

BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE!

Australian Voice believes that it is essential for like-minded smaller Parties to merge and become stronger through the pooling of ideas, membership and other resources.

However, the very concept of "merging" seems to draw out egos that get in the way and prevent it ever happening.

So how do we bring about change?

We believe that the goal must be to come up with a proposition that takes both (or all) groups (whether registered or unregistered as political Parties) closer to their shared objectives. It is not about one group growing and the others disappearing. (That is a take-over.) It is not about one executive keeping their way of doing things, while the others are expected to yield or lose their identity. (Let's be honest, there is a reason why each group is still small or has not been able to achieve its objectives, so this won't work, either.)

It is about bringing like-minded people together into a new, blended entity. It is about creating something fresh that we can each subscribe to and embrace whole-heartedly – if you like, a custom-designed Party that takes the best of each of the contributing groups and allows unity without egos.

So how can we do this? This is our proposal:

- **An initial meeting** should be held as soon as possible to discuss the broad direction of the new Party. For example, we might decide that we all want a strong, united, right-of-centre Party that is committed to upholding traditional family values, protecting the sovereignty of our nation, and revitalising our economy through the development of visionary infrastructure projects across the nation.
- Each participating group should be represented by two or three key people who are empowered to come up with a proposal that could bring about the development of a new Party in which everyone benefits and all are respected.
- All the values considered important to each group should be put on the table.
- Key differences should be respectfully and sincerely explored with a view to fully understanding one another. (It is our belief that only when we understand one another's "big issues" will we find a way to work together beyond this first stage of discussion. To date there has been a lot of talk, but very little progress.)
- A document should be prepared tabling all the agreed ideas, whether Core Values, policies, philosophies, etc, for representatives to report back to their respective Parties and to seek agreement to move forwards. (Ideas which are not universally accepted by those around the table should be put aside for the time being. We are looking for consensus – How much do we agree strongly on? Anything else can be re-visited as the group continues to develop its policies later.)
- Agreement should also be reached on a practical and effective time-frame for representatives to return to the discussion table. This should take into consideration each group's present structure and rules, but be ambitious enough to bring about real progress.

- Assuming each group wants to proceed further, **a second meeting** should be held to discuss structure and rules by which the new, as-yet-unnamed, Party could function.
- A draft Constitution clearly setting out the proposed structure and agreed rules for how the blended entity could work in an organised and democratic way should be presented for representatives to take back to their respective groups.
- Assuming representatives have agreement to move forwards, **a third meeting** should be held to agree upon a name for the new Party and to set a practical time-frame for its establishment and for the folding of each of the existing groups into the new entity.

For example, any unregistered groups might simply recommend to their members that their respective groups be disbanded immediately and that all members transfer to the new Party.

Any registered Parties, with larger membership bases, and particularly any which are considering "re-inventing" themselves or leaving behind encumbering baggage, could possibly move members across in a more staged, or structured way, progressively taking up membership in the new Party until they reach a point where they could simply advise the AEC that they no longer wish to remain registered as a Party in their own right.

This approach could substantially reduce the chance of the new Party being seen as simply the "re-badging" of an existing registered Party, rather than their members leaving to take up membership in a fresh new Party which has no history or baggage. More than likely, the new Party could then be registered with the Electoral Commission before the existing, dissolving Party needed to advise the Commission that it is being de-registered.

The new Party, let's call it the XYZ Party, would have an interim leadership team made up of nominated representatives of each of the contributing groups. None of the present groups would be seen to be "taking over" the others and everyone could have the same input into the design and development of the new blended Party.

In conclusion, this seems to offer a way forward without the constant threat of runaway egos.

If we are indeed all working together for the good of our country, there is no need for anyone to build his or her own little kingdom. Nor is there any need for little Parties to compete against each other to go nowhere.

We believe it is the time for genuine change. It is the time to sit down, to put aside egos, and to "make it happen". Our country needs a sensible alternative to the corrupt and broken system we presently have.

<http://ausvoice.org/bringing-about-change>

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