

Charter for a Democratic Australia

Representation:

- The primary responsibility of elected representatives is to represent their electorate.
- This implies regular open engagement with the communities they represent.
- If representatives are receiving high levels of local communication about an issue, then consultative processes should be put in place.

Honesty:

- There should be full, frank and honest communication between a representative and their electorate.
- This includes accounting for past actions and foreshadowing future intentions on actions being done and decisions being taken in the name of the electorate.
- There is no place for 'spin' in a true democracy.
- When dishonesty is revealed, political representatives should stand down.

Trust:

- We need to re-establish trust in the political process.
- The electorate need to know both immediate and broader political agendas.
- If the politicians cannot trust the electorate to understand the truth and come to informed judgments, then how can the electorate trust them?

Information:

- The foundation of a democracy is a fully informed electorate.
- There should be no need to keep information secret except in limited genuine cases of national security.
- The media provide the main channel for elected representatives to account for their actions, and elected representatives should endeavour to deal impartially and honestly with media representatives. The media must be free to run newsworthy, factual stories without intimidation by any government.

Funding:

- Sources of funding to all politicians and political parties both directly and indirectly should be public knowledge.
- This includes full disclosure to the sources of funds how their money has been spent.

Party Control:

- The party control of representatives in Australia is excessive.
- Representative democracy should not be compromised by excessive control over voting according to party dictates.
- It is not reasonable for our representatives to assume that because they were elected under a political party label, their electorate automatically support the party position on all issues.

Leadership:

- A prime minister who assumes or is given presidential status or authority is contrary to our democratic system of government, and is likely to lead to autocracy.
- We need to return to the intended role of the PM as the chair and spokesperson for the cabinet and the government.
- Major decisions such as to take Australia to war must be made by the full authority of our elected representatives in Parliament, not by a Prime Minister or Cabinet alone.

Minority Rights:

- The rights of minorities should not be dependent on the goodwill of the majority but be protected by laws based on human rights.

National Identity:

- Australia needs to re-establish its past proud place in the world community, which has been undermined in recent years.
- Democracy is a high principle that can only be maintained if those in power are true to these principles.

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Sign the Charter at www.ademocraticaustralia.com