

GET ELECTED

LOCAL STATE FEDERAL

SECOND
EDITION

(updated following
the May 2019
Federal election)



A step-by-step campaign
guide to winning public office

RUTH MCGOWAN

Two bad key strokes and your campaign can be wiped out. This is why *Get Elected* is a must-read for anyone contemplating running for political office and wanting to avoid the potential pitfalls that can turn your campaign into a disaster. Ruth packs this guide with practical tips and insights gained from her coordination role of the two successful 'Indi Orange' campaigns for her sister Cathy McGowan in 2013 and 2016. I also recommend this guide to campaign managers who want to maximise the effectiveness of volunteers and not waste precious time.

Tim Fischer AC (and former Federal MP, NSW MLA, Leader of the National Party, and Deputy Prime Minister of Australia)

Get Elected is a comprehensive guide to everything potential candidates need to know about running an election campaign at local, state or federal level. Written by Ruth McGowan, a long-time advocate for greater representation of women in politics, *Get Elected* is the campaign bible for movers and shakers new to the scene, who want to know the important stuff upfront, the easy way. I wish I'd had this guide at my fingertips when I ran my first campaign almost a decade ago. It would have saved a lot of nail-biting guesswork and costly mistakes.

Ali Cupper, Independent MP Mildura, Victorian State Parliamentarian (and former Councillor Mildura City Council)

Anyone who is thinking about running for office will be encouraged to give it a go after reading *Get Elected*. It doesn't matter if you are interested in Local Council or State and Federal Parliament, this guide will build your confidence to consider politics and equip you with the tools you need to run a masterful campaign.

Geoff Ablett, three times Mayor of the City of Casey, dual Premiership player with Hawthorn and also played for Richmond and St Kilda

In 2018, Ruth ran a series of webinars for women across Australia for the National Rural Women's Coalition on how to run a successful campaign and get elected to their local council. Through a series of weekly sessions, Ruth helped potential candidates understand what they needed to know to run a successful campaign from understanding how to articulate a message to stamina tips on the campaign trail. Ruth is passionate about improving women's representation in local government and her deep knowledge of running a political campaign is now captured in *Get Elected*. This is essential reading for any woman that has ever wondered what do I need to do get elected? I recommend it to the reader.

Leonie Noble, President on the National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC) board, Immediate past National President of the Women's Industry Network Seafood Community (WINSC)

I was so grateful to have Ruth's encouragement when I began contemplating running for my local council. The advice Ruth provided from her considerable experience in running successful campaigns was invaluable in helping me understand the 'ins and outs' of running my campaign. Her support kept me focused and on track, resulting in a winning campaign that led to being elected. It is exciting that Ruth has written

Get Elected because it means that if you are seeking information on successful campaign strategies and winning tactics, Ruth's expert coaching advice is now readily available. And if you are like me and don't know where to start, *Get Elected* is a must read. This will be your 'bible', your guide, your 'coach in a book'. There are no excuses now, so start campaigning!

Diane Gray, Councillor Armidale Regional Council

In my ten years as a radio broadcaster with the ABC, I regularly interviewed candidates running for Local Council or State Parliament and federal politics. Some people would be great communicators, able to connect with my audience quickly and successfully give them a reason to care about who they are, what they know and what they stand for—others, less so. *Get Elected* is essential reading for anyone who wishes to know what it takes to be broadcast ready. It provides practical tools to communicate your campaign message to journalists and ultimately voters. A must-read for candidates and their teams.

Penny Terry, Community Storytelling Expert Creative Director, Healthy Tasmania

This guide sets out the ABC of a game plan that a candidate needs to apply to their campaign to work towards getting elected. With its guidance, practical tips and considerations of campaigning, I highly recommend this guide to anyone considering running for office.

Jacqui Hawkins, Independent candidate for Benambra 2018 Victorian State Election

Get Elected will help you do exactly that if you are considering running as an independent or a small-party candidate. From setting up your campaign team and the comprehensive checklists to practical tips on contemporary campaigning and inspirational stories from other people just like yourself, *Get Elected* makes the seemingly impossible a real possibility.

Judy Ryan, Independent candidate 2016 Victorian Local Government election, Reason Party candidate 2018 Victorian State Election, 2019 Federal Election, Secretary, Residents for Victoria Street Drug Solutions

Seemingly, more people are looking at their local MP and thinking they can do a better job than him (or her) but aren't sure what to do next. If you are disillusioned with politics and care about democracy and representation, then perhaps it's time to consider running for office? It makes no difference what level office you aspire to, whether a newbie or an old hand, you need to deal with election deadlines, budgets, media, volunteers and compliance to get in office and to stay there.

The party machines still run politics but that is changing. It can, however, be daunting to know where to start when you don't have the backing of Team Red, Blue or Green. This is the first national guide to help would-be politicians run a successful campaign; it's a must-read for anyone who has ever thought about giving politics a crack.

Rob Harris, Federal politics reporter formerly with the Herald Sun now National Affairs Editor for the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age

GET ELECTED

A step-by-step campaign guide to winning
public office (local, state and federal)

Ruth McGowan

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Dedicated to those courageous citizens who dare greatly
and step into the arena as candidates for public office.

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Teddy Roosevelt, 1910, Paris (on citizenship)

Foreword

There are so many opportunities to be involved in making our communities, regions and nations better. *Get Elected* is essentially a guide on how to become an activist through political candidacy. Written in an easy-to-read style, it explains, with a practical approach, how to plan and run a campaign. This second edition has been updated following the 2019 federal election.

Get Elected is a call to activists everywhere: don't get mad—get elected! It is a guide about hope, conviction and positive action.

Ruth McGowan is my sister and she was chief strategist of my political campaign to win the seat of Indi in 2013 and again in 2016. When it comes to coaching and supporting people through campaigns, Ruth knows what she is talking about, and in writing this guide, she has collected the wisdom of many successful campaigners.

If you are seeking inspiration, motivation and encouragement, I suggest you read *Get Elected* cover to cover, in one joyful sitting. Or, as candidate who wishes to consider this advice slowly, you can work through the steps at your own pace and prepare for what will come. The guide is filled with practical tips on what to do, how to do it and by when to do it.

Get Elected recalls stories and lived experiences of my 'Independent for Indi' campaigns. In 2013, I was elected by 439 votes on a margin of 0.3 percentage points to the Federal Seat of Indi, which became one of the most marginal electorates in the country—up there with Western Sydney. At the time, I was the first female Independent to be elected to the Lower House of the Australian Federal Parliament. These stories provide the inspiration for this guide with the intention that what was learned can be shared with other independently-minded candidates who wish to be the change they want to see in their local council, state parliament and in federal politics.

My path to politics was full of twists and turns. I started out as a teacher, took up farming and worked with agricultural organisations in Australia and overseas. Being an independent candidate suited me; I was my own boss and ran a home-based consultancy business. I could respond directly to people's needs avoiding the traditional political party hierarchy. As a rural woman strongly

connected to her community, I was experienced in community engagement, leading organisations, and lobbying and working with politicians.

Essential to any campaign is to have a skilled and well-organised group of volunteers. My campaign had its genesis in the ‘Voice for Indi’ movement. This group, later known as V4I, was committed to promoting democratic reform. Many of its members went on to support me in what became known as ‘Team Orange’. In 2016, I ran for re-election, building on all we had learned on our previous campaign. With a team of between 20 and 800 volunteers, I was re-elected with an increased flow of first preference votes. The experience of working with the team and volunteers is shared in this guide.

In my early stages in office, I was given the following advice by Independent MP Tony Windsor, ‘When doing this job, just be yourself’. Of course, you can’t be anything else; it is too hard. When facing difficult decisions, I asked myself ‘how may I respond to this as my best self?’ The intention to be ‘my best self’, guided my decision making and it also guided the volunteers on Team Orange during the campaigns.

For community activists seeking to make a change, especially in rural and regional Australia, the message is this: turn up, speak up and sign up. Whether it be for the school council, local council or fire brigade, put your hand up, step up and get elected. As a leader, transform your vision into action and bring your community with you.

In closing, a big call out to Ruth for making this guide happen, for bringing together the knowledge developed on the Indi campaigns and first-hand experiences on other local and state campaigns along with her extensive research on the topic. It is our hope that the experiences from the Orange campaigns will assist a wider audience to learn about what it takes to successfully get elected as an independent.

To the many people who feel disillusioned and disappointed about the state of politics and find it hard to imagine a way forward, this guide is for you. If you are interested in delivering sustainable change in your community, state or nation, ask yourself, ‘If not now, then when? If not me, then who?’

As a reader of this guide, I encourage you to get more involved in politics. Remember: don’t get mad, get elected! Get campaigning and good luck.

Cathy McGowan AO, former independent Federal Member of Parliament, Indi 2013–2019

Acknowledgements

Two hundred years ago, in early 19th century Ireland, my great, great, great grandfather James McGowan was known as a political ‘shit stirrer’. As a poor Irish Catholic, he was a member of an organisation called ‘Ribbonmen’. These native Irish citizens rallied against the dominating English landlords fighting for tenants’ rights. I imagine that for my Irish forebear having his land confiscated and his rights suppressed would make him pretty angry—and the authorities nervous. Convicted in 1817 on trumped up murder charges with no legal evidence, James McGowan was transported from County Mayo in Ireland to Van Diemen’s Land on the other side of the world, to a penal colony in Hobart. He had a wife and four children (who were left behind), so at least he wasn’t hanged like the four other accused men. Fortunately, McGowan was indentured as a farm hand and after four years of exemplary behaviour, he was awarded his ‘ticket of leave’ and became a free man. His family soon joined him in the town of Richmond, where he went on to become a prosperous hotel owner throughout Tasmania.

Two centuries later, when I considered standing for election in my local council, I was inspired by my ancestor to become political and advocate for change. Politics runs in the blood. When I was a teenager, my father (Paul McGowan) was a Councillor with Chiltern Council. From a young age, I learnt the value of an effective campaign strategy. With hindsight, I admire my dad’s tactic of using family members and the social networks of my mother Marie to assist him to get elected. I recall him dragging his kids door-knocking throughout his rural electorate and enlisting us to hand out his *How to Vote* cards every election day for a decade. In 2008, my retired father attended my swearing in as Mayor of Baw Baw Shire and was a very proud father.

On my mother’s side, my gratitude extends to my great grandfather (Albert Terrill) and my grandfather (Jack Terrill) who showed leadership in their communities as Shire Presidents in the Rutherglen region of Northern Victoria in the early and mid-20th century. My great grandmother Mary Ann and grandmother Nell performed their role as Wife of the Shire President admirably, undertaking charity work along with managing farm chores and raising their families.

While on the topic of family, I want to sincerely thank my sister Cathy McGowan, AO, who has generously shared her tips, tools and advice from the successful Indi Orange campaigns as well as penning the foreword for this guide. Cathy was a fiercely independent Member of Parliament and knows a lot about campaigning. In 2019, Cathy supported Helen Haines, the independent candidate for Indi, to follow her into Federal Parliament. History was made as it was the first time an independent candidate had succeeded another in the House of Representatives. Cathy demonstrated how to thrive as a politician and make a difference while still having fun and maintaining integrity. Without Cathy's example of how an independent can successfully campaign and get elected to change the world for the better, this guide may not have been written.

Thank you to Paul, my husband, who provided practical advice, insights and support to write this guide. Also, thank you to my three awesome adult children Finn, Ivy and Albie. In their younger years, they followed family tradition and assisted me on my election campaigns to door knock, hand out *How to Vote* cards and stuff envelopes (and they kept it fun).

I have appreciated the people who contributed their stories and tips for this guide. Thank you Ali Cupper, the late Tim Fischer AC, Cathy McGowan AO, Rebekha Sharkie and Andrew Wilkie for sharing their political insights and to journalist Penny Terry for her advice on being 'broadcast ready'. Thank you Judy Ryan and Jacqui Hawkins, two candidates who provided a reality check on the draft of this guide and contributed their stories as independent and micro party candidates.

The first edition of this guide sold out in less than six weeks in the lead up to the 2019 federal election. There is obviously a demand from readers who wish to know more about political campaigning. This second edition has been revised and updated, incorporating insights from the 2019 federal election.

It takes a team to deliver a book; therefore, I wish to thank Jo Yardley from The Editing House for her editorial management, Sylvie Blair from BookPOD for the book design and Jane Radman from Jane Radman Designs for the cover design.

Finally, thank you to you, the reader, for being curious enough to pick up this guide. I wish you every success in your campaign to stand for public office, be it for your local council, state or territory parliament or federal politics.

Preface

Do you want to do something about the state of politics in this country? Could politics be your next career move? Are you keen to have a crack at standing for your local council or state government? Maybe you fancy yourself as a federal politician? Or perhaps you think politics is not for you but you want to assist someone else to get elected?

If the current state of politics is causing you despair, you're not alone. Many Australians are increasingly disillusioned and are being turned off politics—particularly the brand practiced by the major parties of a Blue, Red or Green stripe. People are angry at the decisions being made (or not being made) by those who have been elected to represent us. Many citizens feel that our representatives are failing us on the big issues, in particular, those living in the so-called 'safe seats' who feel ignored in favour of those living in marginal seats.

Australian citizens need better representation; therefore, we need a greater number of diverse candidates to consider standing for public office. If you've ever considered politics but are not really into party politics or if you are interested in running for public office but are unsure where to start, then you're in the right place. This guide will assist competent, independently-minded candidates to get elected.

It takes great courage to stand for something bigger than yourself. I have worked with many courageous community activists and leaders to help them get elected. This guide is built on the training I have delivered as part of my '*Get Elected*' workshops and webinars as well as my Coach-the-Candidate programs. Now it's time to share that knowledge, and the tips and strategies to successful campaigning with people who want to make a difference but aren't sure how to 'get into politics' and with people who are considering whether to join a political party or 'go it alone' as an independent candidate.

In writing this guide, I've reflected on the experiences of what works and what doesn't. The idea was to put all these resources into one guide, tailored specifically for Australians who are thinking about running for public office. The result is the first national guide for citizens who want to stand for office at the three levels of government - and for the people who will help them win. I hope to encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds to run and

to prompt more women to consider politics. In writing this guide, I apply the pronoun 'she' so that women contemplating standing for office can more easily picture themselves in the role.

If you consider politics to be your vocation and a way to stand for something, then this guide will help you through the four essentials of running for office. First, it's important to believe in yourself, have confidence that you can do it and clarity on where you will stand (Part One). Second, you'll require a plan for your campaign and a supportive team committed to winning (Part Two). Third is the ability to take effective action to achieve your goal every single day (Part Three). And finally, Part Four is about understanding what is required 'next'—whether or not you get elected.

My hope is that I can inspire you to step forward, run for office and assume the role of leader—to step into the arena. You can change things. Run to be the change you wish to see in the world. This guide will show you how. As a candidate, a campaign manager or a keen volunteer on a campaign team, we can all make a difference.

It's time to start planning your campaign and get elected.

How this guide is structured

This is not a typical political guide about campaigning. As a firm believer in the need for more independent voices in the three levels of government, this guide is written primarily for those who want to run their own grass-roots campaign. However, it will also be a useful guide for candidates running as endorsed candidates for a political party.

This guide is divided into four parts:

Part One begins with the questions a potential candidate needs to ask herself when deciding to stand for public office. It examines the role of elected representatives at the local, state and federal levels of government. It assists potential candidates to explore their skills and experience to stand, and the reasons to do it, and where to stand. It also considers the options of running as an Independent or with a party and the timing of when to run.

Once you have decided to stand for office, **Part Two** unpacks the eight aspects for which you need to plan to develop a winning campaign and describes the processes and actions that need to be in place to support a campaign. If you have already decided to run for office and are clear on when and where you will be standing, feel free to jump straight to this section.

Part Three covers the essential actions a candidate must do on the campaign trail from the campaign launch until election day. Here you will learn how to focus campaign actions on what really matters (voters, funds and volunteers) as well as the importance of setting campaign goals to keep your team on track, develop a 100-day countdown plan and schedule your run.

Part Four wraps up the guide with a discussion around *what next?* This explores what you need to consider should you either be successfully elected to office or not.

When most candidates decide to run for public office, they opt to join a party and may have to battle for pre-selection in order to win party endorsement as the preferred candidate. After succeeding that hurdle, the successful candidate is supported by their party to subsequently run a campaign. That

(usually) means they have access to ‘on-tap’ support like mentors, limited funding and volunteers. They can follow a well-worn party playbook on processes to get elected. Having never stood for pre-selection for endorsement by a major party, I can’t advise on that process. But if that is your circumstance, then good luck, and I hope you can gain useful tips from this guide.

If you are an independent, non-party political, partisan candidate or someone who wants to run for a micro party, then this guide will help you design and implement a winning campaign. Aspiring candidates who are members of a major political party will still learn a lot about campaigning by reading this guide (hello to members of the Australian Labor Party, Australian Liberal Party, National Party and Greens).

This guide is practical, full of tips, exercises, checklists and case studies from real campaigns that will help you be successful in *your* campaign. It is suitable for leaders wanting to step forward at all levels of government, from planning a large campaign for federal or state office, or a smaller one for local council. Whether you are running for State or Federal Parliament, or standing for your local council, although the scale of the campaign will be different, many fundamental aspects of a campaign stay the same.

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Introduction

Get activated and become political

“

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead (Anthropologist)

”

This guide is inspired by the many community activists who have entered politics as a way to get things done rather than continuously complaining. Leaders want to make a difference for their community and fight for a cause they are passionate about.

This ‘how to’ guide is designed to show ‘ordinary citizens’ how they can change the world by standing for public office and getting elected to government. Although the focus is on candidates considering standing as independents or with micro parties, this guide is non-partisan and covers political strategy, tips and tactics that will work for all candidates, regardless of political affiliation or scale of the campaign.

If you have ever thought about running for public office for your local council, state government or federal parliament then this guide will help you get elected. Or, if you want to help someone else get elected and be part of a campaign team, this guide will show you how to do that. If now is not the right time to go into politics, perhaps, by reading this guide, you will be inspired to stand in the future.

It's time for more diversity in representation

If you take a look at the faces of our federal and state Parliaments and local Councils, you won't see much diversity. A principle of democracy is that

governments work more effectively when they represent the desires of their people. But that's not what we see. The seats in the chambers are mainly filled by older white men from professional backgrounds and private school education. Our federal Parliament and most of the state Parliaments are dominated by a 'sea of suits', and men make up approximately two-thirds of the elected representatives—more in local government Councils. Middle-aged white men, being only one-tenth of the population, are over-represented at a ratio of 6:1 in government.¹

Following the May 2019 federal election, women remain in the minority in the 46th Parliament (although there has been some improvement). Overall, the proportion of women in the Federal Parliament reached 36.6 percent, an increase of 4.3 percent on the previous parliament (August 2016). The proportion of women in the Senate increased by 9.2 percent, to 48.7 percent from 39.5 percent following the May election. In September 2019, gender parity was reached in the Senate following the pre-selection of Victorian Liberal Sarah Henderson to a vacant Senate spot. . The proportion of women in the House of Representatives increased by 1.8 percent, to 30.5 percent from 28.7 percent previously (Parliament of Australia, 2019).²

This inequality of representation is slowly changing, but it needs to occur faster. It's time for more diverse voices to be heard in chambers and parliaments across our nation.

If you are a woman or citizen from a culturally diverse background, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, a young person, or someone from the LGBTIQ community, my hope is that this guide will encourage you to give politics a crack. Does your local MP or Councillor fit the stereotype of a 'Stale, Pale Male' who responds to his party's factional puppet strings when it comes to voting rather than the needs of the electorate? Perhaps you are the one to shake this up? Be the change you wish to see?

Our political landscape will never change unless more, diverse and competent citizens stop complaining, step up and start campaigning to get elected.

Australian democracy needs your voice to be heard in order to be more inclusive and reflective of our diverse population. Voters are interested—now, more than ever—in supporting independent candidates. A 2018 poll found that Australian voters were increasingly frustrated with federal politics, with 42 percent 'flirting' with the idea of voting independent. A 2018 report by the Grattan Institute discussed the trend of 'protest politics', whereby those voters who were angry at politicians would vote for 'anyone but them'. This

was demonstrated by the voting patterns in the 2016 senate elections where almost 1:4 voters preferred a micro party or independent above the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal National Coalition or the Australian Greens.^{3, 4}

Calling progressive candidates

This guide has been developed for candidates who wish to run for office as an independent or with a micro party rather than with a major party. Perhaps now is the time for Independents to become the antidote to the declining trust Australians have in politicians.

What is needed is forward thinking politicians that will address the issues concerning Australians like rocketing power bills, inaction on climate change, environmental crises (fish kills on the Darling River and coral bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef), endless political scandals, misuse of entitlements, constant party leadership changes and the decreasing affordability of everyday living.

We need politicians who:

- are motivated to broadly consult their constituents in order to effectively represent **all** citizens, not just the rich and powerful donors who fund campaigns and expect 'favours' in return.
- can separate state from church, and who don't endlessly moralise on one hand while doing the opposite in private.
- can represent a diverse, multicultural Australia and legislate for the 21st century.
- won't try to divide us for political gain or take us back to the 1950s.
- who are willing to collaborate with other elected members, and sometimes compromise a little in order to get good things happening.

If you identify with being a 'shit-stirrer community activist' with a passion for progress on environmental, social, or economic justice, then I hope this guide will motivate you to consider politics as a way to publicise the agenda you want to prosecute. Similarly, if you are a 'small liberal' who despairs of the narrow-minded views of your current representative and you want to challenge him or her, then this guide will assist you in your campaign. You may be a 'disaffected Green' who is keen to run for office but can't stand the confines of a party. Perhaps you are a lapsed member of the Australian Labor party and wish to take your own stance on matters, away from having to follow the fixed views of whatever faction to which you were aligned.

Politics needs to be fixed now

If you are reading this guide, you are either interested in politics or wish to change the world—probably both. You may be like many Australians who are increasingly disillusioned by politicians be it at a federal or state level, or local council. No doubt you're frustrated by the inability of those in power to get things done. This was exacerbated by the drawn out debate on marriage equality in 2017, when most Australians simply wanted our federal politicians to vote 'yes' and get on with it. Yet again in 2018, another Prime Minister was 'knifed in the back' and Australians went through another national leadership change for apparently no good reason.

Have you, like many citizens, turned off politics? Do you hate the bullshit, the scandals, the lies, the dirty deals, the back-stabbing and the factional fighting? Do you wonder how it can possibly change? Or are you still interested in democracy and care about how the system can be improved? Do you think you could do a better job than those currently in power? Are you considering standing for public office?

Could politics be your next career move?

Australia needs passionate, competent and progressive citizens who want to change the system by stepping up and standing for election. This coincides with a voter hunger for a new type of politician, an ordinary person, someone 'just like you' who will 'get on with it'.

If you are competent and feel you can bring a different perspective to any of the three levels of government operating in your locality, then perhaps it is time to add the role of 'politician' (defined as someone who holds elected office) to your resume?

The 'political class' is on the nose

In 2017, the Edelman Trust Barometer found that a majority of Australians believed their government is a broken institution.⁵ Another study by Australian National University researchers reported on attitudes towards democracy following the July 2016 Australian Election Study and revealed that 40 percent of Australians surveyed said they were not satisfied with democracy in Australia.⁶ Such levels of dissatisfaction have not been recorded since the days following the 1975 dismissal of the Whitlam Labor Government.

While current levels of trust in our politicians are low, it's probably going to get worse. The Grattan Institute points to several causes of Australian's falling trust in politics including 'numerous failures of policy, serial changes of leader, the pervasive influence of vested interests, and the self-interest of too many politicians' (Wood, 2019).⁷

It's not just the scandals and in-fighting that is turning off voters. Increasingly, Australians view politicians as being out of touch because their life experiences don't reflect those of the 'average' voter. In 2017, Fairfax media researched the employment backgrounds of federal politicians and found that 'nearly half of all Liberal MPs were former political staffers, party officials or government advisers while inside the Labor caucus, 55% of MPs had previously worked as staffers, electorate officers or advisers before being elected, and 40% have previously worked in roles within the trade union movement'.⁸

I don't wish to disrespect politicians and those who have previously worked as political staffers, trade union representatives or lobbyists; however, their employment experiences prior to getting elected don't represent the working lives of most Australians. In fact, it fuels the perception that politicians are 'out of touch' with ordinary citizens, locked in a 'Canberra bubble' with people like themselves. Perhaps that's why voters are increasingly looking outside the main political parties for people to represent their views—and not the 'same old, same old'. This pattern is not only happening in Australia but is apparent around the world in western democracies.

At the 2019 federal election, a quarter of Australians gave their first voting preference to parties other than the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Liberal-National Coalition; this is a trend that continued from the 2016 federal election and the past decade.⁹ Voters want more 'ordinary people' to put their hand up and prioritise a career in politics: people with a vision; people who believe in what they are doing; people who know that power is worth pursuing because when you are 'in the tent rather than on the outside' you can make and influence decisions that will benefit communities, businesses and our planet for the better.

Like shoppers who prefer to do their grocery shopping at smaller independent supermarkets, voters are turning away from the two major parties—the ALP and the Coalition—to independents and micro parties as a way to channel their angst towards the current political system.

Australians continue to vote for independent and minor party candidates who haven't necessarily risen from a political background. For example, at a federal

level, these politicians include Andrew Wilkie, Helen Haines, Zali Steggall and others from micro parties such as Pauline Hanson, Rebekha Sharkie, Jacqui Lambie, and Bob Katter.

Reasons to consider running for office right now:

- Your country and community need you. There are many problems in the world that need fixing by people who know stuff and are passionate about positive change.
- Australians actually want more diversity in their representation.
- The old duopoly of Red, Blue with a mix of Green is crumbling with 1:4 voters deserting the major parties at the past two Federal Elections.
- People's trust in politicians is at an all-time low.
- There's no time like the present. If you don't do it now or plan to do it soon, you may regret it.
- It's time to stop complaining about things and 'put up or shut up'.
- The electorate wants progressive politicians who look towards 2050 not back to 1950.
- It's time to challenge the stereotype of the typical 'pale, male, stale' politician. On average across all Parliaments, two thirds of chambers are populated by middle-aged white men. Statistically, this demographic makes up about 10 percent of the population. We need waves of quality leaders who reflect the diversity of our community to step up and run.
- There are so many opportunities to stand for public office with a whopping 7,400 potential vacancies come election time across the nation. This includes 537 local government bodies in Australia comprising about 6,600 elected Councillors; just over 600 positions at the various Upper and Lower Houses of State and Territory Governments (ACT and NT have no Upper House); and Federal Parliament with 151 seats in the House of Representatives and 76 in the Senate.

Now that you have the ultimate guide on how to plan and deliver a successful campaign, written specifically for an Australian audience, it is the perfect time to run. With this guide, you can get organised, get going and get elected!