he would accept the following obligations on their behalf in achieving the introduction of .....

A video and press statements in this regard are available for any concerned elector.

To date, and despite his recorded promises, our elected Member has fulfilled none of the obligations he undertook.

Until he does so, the undersigned believe their votes were obtained under false pretences. We now call on Mr. .... to fulfil the promises he made.

Signed:

*John Smith, Jack Brown, Mabel Green, etc., etc..*

Such an advertisement would cause enormous controversy and considerable comment. A situation would

develop which an Impact Voting Association could take further.

The Association could run its own sample poll in the electorate, with one question:

*"Should our elected Member fulfil the promises he made about..... prior to the election?"*

This would produce such adverse publicity for the Member that he would have to take some action. If he failed to do so, it is unlikely he would be elected again.

Such publicity would also increase interest and membership for the Association. No doubt it would be attacked by the few faithful party hacks. In such a case, all publicity is very definitely good publicity.

Ordinary people are now looking anxiously for a lead. There is no doubt that any responsible association prepared to go public and put its money where its mouth is would attract increasing interest and support.

We must also get right away from the accepted idea that the only time to make changes is a brief period at the elections held every three or four years. An ongoing programme of activity, week by week, contacting and motivating concerned people, publicising issues and promises, running surveys, supporting representatives who do the right thing and exposing those who don't, is now essential if Australia is to be turned round.

## Making a start

The first Association with Impact Voting as its aim has been formed in the Groom electorate in South-East Queensland. It has done considerable pioneering work. It is an incorporated association, has a sound constitution and publicity material, the normal office-bearers and a

bank account. It has also gained its first publicity, through running surveys and introduction evenings.

Affiliated with this body is a Toowoomba-based directorate whose sole purpose is to foster and communicate with similar bodies wishing to start in other areas of Australia. It has the necessary computer-skills and managerial expertise to provide fast, effective advice and co-ordination.

Its purpose is NOT to direct a nation-wide movement, but to initiate local responsibility and innovation in as many areas as possible, and to then offer a communication link to all who want to be involved.

The Accountable Government Association in Groom has decided on the introduction of VOTERS' VETO (the most vital part of C.I.R., or Citizens' Initiative and Referendum) as its first Condition for an Impact Voting campaign. There is widespread agreement among members that this is an important key to other much-needed reforms.

As a tool for this Condition it is using an excellent 23-minute video made in 1986 by the late Paul Terry.

As a tool for the Impact Voting concept, it is offering this booklet, which it plans to make into a short video as soon as possible.

## **A personal challenge**

Men and women wanting to become involved can start immediately by joining The Accountable Government Association. They can do this no matter where they live. Membership is \$10 annually. An application form needs to be filled in, which is obtainable from:



**The Accountable Government Association,  
P.O. Box 6543, Toowoomba West, Queensland 4350.  
Ph: 076 - 302469.**

As soon as there are THIRTEEN people in any electorate who are prepared to start their own association, future membership goes to the local group. Only the THIRTEEN founder members retain their membership with the Co-ordinating Body.

The reason for this arrangement is the network communication system we are developing. Every member who joins is asked to accept responsibility for three people - passing on information, helping publicise the concept and any other administrative communications. It is an ideal concept, gives everyone a part to play, keeps costs to a minimum and develops a wide sense of involvement.

All of this happens AFTER each person has made a personal commitment. The only obligations involved are to yourself. There is no legal or moral requirement placed on you by anyone else.

Make a personal commitment! The time has come where you can no longer leave it to others.

If you want a Member of Parliament or a Councillor to vote honestly according to his conscience, you must start by voting the same way yourself.

**BUT DON'T JOIN AN ASSOCIATION UNLESS YOU REALLY MEAN IT!** The Association has already decided it is better to have a smaller committed membership than a larger, half-hearted number who will disappear when the pressure is on.

Do you care enough about Australia, your family and your freedom to make the effort?

## ASSISTANCE:

Copies of this booklet are available at the following prices:

Single copies : \$5.00 including postage.

Lots of 10 or more : \$3.00 each, including freight.

Paul Terry's

### **"VOTERS' VETO"**

video : \$18.00 including postage.

Lots of 10 or more : \$11.00 each, including postage.

A Manual of advice for new associations will be available shortly. Please contact us about this.



There are two legal descriptions of the role of a Member of Parliament. The first is from a British case (A.C. 1910, p.110) where Lord Shaw of Dumfermline stated, *inter alia*:

*"Parliament is summoned by the Sovereign to advise His Majesty freely. By the nature of the case it is implied that coercion, restraint, or money payment, which is the price of voting at the bidding of others, destroys or imperils that function of freedom of advice which is fundamental in the very constitution of Parliament."*

The second is from an Australian High Court case (Horne v Barber, 1920, 27 C.L.R., p.500)

*"When a man becomes a Member of Parliament, he undertakes high public duties. These duties are inseparable from the position: he cannot retain the honour and divest himself of the duties. One of the duties is that of watching on behalf of the general community the conduct of the Executive, of criticising, and, if necessary, of calling it to account in the constitutional way by censure from his place in Parliament — censure which, if sufficiently supported, means removal from office. That is the whole essence of responsible government, which is the keystone of our political system, and is the main constitutional safeguard the community possesses. The effective discharge of that duty is necessarily left to the Member's conscience and the judgement of his electors, but the law will not sanction or support the creation of any position of a Member of Parliament where his own personal interest may lead him to act prejudicially to the public interest by weakening (to say the least) his sense of obligation of due watchfulness, criticism, and censure of the administration."*

## ELECTION CHOICES



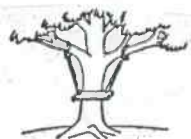
*The Government's policy*



*The Opposition's policy*



*Treasury's Policy*



*The Media's Policy*



*What the bureaucracy decides*



*What Australians wanted*

*Democracy's a simple thing,  
I wonder why we choose it?  
But when we can't be bothered  
Is exactly when we lose it!*

*The 'expert' wants you to believe  
He's much more wise than you;  
And if you leave it up to him  
He knows just what to do!*

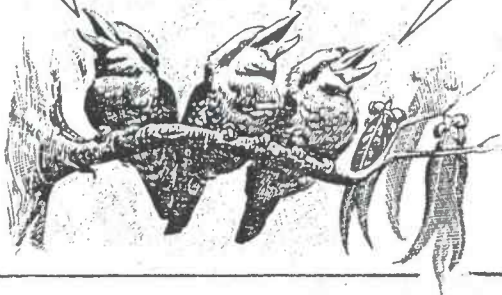
*He'll fix your problems, one by one,  
He'll deal with any strife.  
There's just a little price to pay -  
The power to run your life!*

*But when democracy arrived  
Way back in days of old.  
The people paid the 'experts'  
To do as they were told!*

*"Swings are  
a health  
hazard"*

*"..... Not  
politically  
Correct"*

*"Against  
our U.N.  
obligations"*



It starts with you -

*"GOD GIVE US MEN"*

*God give us men a time like this demands  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands,  
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;  
Men who possess opinions and a will;  
Men who have honour; men who will not lie;  
Men who stand before a demagogue  
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;  
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog,  
In public daily, and in private thinking;  
For while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds,  
Their large professions and their little deeds,  
Mingle in selfish strife, lo, Freedom weeps,  
Wrong rules the land, and waiting Justice sleeps.*

Josiah Gilbert Holland.

And the personal decision you make -

*"I am only one,  
but I am one;  
I cannot do everything  
But I can do something.  
And what I can do  
That I ought to do;  
And what I ought to do,  
By the Grace of God  
I will do."*

Edward Everitt Hale.

before you can effectively join with others.



# Call to reform parties, not parliament

By GEORGINA WINDSOR

THE clerk of the Senate, Mr Harry Evans, has staunchly defended Australia's parliamentary system, claiming any reform should start with political parties which had become "factionalised, undemocratic oligarchies".

In a paper delivered to a weekend Samuel Griffith Society conference, Mr Evans said the parliamentary process would only work better if political parties were changed.

"The real need for reform is not so much in institutions of government as in political parties," Mr Evans said.

"They have become narrowly based, factionalised, undemocratic oligarchies ... controlled by too few people, closed to public view but open to man-

ipulation and outright corruption.

"Reforming them would make the institutions of government work better without changing those institutions, but without reforming them the institutions cannot work very much better than they do at present."

Mr Evans said the problem lay in the rigidity of the party system and the factionalisation of parties which not only weakened the federal structure but also breaks down "parliamentary and representative government".

"Its effect on the House of Representatives and on so-called responsible government has been more devastating than its effect on federalism and the Senate," he said.

"It has resulted in prime ministers who behave like emperors, bullying Speakers of the House of Representatives in public sittings of the House."

Mr Evans said that although senators voted according to party affiliations and not their States as originally intended by the founding fathers, the Senate still ensured a fair geographical spread of political representation which prevented domination by larger States.

He criticised any proposed reform of the Senate based on the "historical and theoretical misconception" that it was not operating as the "States' House" envisioned by the creators of the Constitution.

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