

Pulling up the drawbridge

The *Australian Alert Service* is the weekly publication of the Australian Citizens Party.

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Lead Editorial

1 September 2021
Vol. 23 No. 35



Organising for a postal bank in Bundaberg during the Citizens Party's recent Rocky Road tour in Queensland.

The two major parties combined last week to raise the minimum membership requirement to register a political party from 500 to 1,500. The parties are under siege politically, both of them shells of the mass-membership parties they were in previous times. In the 1940s Labor and the Liberals had more than 400,000 members each; even 15 years ago the ALP admitted to having fewer members "than the Adelaide Crows" football club (then with 30,000 members), and this year a source revealed that the NSW Liberals, the biggest state branch, has fewer than 10,000 members. Also, both parties' genuine membership is much smaller than their formal membership, due to extensive branch-stacking that has filled their ranks with people who aren't even aware they are members.

The fact that the major parties are no longer representative of the Australian people, but narrow sectional interests, is reflected in the minor-party vote, which is now consistently one-third of the electorate. The barbarians are definitely massing at the gates. So what do the major parties do? Do they take stock of how out of touch they are, and change their policies to truly meet the needs of the nation? No, they try to pull up the drawbridge, to lock the revolting masses out.

The Citizens Party, formerly Citizens Electoral Council, has been a federally registered political party for almost 30 years. This is one party that won't be locked out by the new requirement. In the coming weeks we will work very hard to ensure we qualify, because the mission of the Citizens Party is too important to be stopped by the lazy, bureaucratic treachery of the major parties. As Citizens Party supporters already know, we don't wait around for elections to intervene politically in Australia; we do it every day through our campaigns.

Consider the various campaigns the Citizens Party is running at the moment, all of which are facets of our overall mission to re-establish the principle of the common good in Australia, evidenced in the restoration and development of the real, physical economy that truly serves the needs of the people.

National banking: The Citizens Party is acknowledged as the most expert on national banking in Australia, with the richest body of historical research on the establishment and functioning of the Commonwealth Bank. Even before the pandemic hit, Bob Katter MP had agreed to introduce the

Citizens Party's bill for a national bank; but under urgent circumstances, that evolved into the idea of expanding the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) into a national development bank. Whilst that idea was blocked, we were able to intervene in George Christensen MP's "Diversifying Trade and Investment" inquiry last year to influence him to recommend a national development bank. We also took up the policy of a public postal bank to compete with, and break the monopoly of, the Big Four banks at the retail level. We are now campaigning to get local communities to endorse the postal bank bill that Bob Katter intends to introduce in Parliament at the next opportunity. The issue is snow-balling: in June, Nationals Senator Perin Davey put forward a motion in the Senate emphasising the importance of regional banking services, which is expected to become the subject of a Senate inquiry that will also illustrate the need for a postal bank.

Australia Post: The Citizens Party's intervention exposed the privatisation and banking motive behind the removal of Christine Holgate, and put the postal bank firmly on the political agenda, including as the way to ensure the viability of licensed post offices.

Manufacturing inquiry: The Citizens Party is intervening in the current inquiry to ensure it addresses the need seriously, and recommends a national development bank.

ASIC and Sterling First: Our current push for an ASICSterling First inquiry is crucial to expose the financial corruption that blocks the implementation of genuine economic solutions like national banking (p. 3).

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- Kneecapping ASIC: Frydenberg's Statement of Expectations
- Verging on Ponzi: how the banks are rorting the RBA's big bail-out fund
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