

## The Liberal Democratic Party

June 2014

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was formed in the Australian Capital Territory in 2001. The party was formed on a platform of social libertarianism, a free market economy and small government.

LDP candidate David Leyonhjelm was elected Senator for NSW at the 2013 Federal election and will join a key group of minor party and independent cross bench Senators set to hold the balance of power in the Senate from 1 July 2014. He is the first LDP candidate elected to a Commonwealth or State Parliament.

On 1 June 2014, Mr Leyonhjelm entered into an alliance with South Australian senator-elect Mr Bob Day AO of the Family First Party. Under their agreement, the pair will vote together on all economic issues when the new Senate sits from 1 July 2014.

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### Key principles

The LDP broadly describes its philosophy as classical liberal or libertarian. The party advocates ‘greater freedom, smaller government and personal responsibility.’

It promotes the following key principles:

Economic	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free markets and freedom of choice</li> <li>Low tax, limited public spending and minimal regulation</li> <li>Widespread ownership of private property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil society and volunteerism</li> <li>Civil liberties and individual freedom</li> <li>Individual liberty</li> </ul>
Government	International
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitutional liberal democracy</li> <li>Ethical and impartial government under the rule of law</li> <li>Devolution of power including decentralised government and competitive federalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free trade in goods, services and capital</li> <li>Free trade in ideas and culture</li> <li>Freedom and human rights</li> </ul>

## Key policies

### 1. *The Budget*

The LDP believes the Government should balance its liabilities and assets to achieve the equivalent of zero net worth and limit its ownership of assets to essential holdings. Once zero net worth is achieved, the LDP advocates for the Governments to achieve a zero net operating balance.

Within the context of a substantially reduced overall tax burden, the LDP also supports the devolution of income tax and other taxation powers to State governments.

On 12 May 2014 The Liberal Democratic Party released its own Federal Budget. The LDP argues three key steps are necessary to bring the Australian economy back to health:

- (1) tax reform and deregulation to boost economic growth;
- (2) cut government over-spending to immediately bring the budget back to surplus and start paying down the national debt; and
- (3) structural reforms that ensures government spending is sustainable in the long run”, he said.

The LDP proposed Budget involves \$3b lower tax revenue and \$40b in spending cuts (primarily to welfare, and a reduction in the two top tax rates). The LDP argues this would shift the budget from a \$34b deficit to a \$3b surplus.

Key measures include:

- a ten percent cut in salaries for all federal public servants and politicians (saving over \$2b);
- eliminating Family Tax Benefit B and the Schoolkids Bonus (\$6b);
- a one year freeze in welfare payments (\$4b);
- inclusion of homes in the pension assets test (\$5b);
- means-testing Medicare (\$6b);
- a medical co-payment (\$2b);
- halving higher education subsidies (\$5b);
- winding back corporate welfare and R&D subsidies (\$7b); and
- privatising the ABC and SBS (\$1b).

The LDP also calls for a one year freeze in the minimum wage.

The LDP’s policy on the Budget is available [here](#).

Senator Leyonhjelm’s article in The Australian Financial Review discussing the LDP’s proposed alternative Federal Budget is available [here](#).

## 2. *Deregulation and privatisation*

The LDP supports an immediate end to state and federal government ownership of:

- The National Broadband Network
- The ABC and SBS
- Australia Post
- Medibank Private
- Electricity generation corporations
- Bus, ferry and rail services

Over time, the LDP also favours privatising government-owned TAFE colleges and universities, most government owned public schools and public hospitals, and any government land and buildings that are not earmarked for specific Government use.

Areas in which the LDP would immediately reduce or remove regulation include the taxi industry, retail trading hours, liquor licensing, radio and television broadcast licensing, workers' compensation insurance and gambling.

The LDP policy on deregulation and privatization is available [here](#).

## 3. *Civil liberties and freedom*

The LDP believe in freedom of speech and expression, free media, freedom of association, assembly and movement and freedom over one's own body, beliefs, privacy and property. The LDP also supports the legalisation of cannabis, the right to assisted suicide and the reduction of restrictions on firearm ownership.

The LDP's civil liberties and freedom policy is available [here](#).

## 4. *Foreign Affairs and Trade*

The LDP supports unilateral trade liberalisation in preference to bilateral trade agreements or multilateral agreements. The LDP also supports the relaxation of foreign investment requirements and removal of restrictions against foreign ownership. The LDP trade and foreign investment policy is available [here](#).

The LDP believes aid to foreign countries by the Australian government, other than short-term humanitarian relief following natural disasters, should cease. The LDP policy on foreign aid is available [here](#).

The LDP supports professional diplomatic engagement together with trade representation (funded on a user-pays basis) to foster bilateral trade. The LDP policy on foreign relations is available [here](#).

## 5. Health

The LDP advocates for the abolition of government involvement in delivery of health services.

This includes support for the abolition of Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, funding for public hospitals, the private health insurance rebate, government prevention services (other than for infectious diseases and government funding of health research).

The LDP supports the privatisation of blood, organ and tissue coordination and supply agencies.

The LDP also supports the maintenance of government involvement in the management of infectious diseases, health service standards, health statistics, and radiation protection.

The LDP health policy is available [here](#).

## 6. Democracy

The LDP supports voluntary voting and enrolment, citizens initiated referenda, fixed parliamentary terms, recall elections, parliamentary approval of treaties and the principle of one vote one value.

The LDP policy on elections and democracy is available [here](#).

### **Key personnel**

#### *David Leyonhjelm*

David was elected Senator for New South Wales at the 2013 Federal election. His term will begin on 1 July 2014. David spent several years in practicing as a Veterinarian in Victoria, the UK, South Africa and Zimbabwe before moving to industry, first in a technical role and then marketing and management. David then went on to manage the Liberal Democratic Party's Federal election campaigns in 2007, 2010 and 2013.

David has written for Fairfax Rural Media, The Australian Financial Review, The Rural Business and Business Spectator. In his local community, he is president of the Inner West Hunters Club and formerly served as secretary of the St Ives Pistol Club and the Farm Writers' Association of New South Wales.

#### *Clinton Mead*

Clinton Mead was elected to Campbelltown Council in 2012. In 2013, won the council's mayoral ballot 8-7 with the backing of the Liberal bloc and some independent allies. At 29, Clinton is the second-youngest mayor ever elected in Campbelltown.

At a federal level, Clinton ran for a Tasmanian Senate seat at the 2013 Federal election with the LDP. At the same time, he served as convener of the Smoker's Rights party, which attracted more than 6 500 votes at the 2013 election.

## **Electoral history**

The LDP has contested elections at a local, state and national level.

At a Federal level, the LDP contested the 2007 Federal election (using a different name), winning 17 048 votes (0.14 per cent) in the lower house, and 16 942 votes (0.13 per cent) in the upper house. At the 2010 Federal election, the LDP increased its vote, achieving 1.8 per cent of the national senate vote, and an average of 1.3 per cent across the 21 lower house seats it contested, with a best of 5.52 per cent in Gippsland.

In 2013, LDP candidate David Leyonhjelm was elected to the Senate with a 9.5 per cent of primary vote, polling the third-highest vote in New South Wales after the Liberal/National Coalition and the Australian Labor Party. The LDP also achieved a primary vote of 5.33 per cent in the House of Representatives seat of Gippsland, the only lower house seat the party contested at the 2013 election.

At a state level, the LDP has contested all Australian Capital Territory Elections since 2001. In 2012, the party received 2 340 first preference votes, or 1.1 per cent of the Territory-wide vote.

The LDP registered in South Australia in 2011, and Gained 13.3 and 7.3 percent of the primary vote in the Ramsay and Port Adelaide state by-elections in the absence of Liberal candidates.

At a local level, at the 2012 New South Wales local government elections, LDP candidates Jeff Pettett and Clinton Mead were elected councillors to the Ku-ring-gai and Campbelltown Councils respectively.

On 11 September 2013, a few days after David Leyonhjelm's election to the Senate, LDP councillor Clinton Mead was elected Mayor of the city of Campbelltown in New South Wales.

## **Alliance with the Family First Party**

On 1 June 2014 it was announced that senator-elect Leyonhjelm had formed an alliance with South Australian Family First senator-elect Bob Day AO.

Under their agreement, the pair will vote together on all economic issues, but will decide their own positions on social issues.

Both senators-elect share similar economic values. David Leyonhjelm supports the privatisation of schools and hospitals, a lower minimum wage and lower tobacco taxes. Bob Day advocates for lowering the minimum wage to encourage employment and lower taxation.

Bob Day will take David Leyonhjelm's advice on agriculture.

David Leyonhjelm will defer to Bob Day on any industrial relations issues.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the Family First Party is available [here](#).