

The Australian Liberal Party Volume 1: Ideas, History and Organisation

The Australian Liberal Party Volume 2: Policy Challenges and the Global Context

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THE AUSTRALIAN LIBERAL PARTY

VOLUME 1: IDEAS, HISTORY AND ORGANISATION

Edited by
Zareh Ghazarian, Marija Taflaga
and Matteo Bonotti



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VOLUME 2: POLICY CHALLENGES AND THE GLOBAL
CONTEXT

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Rationale

A contribution to the field of politics, especially the sub-discipline of Australian politics.

Parties critical to discipline of political science and Australia provides the ideal case study

- **First**, Australia is one of the oldest liberal democracies in the world.
- **Second**, the Australian constitution and institutional framework have remained virtually unchanged since federation in 1901.
- **Third**, the Australian party system has remained stable with (and thanks to) the left-of-centre Labor Party and right-of-centre non-Labor parties dominating parliament and government (parties as the 'guardians of democracy').

Rationale (continued)

'The Australian Liberal Party is in deep crisis.'

Dean Jaensch (1994)

- In 1944 the current Liberal Party was created and has since enjoyed remarkable success, being in government more often than in opposition at the national level.
- Since 2024 the Liberal Party has been out of government in every mainland state except Queensland.
- Once described as an 'election winning machine', the party faces an uncertain future in a time of dealignment, collapse of party identification, and new and emerging political challenges.
- This collection analyses how a major right-of-centre party operates in a liberal democracy and provides empirical and theoretical contributions to understanding how it might navigate contemporary challenges.

Building on previous work

Many valuable contributions to understanding the Liberal Party through different lenses:

- **Periods in government** (e.g. Tom Frame's Howard Government series, 2017-2020)
- **Contemporary challenges** (e.g. Errington and van Onselen 2015)
- **Party leadership** (e.g. Judith Brett, 2003)
- **Historical** (e.g. Zachary Gorman's edited collection, 2024)
- **Organisational** (e.g. Ian Hancock, 2000)
- Inspired by Dean Jaensch's *The Liberals* (1994), we focus on the party's organisation, operation, policy direction, and future prospects and showcase established and emerging Australian researchers.

Structure of Volume 1

Section 1: Foundations and underpinning concepts of the Liberal Party

Chapter 1

Liberals Before the Liberal Party - Zachary Gorman and Gregory Melleuish

Chapter 2

Menzies Memories - Frank Bongiorno

Chapter 3

The Coalition – More Than a Marriage of Convenience, a Partnership for Success
- Scott Prasser

Chapter 4

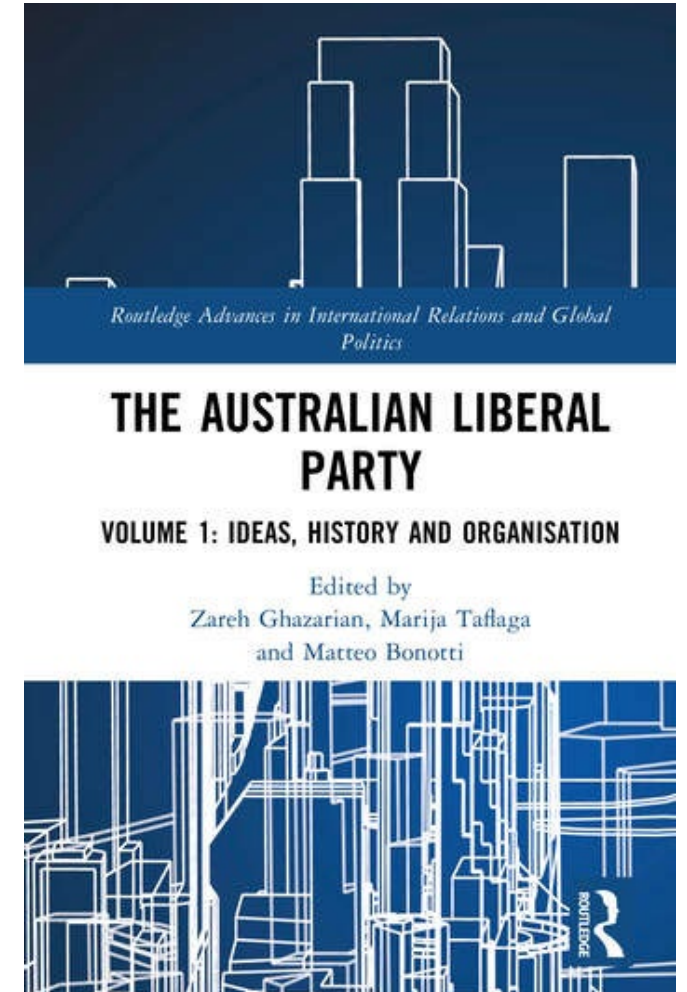
The Liberal Party's Embrace of Populism - Carol Johnson

Chapter 5

The Lost Issues: Liberal Party Electoral Performance Since 1990 - Ian McAllister

Chapter 6

John Howard's Leadership of the Liberals - Judith Brett



Chapter 7

From Broad-Church to Issue-Competitive: The Federal Liberal Party - Zareh Ghazarian and Marija Taflaga

Chapter 8

The NSW Liberals: An Unexpected Success Story - Anika Gauja and Rodney Smith

Chapter 9

'Where Hope Goes to Die': The Liberal Party in Victoria in the 21st Century - Paul Strangio

Chapter 10

A Liberal Paradox: The Evolution of Liberalism and the Liberal Party in Queensland - Paul D. Williams

Chapter 11

The Western Australian Liberal Party: From Dominance to Crisis - Jacob Broom and Narelle Miragliotta

Chapter 12

'Dark Forces' – The Liberal Party in South Australia - Rob Manwaring and Josh Sunman

Chapter 13

The Liberal Party in Tasmania - Mike Lester, Robert Hortle, and Lachlan Johnson

Chapter 14

The ACT: Liberal Alliances in a Changing Party System - Chris Monnox

Chapter 15

The Territory Party: The Country Liberal Party of the Northern Territory - Steven Farram

Volume 2: Policy Challenges and the Global Context

Chapter 1.

Total Control: The Liberal Party and Asylum Seekers - Amy Nethery

Chapter 2.

The Role and Impact of Religion in the Liberal Party in 21st Century Australia - Elenie Poulos and Marion Maddox

Chapter 3.

Economic Policy of the Liberal Party of Australia - Alan Fenna

Chapter 4.

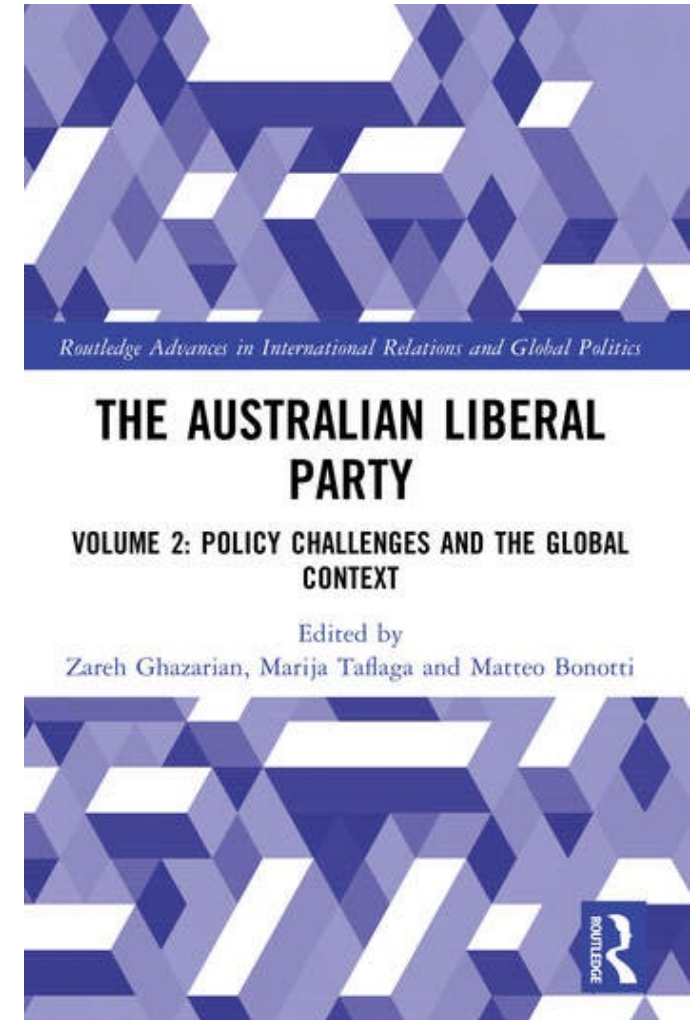
Do the Liberals have a 'Woman Problem'? Blair Williams

Chapter 5.

Anything But Reduce Emissions: The Australian Liberal Party's Climate Policy
Kate Crowley

Chapter 6.

Realist or Neoconservative? The Liberal Party's Evolving Foreign Policy Rémy Davison



Volume 2: Policy Challenges and the Global Context

Chapter 7.

Crashing the party? Independent challengers to the Liberal Party - Phoebe L.V. Hayman

Chapter 8.

Are Millennials and Gen Z Voters Endangering the Australian Liberal Party? - Intifar Chowdhury

Chapter 9.

'Locked in 1954 Mode': The Liberal Party and the Monarchy - Benjamin T. Jones

Chapter 10.

Party Dispositions Versus Indigenous Aspirations: A Liberal Party Policy Dilemma - James Walter

Chapter 11.

A Certain Idea of Britain: The Liberal Party of Australia, the United Kingdom and the Anglosphere - Tom Howe and Ben Wellings

Chapter 12.

Economic Class and the Electoral Future: Comparing the Australian Liberal Party and the US Republican Party - David T. Smith

Chapter 13.

Comparing Centre-Right Parties: The Conservative Party of Canada and the Liberal Party of Australia - Peter Van Onselen and Scott Ryan

From 'broad-church' to issue-competitive?

- Brittle origins of original non-Labor parties
 - Fusion (free-traders vs protectionists)
 - Nationalist (Hughes and ALP split)
 - United Australia Party (Lyons and second ALP split)
 - Liberal Party in 1944
- Structure of the Liberal Party
 - Decentralised, autonomous state divisions
 - Powerful leader
 - Role of ordinary members and extra-parliamentary structure

Tensions between two broad tendencies

- Conservative
 - Maintain existing structures and status quo
 - Tendency towards socially conservative views on defining 'family', abortion, national security
- Liberal
 - Tendency towards socially progressive values
 - Scepticism towards private markets and favour state action
- 1980s division between 'wets' and 'dries'

Liberal Party in the 21st Century

- Howard as prime minister advanced mass party type with ‘broad church’ narrative
 - Seeking to accommodate conservative and progressive values
- Policy record
 - Championing competition and private market forces
 - Privatisation of government services (e.g. employment services, aged care)
 - Deregulation (e.g. industrial relations)
 - Expansion of social welfare payments (eg. so-called ‘middle class’ welfare to assist with advancing ‘traditional family’)
 - Climate policy – market based model developed but shelved to maintain status quo
 - Social conservative values (eg. overturning euthanasia, blocking stem-cell research, changing the Marriage Act)
 - National Firearms Agreement

Liberal Party in the 21st Century

- Moving towards an 'issue-competitive' type?
 - Challenges confronting party membership
 - Many newer members appear linked to religious groups, including Pentecostal churches
 - Advancing socially conservative policies influenced by religious teachings which influence the party's policy direction
 - Liberal Party shifted towards policy program demonstrating signs of being an issue competitive party
 - Rather than 'broad church', party appears more focused on specific policies
 - Climate
 - Identity
 - Values

Liberal Party in the 21st Century

- Moving towards an 'issue-competitive' type?
 - Leadership instability post-Howard
 - Brendan Nelson
 - Malcolm Turnbull
 - Tony Abbott
 - Malcolm Turnbull
 - Scott Morrison
 - Peter Dutton
 - Sussan Ley
 - Angus Taylor

Conclusion

- Liberal Party moving away from 'broad church' to issue-competitive
- Focus on narrower policy agendas
- Shifting from major force to 'issue-competitive' challenger

Thank you