

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Tasmanian Legislative Council is, and always has been, made up of a majority of Independent Members. This in part results from the electoral method used to fill the Legislative Council's 15 single-member seats. However at various times members of political Parties have been elected to the Legislative Council.

Australian Labor Party

The ALP has for many years endorsed candidates for Legislative Council elections. It has been by far the most successful political Party with 18 Members elected.

The most Members of one Party ever to sit together in the Legislative Council was five ALP Members. This occurred in 1957 and is also the present situation. Currently there are five endorsed Members of the Australian Labor Party and one Member who describes herself as 'Independent/ALP' in the Chamber.

The fluctuation in Party representation is well illustrated by the following: ALP candidates were successful in 1947, 1948, 1951, 1952 and 1957 leading to five sitting in the Chamber at the same time. This group of five lasted only until mid-1958, and dwindled to two by 1968 and remained at one for many years.

Liberal Party of Tasmania

For several decades the Liberal Party did not endorse candidates for the Legislative Council. The Liberal Party has generally supported the notion that the Legislative Council should not be a Party House. There have therefore been very few endorsed candidates, with H.W. Bertram being a publicly endorsed Liberal candidate for the Launceston by-election of January 1966.

The former Member for Pembroke, Hon. Peter McKay, who was first elected as an Independent in 1976, declared himself a Liberal in April 1991. He resigned from the Legislative Council in 1999, having served as Minister for Health in the Rundle Liberal Government between 1996 and 1998, once again resulting in there being no Liberal Party MLCs.

Many MLCs over the years have been ex-members of the Liberal Party, with a number standing as Liberal candidates in House of Assembly elections.

Possibly spurred on by its failed attempt to abolish the Legislative Council in 1997-98, in June 1999 the Liberal Party placed newspaper advertisements seeking candidates for preselection at the next Legislative Council elections, due in August 1999. In the end it did not endorse anyone for the 1999 election. However in December 1999 the Liberal Party formally endorsed candidates for the southern seat of Wellington (Peter Thiessen) and the northern seat of Paterson (Dianne Porteous) which were coming up for election in May 2000. Both candidates were unsuccessful and no candidates were endorsed in the following elections.