

Robert Barwick - Citizens Party Senate Candidate for Victoria

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Enquiries Phone: 1800 636 432 **Email:** robbie@citizensparty.org.au



I joined the CEC, now Citizens Party, 30 years ago in 1992, and have worked full-time in the party since 1993, first as an organiser and researcher, and for most of the last two decades as Research Director. My wife Elisa works with me as Editor of the Citizens Party's weekly magazine the *Australian Alert Service*, and we have two children who are growing too quickly into adulthood—a constant motivation for our shared mission to fight for a peaceful and prosperous future.

When I joined the Citizens Party I was a university student in Queensland studying commerce (accounting), but I found myself drawn into politics when the government, in the middle of the 11 per cent unemployment of the “recession we had to have”, shut down sand mining on Fraser Island, just south of my hometown of Childers.

Attending the protest meetings in Hervey Bay and Maryborough, I felt and shared the anxiety of the people who had lost their jobs, and who were searching for answers.

Vague political theories abounded, about such things as the meaning of the term “New World Order” that US President George Bush had just declared, but none of the theories represented any solutions.

When I met the Citizens Party, however, I saw a distinct difference: a party philosophically committed to fostering the essential creativity of individuals and advancing the common good, as the foundation for policies to promote the economic development of both Australia and the world.

I have had the honour of fighting for those principles ever since.

Along the way, I have come to know thousands of Australians from all walks of life, the salt of the earth, from whose expertise and experiences I have learned about real economics, industry, banking and finance, technology, social justice, international affairs, and many other issues.

Working in the Citizens Party's campaigns to fight for solutions to these issues has also taken me overseas, to meet like-minded people fighting for similar solutions in the USA, UK, Europe, Asia and Africa. These experiences have taught me that policy solutions based on the principle of the common good are universal—equally applicable in Africa as they are in Australia.

After now a few decades working as a researcher and then Research Director of the Citizens Party, contributor to *Australian Alert Service*, and co-host of the weekly *Citizens Report* YouTube show, I can honestly say that the biggest thing I have learned is the paramount importance of national banking as a policy solution.

All of the research projects I have worked on with the Citizens Party's research teams have shown that national banking has been central to the political fights, both current and historical, that have shaped Australia.

These include our original research projects that investigated the neoliberal take-down of the economies of Australia and New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s; the history of Australia's republican and labour movements and the ongoing fight for national sovereignty; the role of banks in sponsoring the rise of fascism to oppose the national banking policies of the Labor Party in the 1930s; the history of the Commonwealth Bank; and the infrastructure development of Australia.

In doing this work, the Citizens Party and I came to know senior Australian political figures, including former prime ministers, who gave us direct insights into how this fight shaped their time in politics. We have been able to take what we have learned and apply it in our campaigns for a national bank, a Glass-Steagall separation of deposit-taking banks from speculation, defeating the attempt to ban cash, stopping the “bail-in” of bank deposits, a postal bank, and an independent foreign policy that seeks peaceful cooperation with all nations.

Leading our campaigns on these policies has taken me regularly to meet with politicians in Canberra, to find common ground with politicians in many parties and lay a foundation for a broad coalition of support for these solutions, some of which our collaborators have already introduced into Parliament as bills drafted by the Citizens Party.

I’m campaigning to be elected as a Citizens Party Senator for Victoria to see these campaigns all the way through into becoming law, because I know, and history bears out, that these are the policies that will deliver prosperity, security and peace for all Australians.

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