



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Rennick shock exposes sham of Australian ‘democracy’

The parties that make the laws are above the law.

Following the shock pre-selection loss of one of the LNP’s highest-profile and most popular Senators, a Queensland judge has ruled that the major political parties’ internal rules are not accountable under the law.

The ruling means that the parties that make the laws are above the law.

Senator Gerard Rennick is in his first term as a Queensland LNP Senator, but while most major-party senators are faceless men and women, Senator Rennick, who is not a career politician, has had a significant impact in just one term.

Champion of the people

Most notably, Senator Rennick instigated the Senate inquiry into bank closures in regional Australia, which became a major inquiry that gave a voice to the hundreds of communities across Australia abandoned by the banks.

The inquiry ran for 15 months, received more than 600 submissions and conducted a total of 13 public hearings in every state in Australia.

In that time its mere existence spooked banks including Westpac and CBA into reversing planned branch closures, and announcing they wouldn’t close any regional branches for three years.

The final report handed down eight powerful recommendations to the government, including to designate access to banking services and cash as an essential service and to consider establishing a public bank in post offices, which have infuriated the banks but are game-changers for consumers.

Senator Rennick went even further in his additional comments, calling for a full-service public bank to take on the Big Four banking cartel.

Another way Senator Rennick has taken on the banking system is in Senate Estimates, where he has repeatedly grilled the Governors and Deputy Governors of the Reserve Bank of Australia on why, if they can create seemingly unlimited volumes of money to support the private banks, they can’t likewise issue credit into the economy for infrastructure and industries to support the Australian people? Under Rennick’s questioning, the RBA had to admit that if the government directed them to issue money for infrastructure, they’d have to comply. This was a major admission that led to the government trying to repeal its own power to do so, which has been defeated.

The Senator has also fought tirelessly for proper compensation for Australians with vaccine injuries, instead of merely token compensation from the mean-spirited compensation scheme established by Scott Morrison and Greg Hunt.

In taking up these and other causes, Senator Rennick has stood up to powerful entrenched bureaucracies and vested interests, most notably the banks, on behalf of everyday people, and achieved results.

Why on earth would the LNP get rid of such an effective Senator?

Above the law

Senator Rennick lost his pre-selection to a party apparatchik named Stuart Fraser, the Treasurer of the LNP, by just three votes, in a voting process that he alleges was tainted by irregularities.

For instance, Liberal Party leader Peter Dutton, who was pledged to support Rennick as the incumbent, was not given a vote, but National Party leader David Littleproud, a former banker who opposes Rennick and his public bank policy, was given a vote, along with other Rennick opponents.

Senator Rennick took the LNP to court for the right to appeal his narrow preselection loss on the basis of the voting irregularities.

The Judge, however, upheld previous legal rulings that the internal working of political parties are not justiciable, or subject to a trial in a court of law.

This ruling, seen in this context, has serious implications for democracy, as it means that faceless party hacks can rig preselections to determine who Australians get to vote for at elections.

The two major parties like to call themselves “the parties of government”—a term both sides use—to effectively boast they are the only political parties which form governments. This is an acknowledgment of their advantage in elections due to their histories, their establishment and media backing, their incumbencies, and the fact that preferential voting ensures that eventually most votes flow through to one or the other.

It also means that pre-selections within the major parties, to choose candidates for elections, effectively determine who most of the MPs and Senators in Parliament will be.

Australia may be a democracy because Australians get to vote, but major party preselections decide who we mostly get to vote for.

If such preselections can be rigged, it makes a sham of our “democracy”.

If irregularities in the conduct of such preselections are not challengeable under law, and the integrity of preselections able to be held accountable in a court of law, then that means there is a very real danger preselections can be rigged.

It means the parties that make the laws are above the law!

Curiously, the candidate who narrowly defeated Senator Rennick, Stuart Fraser, has form in dodgy internal voting processes.

As President of the elite Tattersall’s Club in Brisbane in 2019, Fraser defended a court challenge against the outcome of a membership vote by arguing that the club had “no obligation to precisely follow its own rules when members cast votes”, according to *The Courier-Mail* on 31 January 2019.

Now this ultra-establishment apparatchik has rolled an effective Senator in another irregular vote that he similarly argued is exempt from legal scrutiny.

Bankers strike back?

After Senator Rennick lost his preselection vote, a senior LNP source observed to the Australian Citizens Party that Rennick was taken out because he took on the banks.

The banks are the most powerful lobby in Australia, and blatantly use their money, power and influence to keep both major parties on a leash.

By fighting for the banks’ worst nightmare—a public bank—Senator Rennick has done more than anyone else in the major parties to take on the banks’ power, and while the banks may have succeeded in forcing him out, they now have to deal with the consequences of the unprecedented Senate recommendation that has advanced the case for a public bank.

Australians must decide: do we want a sham democracy rigged by powerful vested interests? Or do we want a democracy which elects governments of, by and for the people?

If the latter, oppose the major parties being above the law, and support the ongoing fight for a public bank.

[Click here to sign the Citizens Party’s petition for a post office people’s bank.](#)