

# THE AUSTRALIAN GREENS

FROM ACTIVISM  
TO AUSTRALIA'S  
THIRD PARTY

STEWART JACKSON



**GREEN  
NOT GREED**

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# The Australian Greens

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*From Activism to Australia's Third Party*

Stewart Jackson



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When I first wanted to start studying the Greens, it was in the context of being a political operative myself—a former state and national office holder, and staffer to the party and MPs. As a larger (or rather, smaller) cog in the party machine, I knew why I was there, but was never really clear why anybody else was. So I decided that I needed to learn about what made the organisation—one that had been a part of my life for almost twenty years—and its members ‘tick’. Eight years and a PhD later, this book is the end result, one that will hopefully provide a modicum of clarity as to why people engage in Australian politics on the Green side.

Along the way a few people have been rather helpful. Ariadne Vromen at Sydney University has been, at different times, a superlative supervisor, mentor and friend. Anika Gauja and Narelle Miragliotta have been outstanding collaborators and co-authors. My friend and office co-habitant Peter Chen inspires and assists at every turn, as a co-author, co-researcher and co-host. On the Green side, there are almost too many to name: Ben Spies-Butcher, Christine Cunningham and Penny Allman-Payne as co-convenors, Brett Constable in the National Office, all the people in the state offices across the country (especially Rowena Skinner and Margo Beilby in WA), and everyone who took the time to offer their thoughts, opinions and concerns. Then there are the political friends and confidants—Lesa de Leau, Karl Haynes and Colombina Schaeffer are just three amongst the very many—thank you for your time and patience.

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# Glossary

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AEU	Australian Education Union
AMWU	Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union
ANMF	Australian Nurses and Midwifery Federation
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APESMA	Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia
ASMOF	Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation
ASU	Australian Services Union
AWU	Australian Workers Union
CEPU	Communication, Electrical and Plumbing Union of Australia
CFMEU	Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union
CPSU	Community and Public Sector Union
CSA	Civil Service Association
ETU	Electrical Trades Union
HACSU	Health and Community Services Union
HSOA	Hospital Salaried Officers Association
HSU	Health Services Union
IEU	Independent Education Union
LHMU	Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union
MEAA	Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance
NSM	New Social Movement
NSWTF	New South Wales Teachers Federation
NTEU	National Tertiary Education Union
NUW	National Union of Workers
PANSW	Police Association of New South Wales
PSA	Public Service Association
QPSU	Queensland Public Sector Union
QTU	Queensland Teachers' Union
RTBU	Rail Tram and Bus Union
SDA	Shop, Distributive and Allied Employee's Union
SSTUWA	State School Teachers' Union of WA
TWU	Transport Workers Union
USU	United Services Union
UV	United Voice

# Introduction

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Provoked by a desire to stop the environmental threat from the damming of the Huon and Serpentine Rivers and flooding of Lake Pedder in south-west Tasmania for a hydroelectricity scheme, in 1972 an array of activists banded together to form the United Tasmania Group, the precursor to the Tasmania Greens, and one of the first 'green' political parties globally. Thus the Australian Greens were born and subsequently broadened into a loose collection of localised activist groups, which by 2015 had transformed dramatically into a powerful political party with thirty-four Members of Parliament (MPs) Australia-wide and operating as the third force in Australian party politics.

Since its inception, the Australian Greens have grown and changed, from a purely volunteer organisation operating from the backrooms of members' houses to a party with offices in every state. How these changes have occurred and to what extent the earliest ideals of the first green groups have remained intact are questions I explore in this book. Like its German counterpart, the Australian Greens seem poised to make substantial electoral breakthroughs in the coming years. With this in mind, my aim in writing this book has been to pause and take stock of the Australian Greens' history and see whether by looking into the past, applying key questions to its members—both activists and staffers alike—and gathering some pertinent facts about the party's internal workings, I could unlock the answer to the question: how far have the Australian Greens moved from being a movement-based party to being a pragmatic professional one?

## **Why the Greens? Why now?**

The Greens, as a political force in Australian politics, have been growing in influence since the 2007 federal election. The election of Adam Bandt to the seat of Melbourne in the 2010 Australian federal election, and his involvement in enabling the Gillard government to remain in office, gave the Greens leverage over the Australian Labor Party (ALP) at a national level. The election of Jamie Parker at the 2011 New South Wales election in the seat of Balmain gave the Greens a foothold in another lower house, to be followed by two more seats at the 2014 Victorian election and two in New South Wales at its 2015 state election. When the four new Greens Senators took their seats in the Australian Senate in July 2011, the Greens then held the balance of power in both houses of the federal parliament, which propelled the party to the forefront of media attention.

Also in 2011, the Greens in the German state of Baden-Württemberg were elected to government. They outpolled the Social Democrats, with whom they then formed a coalition with as the senior partner, and elected a Minister-President (equivalent to a state Premier). This was the first time that the Greens had taken government through election as a coalition leader instead of a junior coalition partner. While Baden-Württemberg is far away from Canberra, the Greens' position in Baden-Württemberg has been seen as a watershed election in German politics, with ramifications for other European states. The impact of Greens on European politics, and of the composition and organisation of European Green parties, have been examined numerous times, yet this area has received little attention in Australia.

The reason for studying the Greens' internal organisation is somewhat more complex than a simple examination of their beginnings and current electoral fortunes. As a party with its historical base in social movements—predominantly the peace and environment movements in Australia—the Greens



have had to change and adapt organisationally, first as their membership and number of MPs grew, then as the demands of positioning themselves as an alternative government became greater. These changes necessitated offices, staff, then structural changes and, most recently, modifications to cultural practices within the party. At least some of the change has been unconsciously driven by experiences within other institutions such as parliament and local councils.

In order to establish the context for the ideas and information offered in these pages, I will first offer an account of my own experiences and reflect on those years as a party member, office bearer and national participant.

## **My experience in the Greens**

I joined the Greens in 1990 just after a federal election. It was summer, and I had recently returned to Australia from the UK, where I had lived for most of the previous year. While in the UK, I had joined the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), a Fourth International Trotskyist organisation, because I could not believe that a city as wealthy as London could have so many people sleeping rough each night. My excursion into the SWP only lasted that year in the UK, as I had a number of significant issues with their claims about society, capitalism and social change, not the least of which was their commitment to the violent overthrow of the state—why couldn't it be peaceful? I thought. My greatest disquiet was with their complete disregard for the environment.

On returning home to Western Australia, I was introduced to the Greens (WA) by a former colleague from my days as a public servant, Keith Bostock, who was heavily involved with the then new party. It struck me that the party could be a vehicle for good left-wing politics, encompassing both the environment and social justice, conducted in a peaceful and respectful way. That appealed directly to me. The party, with Senator Jo Vallentine in the federal parliament, seemed to have a voice and a future; however, some of the internal workings of the party—the cultural aspects, if you will—were very different from what I had experienced in the SWP, and seemed quite odd at first. At meetings everybody sat in a circle, rather than the usual ranks of people facing a podium from which a speaker would propound. I was told that people faced each other so that we could all see each other's faces, and all engage in the discussion when we had a decision to make. It was clear that voting wasn't so important here, either. The party used consensus, and even had the name of a book on consensus decision-making written into its constitution. I was informed that consensus was the fairest decision-making systems because it gave everybody a voice, and encouraged all participants both to speak and to convey their point of view. A potentially awkward way of making a decision certainly, but one that held the promise of better outcomes than traditional voting. I gradually became used to it.

Then there were the people, usually women, who would sit watching the meeting. If what they did had a name I have forgotten it, but their job was to observe the 'process' of the meeting and help the facilitator and the participants make good decisions. They would note who had been doing most of the speaking and suggest ways for the group to improve its internal processes. Sometimes they would draw a diagram corresponding to each participant in the meeting and draw lines between who spoke. Cheryl Lange, whose 1994 thesis focuses on the anthropology of the Greens (WA),<sup>1</sup> was one person who I would see doing so. The resultant image was a speaking 'map', which tracked graphically who spoke and how often—which could be very enlightening in uncovering who was dominating the flow in a meeting! The purpose of the speaking map, however, was again to improve the group's processes to highlight those who spoke more in order to create space for others, and to reveal to the facilitator where work was needed on skills development.

My first few years within the party were filled with a range of novel activities and ways of acting

that significantly differed from my previous involvement in the SWP. Indeed, the politics I was engaged in seemed very new and strange, yet more connected both to people and to the environment than the workerist attitudes I had previously experienced, which seemed to focus just on eulogising 'workers' and all things working class. Over time I became a facilitator myself, and worked to introduce some ideas I had seen in other forums, such as 'progressive speaking lists', which prioritised women and those who had said nothing previously over those who would make comments and speak often. This seemed a fairer way of engaging all participants in a meeting, especially one that was quite large, so that when consensus was said to have been achieved, every voice had been heard and every participant had had an opportunity to contribute.

However, at the same time, I was engaged in some internal struggles in the early 1990s over resource allocation—specifically discussion about whether the party should begin establishing itself more formally, with an office and maybe even someone to answer the telephones and letters. At the time, each new set of office bearers had to set up shop in their own backrooms or living rooms. This brought me into contact not just with Jo Vallentine but also with future Green politicians, such as Christabel Chamarette and Dee Margetts. Through these contacts and information given in the party meetings I came to understand the various positions being played out in Germany between the Realos and the Fundis (and other groupings within the German Greens).<sup>2</sup>

The Greens (WA) seemed to have similar groupings, although most members would have been relatively oblivious to them. I was considered, as one person put it, a 'left structuralist', with a left-wing political orientation and an interest in building a strong party identified with Realo elements, whereas Chamarette was identified with Fundi ideas. Over time these labels began to have less meaning in terms of intellectual import and more to do with 'us' and 'them'; nonetheless they had the potential to split the party.

People entering a party also bring their experiences with them. If these experiences have been with parties or groups that use voting and have a strong top-down structure, then this is what they expect and act out. So the cultural element of the party was almost inevitably going to change, at least to some extent. The corollary to this is that while some change is inevitable, if it is predictable the change should also be quite carefully thought through. I can see with the benefit of hindsight that some changes that occurred in the early years of the Greens (WA), such as the focus on a party office employing office staff, adopting a formalised structure and insisting on a focus on election outcomes might have been better considered, but equally, some of the resistance to those changes appeared to be more based on personality conflict than actual intellectual or ideological disagreement. Similar situations were played out at the national level, with the increasing professionalisation of the party and the increasing centralisation of decision-making, campaigning and fundraising.

My own path led to being elected as the Greens (WA) party secretary and party convenor six times between 1991 and 2001, as well as being a local branch convenor for much of that time. Towards the end of the 1990s, I began working in the state MPs offices as a relief staff member, then for eighteen months for the state Member of the Legislative Council (MLC), Dr Christine Sharp, as her research officer, working closely with her and the other MPs in state parliament. After moving to New South Wales to work on the 2003 state election campaign, I continued to work for the party and MP, including a six-month stint with Michael Organ, the Australian Greens' first Member of the House of Representatives (MHR), then for the Greens NSW as an organiser for five years. I was also elected national convenor of the Australian Greens for two terms between late 2003 and late 2005.

As convenor I was responsible for managing the national office and maintaining the good operation of the party between national meetings, as well as being involved in preference negotiations in the

lead-up to the 2004 federal election, a headache that provided some interesting and memorable moments of high drama and dark amusement. One particular moment involved a discussion with the then ALP national secretary Tim Gartrell, who asked, perhaps a little too darkly, 'What, no "world peace"?!' when the Greens' negotiating team announced that the Greens would only be seeking Senate preferences from the ALP in return for lower house preferences from the Greens, and would not be asking for any policy outcomes, as had been the norm previously.

Alongside these more interesting activities sat the responsibility of trying to resolve disputes between and within state branches. This occurred most significantly on two occasions, in South Australia and Queensland. Perhaps fortunately, the convenor has no authority over state parties, so dispute resolution could only be conducted through mediation and negotiation! Those two disputes, however, highlighted potential divisions and tensions concerning local branch autonomy and questioned the wisdom of accepting sitting MPs from other parties into the Greens' ranks. The tensions also exposed the nature of internal politicking over party direction. The disputes themselves were finally resolved only when particular members withdrew from active involvement in the party.

Finally, from 2007 I began winding back my active involvement in the party, maintaining for another two years my job as an organiser for the Greens NSW, but withdrawing from the day-to-day running of the party. I still attend national conferences, have now conducted several surveys of the party with the agreement and support of the party, and focus mostly on fostering links with other Greens parties throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Thus my experience has been at the centre of the party from the local branch to the national office as well as being on staff for both party and MPs. I have attended almost all national conferences of the Australian Greens since the first Annual National Conference in Canberra in 1993. Attending these events allowed me to meet people and discuss the politics the party was engaged in across Australia, look at and learn from the different ways each state operated, and to reflect on my work within the party. The 1990s was a decade of the party gradually building and establishing itself, but the slow nature of the process meant that new members who joined the party were able to be acculturated smoothly. Their own 'party socialisation' process was not so different from my own: learning about consensus decision-making, the flat party structure, and the party's commitment to grassroots organising.

However, following the Global Greens Conference in Canberra in 2001 it had become relatively clear that the party required restructuring and reorganisation, if only to accommodate the increasing administrative workload deriving from its expansion. In 2002, a National Review was carried out followed in 2004 by a Strategic Forward Planning process. Both activities yielded changes to the structure and operation of the national party, with first a national administrative committee (the Australian Greens Coordinating Group) being adopted, then the appointment of a national manager (originally titled national officer). Each new layer of administration and personnel, however, slowly moved power, influence and decision-making away from the state and local branches. With the election of five senators in the 2007 federal election came Federal Parliamentary Party status and a separate Leader's Office and staff. Policy-making now began to be concentrated within parliamentary staff, especially in the ACT and Tasmania, where Greens have since accepted ministerial posts and entered government.

### **Obtaining the information**

Apart from my own knowledge, background and collection of books and paper, derived from having been an active party member since 1990, a great deal of information has had to be collected to build

the picture presented here. The biggest block of information comes from two surveys and a set of interviews. The first survey, of party activists, was conducted in 2008, followed by interviews with staff members in 2009. A second survey, this time of all members, was then conducted in 2012. The party activist layer within the party was defined as including the office bearers of the 140-odd local groups and branches, state and national party office bearers, delegates to state and national councils and members involved in policy circles, and consisted of 740 individuals. This yielded a response rate of 56 per cent. The second survey was conducted online and included all party members with an email address (approximately 90 per cent of the membership). The response rate was lower, at 22 per cent. The 2009 interviews were of staff across the party and in MPs' offices, but was restricted to staff who were currently party members. Twenty interviews were conducted in total, although they were supplemented by those staff (who were also members) who answered the 2012 survey, as there was a question asking whether they were a party or MP staff member.

Where needed, some supplementary interviews were conducted with other activists within the party including former leading party members, such as Jan Jermalinski (in Western Australia) and Dred Hutton (in Queensland). The party archives in Melbourne and New South Wales were also accessed with the party's permission, to check historical occurrences and activities. Additionally, a number of books have been written by former Greens MPs—Bob Brown, Ian Cohen and Lance Armstrong have all written of their time in the party—and aligned commentators for instance, Amanda Lohrey, who has written monographs and articles on the party's development.<sup>3</sup> On top of this comes the many academics and commentators who have written about parties, the Greens and Australian politics. All play their part in building the picture.

## Chapter offerings

This book covers several different parts. [Chapters 1–3](#) cover the history and structures of Green parties, but particularly the Australian Greens. The latter chapters examine the Australian party far more closely, looking at the interests and activities of the party's members, activists and supporters as well as the staff who work for the party and its MPs.

Chapters 1 and 2 cover the cultural and philosophical underpinnings of social change in the West and historical origins of the Greens. The Australian Greens are part of a family of parties that sprang from the social changes in Western countries in the 1960s and 1970s. So we need to acknowledge the party's beginnings in Tasmania, from one of the earliest of these new parties.

[Chapter 3](#) examines the history of the state parties that make up the Australian Greens, including their own origins, whether in the work of individuals or groups looking to move a green agenda forward. While the party's origin in Australia is in Tasmania, the formal aspects of party registration as a Green party were not pursued until the mid-1980s. From that point green groups began to appear in each of the states, some bursting to prominence, other working slowly to come to fruition.

Importantly, Greens have often been considered to be above the traditional left-right divide, arising as it did separate from struggles over the distribution of economic benefits within society.<sup>4</sup> The Greens hoped to infuse new ideas into this debate and to transcend the old arguments. [Chapter 4](#) delves into the ideological positioning of the party to see where members place themselves within the debate, and to see how they perceive themselves in relation to the organised forces of that other social movement, that of organised labour—the unions.

[Chapter 5](#) takes us inside the party to look at the people who make it tick. Members, activists and staff are the core of what a party is, so it is here that we will find what they look like and what they do. This chapter will also examine the internal workings of the party and the relationship between the

different parts.

Turning to why people join a party like the Greens (chapter 6), we will learn the motivations for why people choose to become active within the party. People do join parties for a variety of reasons but Australians join the Greens because of a strong desire for political outcomes as much as because of any opposition to existing political structures.

What we do not find among either Greens members or party activists is a desire to advance their career or to gain personal benefit. At this time of rejection of a political 'class', whether in the form of the anti-politics of Russell Brand or a surge in membership of anti-party parties like Syriza in Greece or Podemos in Spain, what we will find is that Greens have an interest in politics and wish to be active in political change, and are apparently prepared to invest time and energy into such a project.

Chapter 6 also takes us into the territory of what it means to be an activist. This chapter examines the activity of different groups within the party: what members and staff do, and how often they do. Activity is sometimes said to define a party, and even more so in the case of the Greens. What is examined is how often the different groups within the party (members, activists and staff) go to meetings, take part in activities and generally engage in the 'life' of the party. If the Greens are still a party engaged in social movements, then we will see whether the party's members treat the party like this, connected to community, or whether the party is a haven for careerists and hacks.

Further into the chapter we will also come face to face with the core of the party: party activists. While we can define the activist as part of the party—and the various Seyd and Whiteley studies of British parties have unravelled to some extent what they do for a party—what will be shown here are the important activities for Greens.<sup>5</sup> In that sense, how close are Greens party activists to community activities, and does this accord with what we know from our own experiences of what community activism is?

Chapter 7 considers another sign of a party potentially shifting to a more pragmatic and professional mode of operation, that of policy and strategy formulation. In this chapter we begin to step inside the party, examining the feelings of members, activists and staff towards the importance of particular policy areas and to the debate around who should actually be involved in policy-making.

While the Labor and Liberal parties have tended to assign policy-making to specialised committees often directed by party leaders and MPs, the Greens have always seen policy-making as an important role for members. In the earliest days, Greens also allowed community input into policy formulation not just as a demonstration of the party's activist credibility but also as a genuine commitment to open formulation of public policy. But how do Greens view this practice now? Who should have responsibility for suggesting and building the party's policies and platform?

The role of leaders and structure within the party will be examined in chapter 8 to see whether they provide further evidence of a shift from a movement base to an electorally pragmatic party form. In the early days of the party, formal leadership was not considered by the party or its constituent parties. The exception was Tasmania, where the nature of the state party's formation resulted in MPs being elected without a party structure—hence there were MPs in search of a party. It was only in 2002, twenty years after the party's first formal registration in 1985, that a party leader position was created and theoretically then only in relation to the federal parliamentary party.

Since then most of the state parties have also adopted leader roles, noting, however, that adopting leaders has been done in the context of parliament only, with internal party leadership still being very much the province of the membership. We do need to consider, however, what the impact of a growing membership is, especially as longer-term members fall by the wayside. Will greater membership lead to more leader figures emerging? Will those leaders desire to be directive in the

engagement with the party, and then how will members respond?

Lastly, [chapter 9](#) deals primarily with the broad question of placing the Greens within a party framework and what direct indicators there might be. As such, the logical place to start is with the Greens as a ‘movement party’. However, we know the Australian Greens have moved away from the original base. Using Kitschelt’s criteria for an electoral professional party,<sup>6</sup> we will compare responses to the categories to see where the points of difference are.

What we might hope to find is how party members and activists see the party—as a social movement or as a more formalised political party. A closer affinity with social movements would suggest one mode of organising, to being a political party with a different style and approach to electoral politics. What we find will not be such a surprise, given the rise and strength of the Australian Greens electorally, but what is important to consider is whether there are still vestiges of the old movement activism, as this gives a clearer idea of the future trajectory of party political activities into the future.

At the end of this journey we hope to reach a conclusion on the shift of the Australian Greens from social movement to professional party. The story of the party’s development is inextricably linked to its history, but just as we ourselves grow from childhood, through adolescence to adulthood, so does the party. As we grow up, we pick up some scars, have our ideas tested, and develop ways of seeing and acting upon the world around us. So it is with a political party as it struggles to maturity, hopefully with successful outcomes along the way. The Greens have left its childhood and adolescence behind; it is an adult now, so we need to understand it from this perspective. This book is the first to do so in an Australian context.

Equally, to understand the adult, we need to understand the child, to know where it has come from and what processes have helped form it—have been part of its own political socialisation, if you will. So it is to these early beginnings, the political underpinnings of the party, that we shall now turn our attention.

## Notes

- 1 Lange, ‘Being Green’.
- 2 Hulsberg, *The German Greens*, provides an excellent overview of the early Greens in Germany—among the many others!
- 3 Brown & Singer, *The Greens*; Cohen, *Green Fire*; Armstrong, *Good God, He’s Green!* Lohrey, *Groundswell*; and *The New Greens*.
- 4 Dalton, ‘Economics, environmentalism and party alignments’; Zimmerman, *Ecofascism*; and Warnock, ‘The Greens’, suggest that this was first made clear by the German Greens in their slogan ‘Neither left nor right, but out in front’.
- 5 Seyd & Whiteley, *Labour’s Grass Roots*; Whiteley, Seyd & Richardson, *True Blues*; Whiteley & Seyd, *High Intensity Participation*; Whiteley, Seyd & Billingham, *Third Force Politics*.
- 6 See Kitschelt, ‘Movement parties’.

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## A beginning

The Greens as a political entity started in the Australian state of Tasmania with the United Tasmania Group (UTG), which formed around opposition to the impending destruction of Lake Pedder through dam-building by the Hydro-Electric Commission (HEC). Formed just before the May 1972 state election, UTG's purpose was to raise awareness about the destruction of the lake and the apparent wanton environmental destruction of other places in Tasmania in pursuit of development. The UTG was ultimately unsuccessful in stopping the damming of the lake, or getting anyone elected, although the 'No Dams' movement would re-emerge successfully ten years later around another dam proposal on the Franklin River.<sup>1</sup>

At almost the same time in New Zealand (in August 1972), a group of activists formed the Values Party to campaign on a progressive platform for the 1972 national election. The Values Party also looked to environmental campaigns for support, in particular groups opposed to a major dam project at Lake Manapouri, but also questioned New Zealand's role in international affairs and opposed the Vietnam War. The Values Party did moderately well, but although it contested further elections, it was denied electoral representation due to the first-past-the-post electoral system, and the party faded towards the end of the 1970s. Slightly earlier, Europe saw the formation of the first ecologist party in Switzerland, Mouvement Populaire pour l'Environnement (MPE), in December 1971.<sup>2</sup> This party also formed around an environmental issue, in this case the building of a road, which motivated local residents to form the group and challenge at the cantonal level. Although unsuccessful at that time, the MPE would succeed in 1979, with the election of the first Green MP globally.

Green parties emerged simultaneously in several Western nations. Thus it was for many campaigns and groups around the world, spurred on by the social changes of the 1960s. Whether it was the Moratorium marches in Australia that campaigned against Australian involvement in Vietnam, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in the UK, or the coalition of groups and ideas that converged on the US Democratic Party Convention in Chicago in 1968, there were social and political movements advocating large-scale political change. Such books as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, E. F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* and the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* provided critiques of Western industrial capitalism that inspired activists to consider non-Marxist radical ideas. Drew Hutton, founder of the Brisbane Greens in 1984,<sup>3</sup> noted that many of his generation, growing up in the 1960s, were strongly influenced by the anti-Vietnam war marches and by New Left criticisms of Western capitalism.

In Australia at the time, there were limited political options. The formation of the UTG did not herald a national party formation process, built as it was around dissatisfaction regarding the flooding of Lake Pedder. Indeed, individual progressive activists were still working on diverse projects across the country, such as the Rainbow Ecology Party, based in the south-west of Western Australia and the Trotskyist group Resistance, which began as a youth group in opposition to Australia's Vietnam involvement. The formation of the Australian Democrats in 1977, as a result of the merger of the New Liberal Movement, Centreline Party and the Australia Party, brought together a number of strands of environmental thinking, but in a purely parliamentary paradigm, and did not engage a grassroots activist base.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, tendencies within the ALP, influenced by other traditional leftist and progressive

thinking, were developing. Moss Cass, Minister for the Environment under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, was influential in advancing a new ethic of environmental protection. Left-wing ALP members in inner-city districts such as Balmain, New South Wales, were mobilising around social and environmental issues as much as industrial and labour movement issues. The development of the emancipatory and identity politics of the 'New Left' in the 1960s also saw similar statements expressed in the UTG founding charter. The diversity and complexity of the story is characteristic of any narrative of green party formation in Australia.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, in terms of electoral campaigning, by 1989 there were some thirteen green parties throughout Australia registered federally with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC),<sup>6</sup> with eighteen campaigning at the 1990 federal election. They represented a wide variety of groups and structures. On top of that were a further number of state-registered parties and unregistered groups (some not using the name 'Greens') that would later form part of the Greens. For instance, in Western Australia these included the federally registered Vallentine Peace Group, the state registered Alternative Coalition and the unregistered Green Development, all of which merged finally with the small but federally registered Green Party of Western Australia to form the Greens (WA) on 1 January 1990. Although discussions on forming a Green party in Western Australia stretched back to the mid-1980s, registration of such a party did not occur until 1989, with the merger in 1990 as the final step in that process.

The name 'Green' itself was derived from the green bans of the early 1970s in New South Wales. The green bans, initiated by the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) under Jack Mundey, were so called because they combined the more traditional black bans against unsafe worksites with a new 'green' idea of environmental protection and community action. The first of the green bans, in Hunter's Hill, New South Wales, in 1971 saw the BLF allied with local community members attempting to save an iconic piece of local bushland, Kelly's Bush. This alliance of community interests, environmental concerns and workers (labour) was an exemplar for Petra Kelly, founding member of the German Greens (arguably one of the most successful green parties globally). Indeed, Petra Kelly's tour of Australia in 1984 was pivotal in the formation of an Australian green party and a catalyst for future political action.<sup>7</sup>

However, in considering the name 'green' here, it is important to note that it was coined not by the emerging environmental parties such as the Values Party in New Zealand (NZ) or the UTG in Tasmania, but as an expression of the emerging connections between differing social movement activists. These new connections linked the old labour movement with the newly emerging environmental movement.

The first European Green party was formed in Switzerland in December 1971, at the cantonal level with the first national party in Europe being PEOPLE in the UK in 1973. However, the first usage of the word 'Green' as a party label was in relation to the German Greens (Die Grunen) in 1980, in preparation for the European election later that year. The Swiss Greens won seats in their national parliament in 1983, although Daniel Brelaz became the first Green elected to a national parliament in 1979, as a candidate for the MPR's national list Group for the Protection of the Environment. While it seems obvious that a variety of Green parties were forming at this time, each with their own charters, ideals and ideology, what is also clear is that these early formations were establishing themselves in a more generalised milieu as opposed to being simply branches derived from each other.

The bringing together of the old and the new can be seen in the classic four pillars of the green movement. Leading West German Greens member August Haußleiter described the process of formulating the four pillars at the often fractious German Greens congress at Offenbach in 1979:



~~I took a piece of paper and wrote four words on it: ecology, social responsibility, grassroots democracy and non-violence. Then I called Gruhl (leader of the conservatives) and Reents (leader of the left) into the room where the journalists were and said 'Sign'. We then went back into the convention hall and announced we had a programme.~~<sup>8</sup>

These four pillars are now a key element of all green parties' charters and constitutions. That they were derived in a fairly spontaneous manner does not undermine their importance, but may be considered the final expression of a longer process. That process began in the 1950s and 1960s in the peace and counter-culture movements, was expressed in protest and street activism, and was ultimately a product of the long period of post-war boom that delivered education and prosperity to a broad Western public.

## **Greens internationally**

The German Greens, with a lengthy and at times turbulent history, have been the subject of much academic study. Scholars have examined the forces at play within the German Greens, and scholarly interest has been extended to studies of the French Greens, the Greens in the United Kingdom and other European nations. Still others have written on the philosophical backing for a green party. Each has noted the movement of the party from a relatively fringe political party towards the centre of political life in their respective countries, although this has been tempered both by internal debate and by external political realities and opportunity structures.<sup>9</sup>

If we are concerned about the current and future developmental path of the Australian Greens, the way how the internal debates of the various green parties have been characterised and analysed will be of interest, and finding out whether this describes the nature and form of those parties' trajectories towards the political centre is important. The best-known debates are those from within the German Greens, particularly between the factions struggling for control of the party's program and, importantly, its political direction, whether operating within government or aloof from it. The struggles between the competing factions of the Fundis and Realos, however, both mask yet also reveal deeper debates about the purpose of the party. Simple characterisations of people and ideas in dichotomous positions masks the wide variety of possible positions and potential solutions to the ecological crisis, while at the same time making explicit the basic split between those who see the existing system as the problem and those who see that it might be possible to work within it.<sup>10</sup>

Werner Hulsberg defined factional groupings within the German Greens as primarily within four strands of thinking regarding the party in relation to the state. The Realos (or 'proponents of realpolitik') looked to entering parliament to achieve reform. Fundamentalists (or Fundis) argued that accommodation with the major German parties (the Social Democrats or Christian Democrats) is not to become like them: that a continuation of the transformation of the people is required, and this can only be achieved by working directly with people and not through the institutions of the state. Eco-libertarians supported reformism and compromise, and in that gathered up the remnants of the right wing of the party who had departed as the Greens was forming. Eco-socialists adopted a generally socialist line, seeing parliamentarianism as an illusory goal, but also considered that electioneering and campaigning were necessary components of building an opposition according to the existing social and political paradigm. Thomas Poguntke defined the debates as principally between the Fundis and Realos, with the other tendencies operating more as subfactions.<sup>11</sup>

The main arguments stemming from the four key strands of thinking within the German Greens

the 1980s have been replicated in many other green parties, just as they have in green philosophical thinking, but to varying degrees across different parties. However, most of these green parties have moved from being amateur parties based on social movements, to a professional vehicle for legislative reform. The relatively rapid move within the German Greens from the early structures that attempted to spread power inside the party away from MPs and people in leadership positions towards a more professional and hierarchical structure was mirrored in a series of green parties, although not always with immediate success.<sup>12</sup>

Equally significant is that the parties' successes, or lack thereof, are also linked to the opportunities the parties face, both electorally and politically. Since most European nations have proportional electoral systems, Green parties have found the path to parliament to be relatively open, even when the political opportunities have been lacking. In countries with a Westminster tradition (such as the UK and Canada) this has provided far fewer electoral opportunities and a greater tendency to focus on localised politics or broader policy issues. Particular political situations (Chernobyl for Sweden, nuclear disarmament for Germany, a disintegrating Grand Coalition in Austria, and independence in the Ukraine) have also allowed for public policy debates assisting the rise of Green parties, although again have not been a guarantee of success. So it is important, then, to examine the Australian political context.<sup>13</sup>

### **Developing a party political culture**

An issue under-canvassed in the examination of political parties from a political science perspective is that of 'culture': the internal dynamics that drive the organisation and are based not in particular forms of political psychology or in party constitutions, but on the invisible and often unspoken web of actions and expectations that operate within meetings and between people.

In thinking about party culture, it is useful to place the party within an extended idea of political culture, whether based on the nation, class, religion or other categories. However, studies that focus on national understanding of culture alone, while providing an overview of the contours of a national politic, will not be differentiated enough to offer an understanding of what occurs within any particular party. Equally, examining the party culture alone might provide a rich description but little insight into what drives the various actors within the party. Where examination of party culture has occurred, it has tended to focus on why particular groups do not participate in party politics, on political socialisation or on why parties are in decline.<sup>14</sup>

To reach an understanding of the distinctive character of the inner culture of the Australian Greens means looking closely at its history and realising that the very nature of the party's development, from its series of separate but linked local organisations to a federation of state-based parties, has meant that there is not one over-arching monoculture at work within the party. Instead a diverse set of behaviours, expectations and activities are present thanks to the different formation paths and histories of the local and state parties.

Party culture is important to understand given the context of the significant changes within the Australian Greens' constitution that occurred in 2014. These changes reduced the importance of long-held traditions of consensus decision-making, multi-level diffusion of decision-making, and strong state representation on central party bodies. These elements of party operation were also part of the party culture, and signify a shift from the party's movement past, even while retaining active state and local branches with diverse histories.

The party culture of the Australian Greens is therefore marked by state and local differences. While there are obvious similarities, such as the use of consensus and the tendency to sit in a circle

meetings, there are also differences between the interpretation of how meetings should be run, the view on the power of executives, the role of the local group, the way in which group members socialise and the minutiae of meeting and event protocols, such as how to acknowledge Indigenous people, the pattern and form of meetings as well as other idiosyncratic meeting practices. The differences subtly influence the decisions made at party meetings.

For instance, the Greens NSW was created as a state-based party several years after a series of separate local parties had already formed. The process of amalgamation into a single party was one requiring discussion and negotiation, especially as some of the constituent groups had been active parties in their own right for a number of years. Issues of local autonomy needed to be balanced with single policy positions, even if there was contention over proposals. The struggle to develop the state party reflected the very different foci and ideologies of these groups, and their own internal practices were then reflected in the state party. The very clear acknowledgement of the autonomy of the local group is a reflection of the early struggles between groups, as is the continued (and contested) opposition to both a hierarchy and executive. As the New South Wales state party continues to develop, claims over needing to change policy, structures and processes will continue to be aired, whether internally or externally, generating internal divisions over these issues.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast, the Tasmanian Greens have utilised very different structural arrangements. The Tasmanian party developed more as a response to having elected MPs than to the need to network a set of local groups, and developed in the wake of the formation of the Wilderness Society. While the party's annual state conference holds supreme power within the organisation, the state executive clearly directs the normal running of the party and determines when and how the state party operates, including the candidate selection process in its entirety. The adoption of a parliamentary leader before the existence of a party also provided a focus for party energies in parliament, even while many party activists retain strong links to an external and activist environmental movement. The features of the party constitution and the role of the party leader follow a different party development path from the New South Wales and Western Australian parties, reflecting the different motives and necessities of the Tasmanian party.

In examining Green party culture, it is useful to consider both the local and the general milieu in which the party operates. Florence Faucher-King noted the varying cultural practices in both the Aix-en-Provence and Oxford Greens, but does not attribute the observed practices to any specific national party characteristic, even though broader cultural practices might be at work.<sup>16</sup> So it is with the Australian Greens.

If we consider the historical developments of each of the state parties, and in some cases local parties that became local branches of the Australian Greens, we would be able to note the separate cultural practices at work. In then looking at the Australian Greens we would need also to consider the practices of the Australian Greens meetings in isolation from those of the party's constituent parties, even though there is an iterative process between the state and national levels of the party.

The national Greens party operates as part of the national political scene. It has a national headquarters in Canberra, with a national manager and staff. The operations of the national party have tended to be more hierarchical than most state and local groups. Final decisions on campaigns and national-level arrangements tend to need at least the agreement of senior MPs. However, the 'cultural' practices at an Australian Greens' national meeting derives in part from the collective experience of the state party members attending, as much from what might be expected as from the peak meeting of a national political party. In this context, some of the same practices observed at state and local level can also be observed at a national level. The national level practices include: delegates sitting in

large circle so that they can face each other; national office bearers acting as functionaries, not leaders; regular breaks for further discussion; and the use of alternative dispute resolution techniques to break policy and procedural deadlocks. At the same time, business is expected to be dealt with expeditiously, and agendas maintained through disciplined decision-making. This is in contrast to the practices of states and earlier practices at the national level. These practices were characterised by long initial discussions, with meetings disintegrating towards the close of the meeting as they rushed to get decisions made or deferred, all with a perceived drop in the quality of decision-making.

However, some of the older decision-making practices still persist. New South Wales Greens delegates will withdraw consent—called ‘blocking consensus’—on proposals if its delegates do not think there has been adequate discussion at the state level. This replicates practices at the New South Wales state-level meetings, where decisions might be deferred if local branches have not had sufficient time to discuss issues and make a decision on them. This deliberative style of decision-making was a feature of early meetings of some Greens parties, and borrows heavily from the Quaker and US peace activists. In maintaining this practice, Greens have attempted to entrench it as a procedure thought to produce better decisions. A former reference (now removed) in the Greens (WA) constitution cited a book on which decision-making practices were to be based and provided a direct link to those peace group activities. An early study of the Greens (WA) highlighted, however, that different groups within the early party still contested these practices, even as the internal party culture developed.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, the study of the Greens (WA) provides an historical snapshot of the formative period. Within it are noted the various practices associated with meetings, including the difficulty in gaining consensus, the referral back to local branches—called ‘local groups’ in Western Australia—and the struggles over what ‘green’ practice might be. It becomes clear that the meetings are the core of the socialisation of newer members into the party, yet can be both frustrating and alienating for those members, who are as yet unaccustomed to the particular modes of behaviour and mechanics of the meetings. This suggests that the socialisation process itself is a key component of the construction of group identity as well.<sup>18</sup>

The acculturation process can be seen by observing a state-level meeting of the Greens (WA) from 1991, when it was comparatively large among Australian Green parties (with 340 members and a federal MP). At this meeting the activities and processes utilised by various members to discuss issues and make decisions could be observed and described. A key observation was that individuals within the meeting resorted to accusations of ‘un-greenness’ on a variety of occasions to defend or criticise positions. At the same time, the absence of concrete arguments was also fairly obvious to the meeting participants. The rhetorical activities of participants in the meetings alluded to various opaque power dynamics operating within those meetings.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, the Greens NSW specify a process of decisionmaking, contained on their member website and periodically referred to within meetings. This is a process, listed as Interim Standing Orders and adopted in 2002, designed to codify previously existing decision-making practices. The Standing Orders also codify the grounds for referral back to local groups, in the same way as the Australian Greens’ practice does, and allow for voting within the consensus framework, if required. While not definitive (meetings can still decide to suspend their own rules), this codification takes what was once a cultural practice and makes it the standard.

The pervading culture of consensus decision-making within the Greens while generally enshrined in party constitutions and papers, is not complete. Consensus decision-making is part of a commitment to participatory democracy. Local decision-making provides legitimacy to state or national decision-

and further supports the continuing value placed on participatory practices. Proposals have, at various times, been put forward to apply ‘modified’ consensus to all processes even while that was not a constitutional requirement, with a shift to modified consensus occurring with the constitutional changes agreed in November 2014. Modified consensus allows for voting to take place where consensus cannot be gained from all present, and could be seen as weakening a commitment to consensus. That the earlier proposals failed is perhaps as much because it was not seen as an urgent issue as for a cultural attachment to consensus processes. The changes in 2014, which removed the requirement for strict consensus (i.e. no voting on decisions) for any decisions except changes to the constitution or policy, occurred in the context of structural change, which removed the number of quasi-executive bodies of the Australian Greens from three to one. While consensus remains as a ‘goal’ mentioned within the new constitution, it no longer holds the status that it once did, and might in fact now be a historical artefact, at least in terms of its strictest interpretation.<sup>20</sup>

While the best evidence we have for Greens groups’ cultural markers is anecdotal, that they exist should equally be telling us that there is at times a high degree of individuality between groups. The cultural activities or signifiers can be addressed by looking more deeply at some of the state party activities, such as meetings and conferences, and then at the way in which these activities inform their outcomes. While research about the local level is limited, some anecdotal evidence can be used to form conclusions.

Just as Faucher-King describes the entrenchment of differing meeting practices of the Aix-en-Provence and Oxford Greens, a sudden change to existing practices can cause significant resistance. In the context of the Australia Labor Party this was noted by Michael Organ in the Illawarra Green Party whose election was largely the result of the imposition of a candidate by the ALP State Office, with a resulting backlash from both party members and the public.<sup>21</sup> To this, Michael Organ noted that ‘we’re seeing problems down here [in the Illawarra], with Labor, where the State [Office] has imposed candidates and so forth. It just causes problems’,<sup>22</sup> while also being wary of state office direction from his own party.

## Conclusion

The progress of a party, from earliest beginnings to the current point, necessarily involves changes to the party’s organisation, platform and personnel, particularly if the party has any degree of electoral success. In the case of the Australian Greens, the process of development was slow for the first fifteen years of the party’s history, coupled with only limited and variable electoral success, and a relatively low membership level. However, the years following the 2001 federal election saw a dramatic shift in the party’s fortunes. From 2001–11 the party tripled in size, in both membership and MPs elected, with those MPs now sitting in multiple upper and lower houses.

The shift in electoral fortunes of the Australian Greens has necessarily seen many stresses placed on the party, in both policy and structural terms, with significant changes in both employed and voluntary personnel and processes. In many respects, the strength of the party has helped it to weather those stresses, but in doing so it has had to accommodate more traditional forms of operation. Accommodation of the pressures, whether driven by internal necessity or external expectations, has seen the party change.

In [chapter 2](#), we will look at some of the theoretical grounding for discussion of the Australian Greens, including how the party might be situated between movement and professional party. In [chapter 3](#), we will be introduced to the people in the party, the members, and two groups of those members not often discussed or seen in the literature on parties: the staff and party activists. The

two groups are crucial 'players' within the party, as interlocutors and communicators between the MPs, the membership and the electorate, yet are largely ignored in the Australian context. The experiences, knowledge and actions have been crucial in the development of the party, and will continue to be important as the party moves towards its next phase of development. It is important therefore, to examine their views as they will highlight the changes within the party, particularly on historically difficult questions for green parties, including what direction members think the party should move in.

## Notes

- 1 See Brown & Singer, *The Greens*; Buckman, *Tasmania's Wilderness Battles*, and Pybus & Flanagan, *The Rest of the World is Watching*, for extended discussion of the UTG and Franklin Dam.
- 2 Ladner & Brändle, *Switzerland*; Sara Parkin, *Green Parties*, incorrectly identifies this as December 1972, as the party timeline s outlines indicates a repeated typographical error.
- 3 The Brisbane Greens never registered with the AEC as a party, although members went on to be involved in the Queensland Green Network and the Queensland Greens. Hutton, in the edited collection *Green Politics in Australia*, traces the emergence and convergence of movements in the pre-formation of the Greens.
- 4 Percy, *Resistance*, provides a good overview of radical Trotskyist politics of this period, while Warhurst, 'The Nationals and the Democrats', provides a history of the Australian Democrats. Warhurst has written extensively on the thirty-year parliamentary history of the Democrats.
- 5 The UTG charter lists their key demands and reflects the development of a post-Marxist environmental thinking. See also Rainbow, *Green Politics*.
- 6 Harris, *Basket Weavers and True Believers*, recounts both the shifts in Sydney's inner west around Balmain, as well as the formation of the first registered Green Party in Australia and the thinking and processes that led to the registration of so many local parties.
- 7 Munday, *Green Bans and Beyond*, provides a clear outline of the issues and concerns of the BLF at that time, which Brown & Singer in *The Greens* acknowledge as instrumental in early Green thinking. Salleh, 'A Green party', then charts the influence of Kelly and others in providing the impetus for an actual 'Green' party.
- 8 Quoted in Parkin, *Green Parties*, p. 120.
- 9 For discussions of the German Greens, see Poguntke, 'The organization of a participatory party', 'Party activists versus voters', 'Unconventional participation in party politics', 'Goodbye to movement politics?' and 'Basisdemokratie and political realities'; Hulsberg, *The German Greens*, and Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation*, among others. On the French Greens, see Faucher, 'Party organisation and democracy'; Drugan, *Les Verts*; Faucher-King, *Changing Parties* and 'Comparing parties'; and Villalba, 'The French Greens'. On the UK Greens, see Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, *Green Party Members*; Bennie, *Understanding Political Participation*; Carter, *The Green Party*; and Frankland, 'The evolution of the Greens in Germany'. For other European Green parties, see Rudig, *Green Politics One 1990*, and Frankland, Lucardie & Rihoux, 'From amateur-activist to professional-electoral parties?'. For discussions of Green philosophical theorising, see Bahro, *From Red to Green* and *Building the Green Movement*; Porritt, *Seeing Green*; Kelly, *Fighting for Hope* and *Thinking Green!*; Spretnak & Capra, *Green Politics*; McKibben, *The End of Nature*; Eckersley, *Environmentalism and Political Theory*; Pepper, *Eco-socialism*; and Dobson, *Green Political Thought*.
- 10 Hulsberg, *The German Greens*, and Poguntke, 'Party activists versus voters', both provide a good background to the basis of the factional divides within the German Greens.
- 11 Hulsberg, *The German Greens*, pp. 145–52. Poguntke, 'Party activists versus voters', pp. 32–4.
- 12 See Lucardie & Rihoux, 'From amateur-activist to professional-electoral parties?', and Frankland, 'The evolution of the Greens in Germany', for a discussion of the shift from amateur-activists to professional party. Poguntke, 'Basisdemokratie and political realities', provides some words of caution on where this shift has led to collapsed votes and internal division.
- 13 Carter & Rootes, 'The environment and the greens in the 2005 elections in Britain', and Lambert & Jansen, 'Party building by a state dependent party', provide good background on problems with Westminster-based systems. Kitschelt, 'Left-libertarian parties', discusses at length the different political opportunity structures available during the 1980s.
- 14 Almond & Verba, *The Civic Culture*, provide a classic view of national political difference, while Elkins & Simeon, 'A cause in search of its effect, or what does political culture explain?', provide something of an antidote to underlying assumptions of what political culture might be. See also Fielding & Tanner, 'The "Rise of the Left" revisited', and Fielding, 'Activists against "Affluence"', on the context of changes within the British Labour Party from the 1950s to the 1970s; Kolinsky, 'Political participation and parliamentary careers', and McKay, 'Women in German politics', on women in German politics, or Hooghe, Stolle & Stouthuysen, 'Head start in politics', on youth recruitment in Belgium.
- 15 Faehrmann, 'Greens won't get much further if we repeat poll blunders', and Kerr, 'Greens received \$27 000 overseas donation before banning overseas cash', are two examples of public commentary on internal party matters.
- 16 Faucher-King, 'Comparing parties', describes 'tea-drinking' in the Oxford Greens but, rather than defining it as a UK Greens-specific cultural practice, defines it more broadly as participation in an English cultural phenomenon.

- 17 Lange, 'Being Green'.
- 18 Lange, 'Being Green' utilises the social movement theory of Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, to describe this process.
- 19 Lange, 'Being Green'.
- 20 Vromen & Turnbull, 'The Australian Greens'; Australian Greens, 'Schedule B—The Charter and Constitution of the Australian Greens'. See also Miragliotta, 'Minor organizational change in Green parties', for a discussion on organisational change within the Greens (WA).
- 21 Cahill & Brown, 'The rise and fall of the Australian Greens'.
- 22 Cited in Vromen & Turnbull, 'The Australian Greens', p. 462.

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## Party structure, activists and movement politics

### Parties and party change

The literature on parties is multifaceted and diverse. The literature on Green parties is also diverse although rather more sparse. So where does a discussion of the Australian Greens and its journey from a movement base to an electorally pragmatic (even electoral professional) party begin? The logical place might be with social movements, and how movements may coalesce into parties. This could then be followed by what we understand 'green' parties to be and in what context, both political and ideological, they operate. For this examination of particular groups within the Australian Greens there then needs to be at least some discussion of the literature on the roles of party members and activists as well as the organisational context in which they operate.

The questions that need to be considered here centre on the context in which Australian Green parties arose, how has it grown from a tiny membership in an inner-city suburb, and the factors that shaped its organisational trajectory. That the Australian Greens have an organisational trajectory is clear: in the Australian context the party has grown from a group of disparate localised groups to a national focused party capable of being considered a government coalition partner. The increasing nationalised focus is likely to continue, especially given the shifts in how Australians view political parties (and certainly the two major parties). The journey from small localised parties to government will also surely cause the shedding of various practices associated with the Greens' original 'anti-party party' status.<sup>1</sup> Whether changing party organisational processes influence the party's electoral fortune is debatable, but adopting the institutional frameworks of parliament and other parties may assist in gaining access to government participation.

The nature of those changes, and the processes that have shaped them, are important to understand as they provide a potentially valuable insight into the party's future trajectory. With government, of course, comes the ability for the party's most cherished policies to be implemented, but what those policies may eventually look like—whether the radical edge has indeed been taken from them—also affects how people will respond to the party into the future, and may well determine whether they remain a junior coalition partner like the Nationals or whether they can become, and remain, the senior partner. That this is possible has been demonstrated by the German state of Baden-Württemberg, where Die Grünen is the senior coalition partner and holds the state premiership, but it is by no means clear that it will be the case in Australia.

The classic scholars on political parties, Michels, Duverger and Sartori, all wrote about the nature of parties and the way in which they have changed and evolved, both as individual organisations and as systems of parties within national polities. Then there are the scholars who have built on their works to analyse the nature of those changes in more detail, and have sought to identify drivers of internal party change. What all these scholars have shown is a tendency for parties (and party systems) to progress from one party type to another (although this transition is not always smooth), while operating within a political system.

The suggested progression is, of course, of ideal party types, and implicitly suggests that all parties within a particular country will be progressively shifting through the different types. The different types have also come to signify particular epochs of parliamentary democratic practice as well. We can see that the original 'elite' or 'cadre' party, represented in the forms within nineteenth-century



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