

## Reform of the Australian Labor Party

April 2014

On 22 April, Opposition Leader the Hon Bill Shorten MP announced reforms aimed at renewing and modernising the Australian Labor Party.

Mr Shorten is the first directly-elected Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party. He was elected under changes implemented under former Prime Minister the Hon Kevin Rudd.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the election of the Federal Labor Leader is available [here](#).

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on changes implemented by former Prime Minister Rudd to the way Federal Labor leaders are elected is available [here](#).

Mr Shorten's speech is available [here](#).

Some of these measures will be directly implemented by the National Secretary. Due to the federal structure of the Australian Labor Party, others will require the cooperation or need to be implemented directly by State and Territory branches themselves.

### Changes to the ALP membership process

Mr Shorten has set a target of 100 000 members. To reach this target, Mr Shorten announced the following measures:

- a new 'one-click' national online joining model for new members to start from July 2014;
- the establishment of low cost, uniform national membership fees; and
- the removal of the requirement that prospective members of the Labor party must also join a union.

### Changes to ALP candidate selection

Mr Shorten also called for an overhaul of pre-selection processes, and called for a greater role for the ALP membership in candidate selection at Federal, State and Territory levels.

- **Labor Leader elections:** For all Federal, State and Territory leaders to be elected using the 50:50 system similar to that used by Federal Labor in 2013. This has already been taken up by the NSW, ACT, Queensland and Tasmanian Labor branches.

- **House of Representatives candidate selection:** Increasing the weight given to the local members' vote by at least 20 per cent in every House of Representatives seat with more than 300 party members. In Victoria, for example, this would result in a 70:30 split in favour of local party members. Some branches, such as the ACT, already have 100 percent rank and file pre-selections.
- **Senate candidate selection:** Mr Shorten has instructed the National Secretary to work with the National Executive and WA Labor to recommend the best way of giving local party members a meaningful say in the selection of Senate candidates. The party's work in Western Australia will be used to inform other State and Territory branches in allowing local members to contribute to Senate pre-selections nationally.
- **Candidate selection broadly:** Mr Shorten also called for more primary-style community pre-selections in non-held seats, similar to those recently trialled by NSW Labor.

### **Changes to the ALP National Conference**

Mr Shorten's goal is for the ALP National Conference to be composed of a mix of people directly elected from and by Labor members, and those elected by state conferences.

- Mr Shorten has asked NSW State Secretary Jamie Clements to provide concrete recommendations to make the ALP National Conference more representative.
- Mr Shorten also announced his support for a decision of the previous ALP National Conference to undertake a major review of the ALP National Platform in time for the 2015 ALP National Conference. This will include a review of chapter one of Labor's national policy platform, which outlines Labor's Enduring Values.

The ALP National Platform is available [here](#).

The next ALP National Conference will take place in 2015 on a date yet to be determined.