

## Nick Xenophon contesting 2018 South Australian Election

On Friday 6 October 2017 the leader of the Nick Xenophon Team (NXT), Senator Nick Xenophon, announced that he will be resigning from Federal Parliament to contest the seat of Hartley at the 2018 South Australian Election.

Mr Xenophon said he wants to win the balance of power in the SA Lower House, the House of Assembly, to 'lead reform' in the State.

Mr Xenophon will contest the Liberal-held seat of Hartley, in Adelaide's eastern suburbs, as a candidate for the SA Best party. SA Best candidates have been selected in the seats of Morphett, Waite, Mawson, Heysen and Hammond.

Mr Xenophon's Senate position will either be filled by a NXT-appointed candidate through a casual vacancy or be elected on countback. This determination will be incumbent on the High Court's ruling on Mr Xenophon's eligibility to sit as a Senator under section 44(i) of the Constitution, to be handed down in the week commencing 9 October. Mr Xenophon will remain in the Senate until this decision is made.

### Background on Nick Xenophon's political career

Mr Xenophon was elected to the SA Parliament at the 1997 State Election on the independent No Pokies ticket, where he attracted 2.86 per cent of the state-wide vote and become the first independent elected to the Legislative Council in 60 years. Following the election of the Rann Labor Government in 2002 he held the balance of power in the Legislative Council with minor parties including Family First and the Democrats. The 2006 Election saw Mr Xenophon attract 20.51 per cent of the total vote, gaining a second quota for the No Pokies ticket.

After switching to the Australian Senate to contest the 2007 Election, Mr Xenophon held the balance of power in the with the Australian Greens and Family First from mid-2008 until July 2011. Xenophon was re-elected to the Senate at the 2013 and 2016 Federal elections. The NXT currently holds three Senate seats and one Lower House seat, Mayo, which it won at the 2016 Election.

### Policies

In his announcement on 6 October 2017 Mr Xenophon outlined several priority areas for his SA election campaign:

- SA submarine/ship-building industry;
- SA steel industry;
- Integrity of the Murray Darling Basin scheme;
- Increasing apprenticeships;
- Solar Thermal for Port Augusta; and
- Funding for Proton Therapy.

At the 2016 Election the NXT campaigned on a platform including:

- Restoration of the \$28 million in supplementary road funding allocated to SA;



- Establishment of a special regional migration status to encourage business migrants and their families to invest and reside in SA;
- Limiting utility cost increases to be no greater than CPI, with instances of increases above CPI rebated to those on a government pension;
- Targeted tax breaks for small business in the first two years of operation;
- Payroll tax exemption for small business with up to 15 full-time equivalent employees;
- \$1 maximum bets per spin and a \$120 limit on hourly losses on pokie machines;
- Prohibition on the broadcast of any form of gambling advertising during any G-rated program or sports broadcast;
- The introduction of an 'Australian Made' labelling category where 75% or more of the labour component to manufacture or assemble the product was undertaken by Australian residents;
- Opposition to certain agricultural sales to foreign buyers, including the sale of S. Kidman and Co.; and
- Decreasing the Foreign Investment Review Board scrutiny threshold from \$252 million to \$5 million.

### **2018 South Australian election state-of-play**

The 2018 SA Election will be held on 7 March 2018. All 47 seats in the House of Assembly and 11 of 22 seats in the Legislative Council, last filled at the 2010 Election, will become vacant. The record 16-year incumbent Labor Government, currently led by Premier Jay Weatherill, will seek a fifth four-year term against the Liberal Party Opposition led by Steven Marshall.

23 of the 47 House of Assembly seats are held by the ALP, with 20 Liberal seats and 4 crossbenchers. Labor form a working majority with the support of two crossbenchers who are Cabinet ministers – Martin Hamilton-Smith and Geoff Brock. Labor and the Liberal Opposition both hold eight seats in the Legislative Council, with two seats each held by the Greens and Conservatives and two held by independents.

A 2016 redistribution by the Electoral Districts Boundaries Commission has resulted in four Labor-held seats becoming notionally Liberal, meaning Labor will likely require a 4 per cent swing towards it to hold government.

A Galaxy Poll published on 1 July 2017 shows support for the major parties at 50-50 on two-party-preferred terms. The Liberal Opposition attracted the first preference support of 34 per cent of those polled, leading Labor's 28 per cent and SA Best's 21 per cent. The Greens and One Nation attracted 6 per cent primary votes respectively, while the Conservatives polled at 3 per cent.

### **Further information**

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