

# **SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO FOREIGN POLICY FOR AUSTRALIA**

**Submitted by:**

## **AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS (QUEENSLAND DIVISION) INCORPORATED**

The Australian Democrats (Queensland Division) Incorporated is a not-for-profit association, incorporated under Queensland legislation. Mindful of the 23 published Objectives for the Australian Democrats, we would like to make the following recommendations for Australian foreign policy:

1. We recommend that it is important that the Australian government be mindful of the importance of the environmental challenges facing the planet (see Objective 2). Accordingly, it is suggested that it is in Australia's national and international interests that we be at the forefront of international initiatives to protect the planet, and in particular to address anthropogenic climate change.
2. We recommend that it is important that the Australian government recognizes the interdependence of all peoples and nations, and that the Australian government co-operates with the United Nations (see Objective 3). In practical terms, this means, for instance, that the Australian government should engage fully with current United Nations initiatives for general and nuclear disarmament.
3. We recommend that it is important that the Australian government be mindful of its obligation to developing countries, by co-operating with them in their social and economic development (see Objective 3). Ultimately it is in our own interests to have a healthy and prosperous region, both in terms of strategic stability and increased trade, and to this end we recommend a significant increase in our level of international aid.
4. We recommend that the Australian government should see honesty as an important principle in foreign policy (see Objective 9). In particular, where Australia's actions in the past have been ill-founded and contrary to international law, such as in Australia's participation and support for the invasion of other countries, then at an official level we should be open and honest in admitting to this error.
5. We recommend also that the Australian government should see honesty as important through the recognizing of the Indigenous people of our continent, and in particular with constitutional recognition (see Objective 9). Whilst this might not seem at the surface relevant to foreign policy, it is a step which should assist in building international confidence in the integrity of Australia as a nation-state.
6. We recommend that the Australian government should see compassion as an important principle in foreign policy (see Objective 9). An important implication of

this is that Australia needs to have a compassionate policy to asylum seekers, treating them with dignity and understanding. We also need to end off-shore processing of asylum-seekers.

7. We recommend that the Australian government should recognize the rights of all peoples to self-determination (see Objective 21). For instance, internationally, it is suggested that the Australian government should recognize the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, both as a matter of moral right, but also because it is in Australia's national and international interest to seek stability within this key region.

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28 February, 2017

## **ATTACHMENT: 23 OBJECTIVES OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS**

1. To be beholden to no group or groups in the community but to serve the best interests of all Australians.
2. To accept the challenges of the predicament of humankind on the planet with its exponentially increasing population, disappearing finite resources and accelerating deterioration of the environment.
3. To recognise the interdependence of all people and nations, to co-operate with the United Nations, and to accept our obligation to the developing countries by co-operating with them in their social and economic development and quest for environmental protection.
4. To seek the transition to a sustainable economy, in equilibrium with world resources and ecosystems, with a minimum of dislocation, by planning and increasing public awareness of the problems.
5. To be even-handed to employee and employer, and reconcile their real interests by encouraging industrial democracy and other appropriate forms of co-operation.
6. To foster greater understanding and equity between city and country dwellers.
7. To stimulate the development of a multi-faceted national culture, with full opportunity for all groups to contribute.
8. To further unite the people of Australia by co-operative, indicative national planning, taking into account social, economic and environmental objectives.
9. To seek improvement in the quality of human relationships in all aspects of society and the economy, through honesty, tolerance, compassion and a sense of mutual obligation.
10. To decentralise power, to oppose its concentration in the hands of sectional groups, and to ensure that the power of large groups or bureaucracies is not allowed to override the interests of individuals or smaller groups.
11. To achieve and defend effective participatory democracy and open government by appropriate constitutional, parliamentary and governmental reforms.
12. By supporting existing rural and provincial industries and in other ways, to stem, and finally reverse, the flow of population to the cities.
13. In social and health services to emphasise prevention rather than cure.
14. To foster community activities and the growth of community spirit, bringing government and health and social services closer to the people.

15. To enable people to pursue their own way of life so long as they do not interfere with the rights of others.
16. To provide throughout life an education for living as well as for earning a living.
17. To ensure ready access to the media for public communication.
18. To ensure that the basic needs of all people are securely met, and to distribute income, wealth, social services and opportunity more equitably without undermining either incentive or self-respect.
19. To encourage individual initiative and enterprise and to recognise the need for self-fulfilment.
20. Animals should be protected from cruelty and exploitation.
21. To recognise the rights of all peoples to self-determination
22. To ensure the maintenance of biodiversity, to protect threatened species and to provide for better habitat protection.
23. To seek the election to Parliament of members committed to the objectives of the Party.