



**VOICES
FOR THE
SENATE**

Constitution

INDEPENDENT VOICES FOR THE SENATE

CONSTITUTION

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1. Name

1.1 The name of the party is Independent Voices for the Senate (the Party).

2. Values

2.1 The Values of the Party are

- a) **Integrity** - requires honesty, transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness.
- b) **Respect** – for voters, community views, experts, and evidence.
- c) **Diversity** – of participation, viewpoints, representation, and voices.
- d) **Democracy** – requires ministerial accountability and standards; separation of executive, legislative and judicial functions; a diverse and accountable press; and transparency of political donations and public funding.

3. Objectives

3.1 The Objectives of the Party are:

- a) To support community based political organisations which are:
 - i. strongly connected to local electorates with broad community engagement
 - ii. have goals and aims which are not contrary to the Values
 - iii. represent their community and not a political party or organisation
- b) To stand candidates for election to the Senate of the Australian Parliament who support and adhere to the Values.
- c) To make the government of the day more accountable and transparent to the Australian people.
- d) To strengthen protections against corruption and poor decision making.
- e) To promote real and meaningful representation of electorates, communities and citizens by elected officials.

4. A Senate Party

- 4.1 The Party will only stand candidates for election in the Senate of the Parliament of Australia.
- 4.2 The Party will not contest, endorse or promote candidates for the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Australia.

5. Electorate Community Groups (ECGs)

- 5.1 The Party will recognise as an Electorate Community Group (ECG) an organisation which meets all the following criteria:
- a) covers the whole of a federal electorate, or multiple federal electorates.
 - b) is open for all residents in the electorate(s) to participate in;
 - c) has a primary focus of advancing the interests and views of the electorate(s) in federal parliament
 - d) has values and objectives which are not contrary to the Values and Objectives of the Party.
- 5.2 No organisation is required to join, provide reciprocal recognition or support the Party in order for that organisation to be recognised as an ECG by the Party.

6. Elections

CANDIDATES

- 6.1 Candidates for election and the order in which those candidates appear on the Party ticket will be determined for each State and Territory by a Candidate Panel (Panel) composed of members nominated by ECGs in that State or Territory.

- 6.2 Each Panel will have not more members than the number of electorates which are represented by an ECG in the relevant State or Territory, but will have at least 5 members.
- 6.3 Each ECG may select 1 person for each electorate they cover to the Panel for that State or Territory.
- 6.4 If there are less than 4 electorates covered by ECGs in a particular State or Territory then ECGs may select 2 persons per electorate they cover to the panel.
- 6.5 If there are less than 5 members nominated to a Panel by ECGs then the Party will select the minimum number of additional voting members to that Panel so that the Panel has 5 voting members.
- 6.6 In addition to any voting members of a Panel nominated by the Party under Clause 6.5 the Party will also nominate 1 non-voting member to each Panel.
- 6.7 The Party will provide secretariat [services] to each Panel.
- 6.8 Members of a Panel do not need to be members of the Party
- 6.9 Candidates selected by each Panel do:
- a) not need to be a member of the Party or join the Party prior to or after the election;
 - b) do need to commit to the Values and Objectives of the Party
 - c) do need to commit to voting in the Senate in accordance with the best interests of the citizens of the State or Territory which they represent and in accordance with any commitments they have made to the State or Territory which they represent.
- 6.10 The Registered Officer of the Party will endorse candidates to appear in the order determined by each Panel for each State and Territory with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC).

CAMPAIGNS

6.11 The lead Candidate on each Party ticket has campaign authority in relation to the Party ticket for that State or Territory.

6.12 The Party will support each lead Candidate prior to and during the campaign.

BALLOT GROUPING

6.13 Each Campaign may form a group with other candidates or parties on the Party Ticket only if:

- a) All candidates nominated by the Party are placed above other group candidates.
- b) All grouped candidates have values and aims which are not contrary to the Values of the Party
- c) That the grouping will further the campaign objectives and the Objectives of the Party.
- d) The Committee of the Party agrees to the grouping.

7. Distribution of Income

AEC FUNDING

7.1 Money received from AEC electoral funding shall be distributed as follows:

- a) Where the first preference vote is for a specific candidate on the Party ticket then that candidate shall receive 100% of the AEC funding received by the Party for those votes.
- a) Where a first preference vote is for the Party ticket then the lead candidate on the Party ticket shall receive 100% of the AEC funding received by the Party for those votes.

DONATIONS

- 7.2 Donations of money received by the Party for a specific candidate or specific senate election campaign shall be be paid 80% to the campaign or candidate and 20% to the Party to be used solely to further the Objectives.
- 7.3 Donations of money received by the Party, which do not fall under Clause 7.2, shall in any quarter (July-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun) shall be paid 60% to all ECGs, in equal shares, within 30 days of the end of the quarter and 40% to the Party to be used solely to further the Objectives..
- 7.4 Any donations not covered by Clauses 7.1 to 7.3, and donated goods or services received by the Party shall be retained by the Party and be used solely to further the Objectives

MEMBERSHIP FEES

- 7.5 Membership fees shall be retained by the Party and be used solely to further the Objectives.

8. Constitution

CHANGES

- 8.1 This Constitution can only be altered at the first Annual General Meeting held after a Federal Election.
- 8.2 The following clauses and their sub-clauses of this constitution can only be amended with 90% of the votes cast in favour of the amendment.
- a) Clause 2 – Values
 - b) Clause 3 – Objectives
 - c) Clause 5 – Electoral Community Groups (ECGs)
 - d) Clause 6 – Elections
 - e) Clause 7 – Distribution of Income

8.3 Clause 4 of this Constitution; A Senate Party, cannot be amended.

INTERPRETATION

8.4 Where a matter arises as to the interpretation of this Constitution the Committee shall determine the correct interpretation.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

8.5 Any disputes in relation to the affairs of the Party, shall be mediated, conciliated, arbitrated or otherwise heard and determined by the Committee in the manner it considers appropriate to the relevant circumstances. If there is no agreement amongst the Committee as to the manner of settling a dispute, the manner shall be determined by the President.

MEMBERSHIP

8.6 Membership is open to any individual over the age of 18 years who

- a) agrees to uphold and promote the Values and Objectives of the Party;
- b) agrees to abide by the Constitution of the Party;
- c) has paid the membership fee;
- d) has not been convicted of an electoral disqualifying offence;
- e) has not said or done any action which would bring the Party into disrepute;
- f) is not a member of another political party.

8.7 The Committee may reject any membership application if the committee is not satisfied that:

- a) the applicant for membership will uphold the Values; or
- b) that granting membership will further the Objectives.

8.8 the Committee may warn, suspend or terminate the membership of any member:

- a) who has been convicted of an electoral offence, either before or after joining the Party;
- b) whom the Committee reasonably determines has engaged in conduct which has, or which may bring the Party into disrepute;
- c) whom the Committee has reasonably determined has failed to uphold the Values;
- d) whom the Committee reasonably determines has failed to abide by the Constitution of the Party.

8.9 If a member's fees are overdue the member is unfinancial and their membership is suspended, and all rights and privileges of membership are suspended until the members fees are paid in full.

8.10 Members may resign by communicating their resignation to the Committee in writing.

MEETINGS

8.11 An annual general meeting of the members of the Party will be held within 5 months of the end of the financial year.

8.12 Each financial member is entitled to 1 vote.

8.13 Financial members whose votes total 5% or more may call a general meeting.

9. Finances

INCOME AND PROPERTY

9.1 The property and income of the Party will be used solely towards achieving the Objectives.

9.2 No income or property will be paid or transferred directly or indirectly to any member except for payments in return for any services rendered, goods supplied to the Party, rent on premises let by any member or reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the member on behalf of the Party.

AUDITOR

- 9.3 A registered auditor shall be appointed and audited financial statements will be prepared and provided to all members

RECORDS

- 9.4 Records of all meetings must be produced, kept and made available to members upon request
- 9.5 Records of committee and party membership details must be kept and made available, subject to privacy requirements, to members upon request.
- 9.6 Records of donations and donors must be kept and made available to members upon request.

10. The Committee

- 10.1 The Committee is responsible for the management of the Party and its affairs and may make by-laws, rules, and procedures as it thinks fit.
- 10.2 The Committee will consist of not less than 3 and not more than 9 members.
- 10.3 The Initial Committee Members shall hold office until the first Annual General Meeting at which time their office shall be open to election by financial members of the party.
- 10.4 A Committee member may resign by written notice to the Secretary.
- 10.5 The casual vacancy created by the resignation, or the death, of a Committee Member may be filled by the Committee until the next Annual General Meeting.
- 10.6 The Committee may appoint additional members to the Committee but there must not be more than 9 Committee Members.
- 10.7 The Committee Members will hold office for 2 years and will be eligible for re-election. Notwithstanding this clause, in order to assist in continuity of management, one half of the Committee Members will resign at the second Annual General Meeting but may offer themselves for re-election.

- 10.8 Each financial member is entitled to nominate a person (including themselves) and to vote for Committee Members.
- 10.9 The Committee will appoint the following office bearers from members of the Committee:
- a) The President
 - b) The Registered Officer
 - c) The Secretary
 - d) The Treasurer
 - e) The Party Agent
- 10.10 An individual may hold 2 or more offices but will only have one vote at Committee meetings.
- 10.11 The role of the President includes:
- a) overseeing the ongoing and efficient functioning of the Party;
 - b) ensuring that, in all its business, the Party adheres to its Values and Objectives;
 - c) Chairing Committee and General Meetings.
- 10.12 The role of the Registered Officer includes:
- a) Nominating the party's endorsed candidates,
 - b) Providing details for recording in the Register of Political Parties and information required by the AEC for .ballot papers and registration
- 10.13 The role of the Secretary includes:
- a) Carrying out the administration and for the conduct of the correspondence of the Party

- b) To be the Party's contact for general election and enrolment matters, appointment of party officials and to notify the contact details for the party and its office bearers;
- c) Such other matters as the Committee decides.

10.14 The role of the Treasurer includes:

- a) Manage and maintain the Party's finances in a good and orderly matter according to law.
- b) Authorising and tracking expenditure of Party funds in accordance with the Party's Aims.
- c) Such other matters as the Committee decides.

10.15 The role of the Party Agent includes:

- a) Identifying and ensuring the Party's legal disclosure requirements are met
- b) lodging of the Party's annual financial disclosure return and the receipt of election funding.
- c) Such other matters as the Committee decides.

11. Notices

11.1 Any notice required or authorised by this Constitution to be given to a member may be served on the member personally or sent by prepaid mail or by email or other electronic means addressed to the member at their last known address.

12. Winding Up

12.1 The Party may only be wound up or dissolved by the recommendation of the Management Committee, supported by the vote of two-third of financial members.

12.2 If the Party is wound up and there are insufficient Party assets to pay the Party's debts and liabilities, each member (and each person who has ceased to be a member

in the preceding year) undertakes to contribute to the Party and amounts not exceeding two dollars for payment of those debts and liabilities.

- 12.3 Any surplus assets of the Party remaining after payment of all debts and liabilities must be divided equally to all active ECGs which were a recognised ECG during the period from the date of the last federal election to the date of dissolution.