

1 August 2016

Att: Richard Alston & Tony Nutt
Liberal Party Federal Secretariat
PO Box 6004
Kingston ACT 2604

Re: Submission to review of the federal election campaign

Dear Mr Alston & Mr Nutt,

I write on behalf of Fair Agenda, an independent community campaigning organisation working to bring about a fair and equal future for women.

Fair Agenda is a community made up of 35,000 women and men from all backgrounds and walks of life, and from across the political spectrum.

One of the issues Fair Agenda members are concerned about is the ongoing under-representation of women in our parliaments. They are particularly concerned about the low number of women currently serving as federal representatives of the Liberal Party.

As part of the election review being undertaken by the Party, I am writing on behalf of Fair Agenda members to urge the Liberal Party to make women's representation an internal priority. Fair Agenda members support strong measures to increase the number of women pre-selected as Liberal candidates, particularly in safe seats, before the next federal election.

Australia's political leaders should reflect the full array of talent that Australia has to offer, and the varied perspectives and life experiences that make up the communities they represent.

Yet when federal parliament reconvenes next August, 8 out of 10 federal Liberal MPs will be men.

I note the 2015 report from the federal executive warning that the Liberal Party risks losing relevance if it doesn't lift female participation.

The report highlights barriers to women's participation in the party, and processes that perpetuate the power of those already in political positions, to the exclusion of others, particularly women. On behalf of Fair Agenda members, I urge you to address these issues as a priority through this review process.

Fair Agenda welcomes the Party's endorsement of a target of 50% female candidates by 2025.

However, our members are concerned that the Liberal Party has actually gone backwards in terms of representation; and that Liberal Party representatives themselves have stated that women are being recruited and preselected into mostly marginal or unwinnable seats.

We note that at the most recent election in the three seats of Murray, Mackellar and Brisbane where women were retiring, they were universally replaced by male candidates.

As part of the election review and response process, we urge you to make addressing the barriers to women's election, pre-selection and promotion within the Liberal Party, a priority.

We particularly note the sentiment of Fair Agenda members like Ms R [REDACTED], who said *"you will continue to disenfranchise loyal supporters if you don't support women at branch level and beyond. Myself and my friends included."*

On behalf of concerned Fair Agenda members, we would welcome your response and further information on the actions being taken to address barriers to women's pre-selection and promotion.

Yours sincerely,

Renee Carr
Executive Director
Fair Agenda