SECOND EDITION
(updated following the May 2019 Federal election)

GET ELECTED

LOCAL STATE FEDERAL



A step-by-step campaign guide to winning public office

RUTH MCGOWAN

Two bad key strokes and your campaign can be wiped out. This is why *Get Elected* is a must-read for anyone contemplating running for political office and wanting to avoid the potential pitfalls that can turn your campaign into a disaster. Ruth packs this guide with practical tips and insights gained from her coordination role of the two successful 'Indi Orange' campaigns for her sister Cathy McGowan in 2013 and 2016. I also recommend this guide to campaign managers who want to maximise the effectiveness of volunteers and not waste precious time.

Tim Fischer AC (and former Federal MP, NSW MLA, Leader of the National Party, and Deputy Prime Minister of Australia)

Get Elected is a comprehensive guide to everything potential candidates need to know about running an election campaign at local, state or federal level. Written by Ruth McGowan, a long-time advocate for greater representation of women in politics, *Get Elected* is the campaign bible for movers and shakers new to the scene, who want to know the important stuff upfront, the easy way. I wish I'd had this guide at my fingertips when I ran my first campaign almost a decade ago. It would have saved a lot of nail-biting guesswork and costly mistakes.

Ali Cupper, Independent MP Mildura, Victorian State Parliamentarian (and former Councillor Mildura City Council)

Anyone who is thinking about running for office will be encouraged to give it a go after reading *Get Elected*. It doesn't matter if you are interested in Local Council or State and Federal Parliament, this guide will build your confidence to consider politics and equip you with the tools you need to run a masterful campaign.

Geoff Ablett, three times Mayor of the City of Casey, dual Premiership player with Hawthorn and also played for Richmond and St Kilda

In 2018, Ruth ran a series of webinars for women across Australian for the National Rural Women's Coalition on how to run a successful campaign and get elected to their local council. Through a series of weekly sessions, Ruth helped potential candidates understand what they needed to know to run a successful campaign from understanding how to articulate a message to stamina tips on the campaign trail. Ruth is passionate about improving women's representation in local government and her deep knowledge of running a political campaign is now captured in Get Elected. This is essential reading for any woman that has ever wondered what do I need to do get elected? I recommend it to the reader.

Leonie Noble, President on the National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC) board, Immediate past National President of the Women's Industry Network Seafood Community (WINSC)

I was so grateful to have Ruth's encouragement when I began contemplating running for my local council. The advice Ruth provided from her considerable experience in running successful campaigns was invaluable in helping me understand the 'ins and outs' of running my campaign. Her support kept me focused and on track, resulting in a winning campaign that lead to being elected. It is exciting that Ruth has written

Get Elected because it means that if you are seeking information on successful campaign strategies and winning tactics, Ruth's expert coaching advice is now readily available. And if you are like me and don't know where to start, *Get Elected* is a must read. This will be your 'bible', your guide, your 'coach in a book'. There are no excuses now, so start campaigning!

Diane Gray, Councillor Armidale Regional Council

In my ten years as a radio broadcaster with the ABC, I regularly interviewed candidates running for Local Council or State Parliament and federal politics. Some people would be great communicators, able to connect with my audience quickly and successfully give them a reason to care about who they are, what they know and what they stand for—others, less so. *Get Elected* is essential reading for anyone who wishes to know what it takes to be broadcast ready. It provides practical tools to communicate your campaign message to journalists and ultimately voters. A must-read for candidates and their teams.

Penny Terry, Community Storytelling Expert Creative Director, Healthy Tasmania

This guide sets out the ABC of a game plan that a candidate needs to apply to their campaign to work towards getting elected. With its guidance, practical tips and considerations of campaigning, I highly recommend this guide to anyone considering running for office.

Jacqui Hawkins, Independent candidate for Benambra 2018 Victorian State Election

Get Elected will help you do exactly that if you are considering running as an independent or a small-party candidate. From setting up your campaign team and the comprehensive checklists to practical tips on contemporary campaigning and inspirational stories from other people just like yourself, *Get Elected* makes the seemingly impossible a real possibility.

Judy Ryan, Independent candidate 2016 Victorian Local Government election, Reason Party candidate 2018 Victorian State Election, 2019 Federal Election, Secretary, Residents for Victoria Street Drug Solutions

Seemingly, more people are looking at their local MP and thinking they can do a better job than him (or her) but aren't sure what to do next. If you are disillusioned with politics and care about democracy and representation, then perhaps it's time to consider running for office? It makes no difference what level office you aspire to, whether a newbie or an old hand, you need to deal with election deadlines, budgets, media, volunteers and compliance to get in office and to stay there.

The party machines still run politics but that is changing. It can, however, be daunting to know where to start when you don't have the backing of Team Red, Blue or Green. This is the first national guide to help would-be politicians run a successful campaign; it's a must-read for anyone who has ever thought about giving politics a crack.

Rob Harris, Federal politics reporter formerly with the Herald Sun now National Affairs Editor for the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age

Get Elected

GET ELECTED

A step-by-step campaign guide to winning public office (local, state and federal)

Ruth McGowan

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First and second editions published in 2019

ISBN 978-0-6482812-7-6

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

Edited by Joanna Yardley at The Editing House

Typeset by BookPOD

Printed and bound in Australia by BookPOD

Cover design by Jane Radman

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Dedicated to those courageous citizens who dare greatly
and step into the arena as candidates for public office.

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Teddy Roosevelt, 1910, Paris (on citizenship)

Foreword

There are so many opportunities to be involved in making our communities, regions and nations better. *Get Elected* is essentially a guide on how to become an activist through political candidacy. Written in an easy-to-read style, it explains, with a practical approach, how to plan and run a campaign. This second edition has been updated following the 2019 federal election.

Get Elected is a call to activists everywhere: don't get mad—get elected! It is a guide about hope, conviction and positive action.

Ruth McGowan is my sister and she was chief strategist of my political campaign to win the seat of Indi in 2013 and again in 2016. When it comes to coaching and supporting people though campaigns, Ruth knows what she is talking about, and in writing this guide, she has collected the wisdom of many successful campaigners.

If you are seeking inspiration, motivation and encouragement, I suggest you read *Get Elected* cover to cover, in one joyful sitting. Or, as candidate who wishes to consider this advice slowly, you can work through the steps at your own pace and prepare for what will come. The guide is filled with practical tips on what to do, how to do it and by when to do it.

Get Elected recalls stories and lived experiences of my 'Independent for Indi' campaigns. In 2013, I was elected by 439 votes on a margin of 0.3 percentage points to the Federal Seat of Indi, which became one of the most marginal electorates in the country—up there with Western Sydney. At the time, I was the first female Independent to be elected to the Lower House of the Australian Federal Parliament. These stories provide the inspiration for this guide with the intention that what was learned can be shared with other independently-minded candidates who wish to be the change they want to see in their local council, state parliament and in federal politics.

My path to politics was full of twists and turns. I started out as a teacher, took up farming and worked with agricultural organisations in Australia and overseas. Being an independent candidate suited me; I was my own boss and ran a home-based consultancy business. I could respond directly to people's needs avoiding the traditional political party hierarchy. As a rural woman strongly

connected to her community, I was experienced in community engagement, leading organisations, and lobbying and working with politicians.

Essential to any campaign is to have a skilled and well-organised group of volunteers. My campaign had its genesis in the 'Voice for Indi' movement. This group, later known as V4I, was committed to promoting democratic reform. Many of its members went on to support me in what became known as 'Team Orange'. In 2016, I ran for re-election, building on all we had learned on our previous campaign. With a team of between 20 and 800 volunteers, I was re-elected with an increased flow of first preference votes. The experience of working with the team and volunteers is shared in this guide.

In my early stages in office, I was given the following advice by Independent MP Tony Windsor, 'When doing this job, just be yourself'. Of course, you can't be anything else; it is too hard. When facing difficult decisions, I asked myself 'how may I respond to this as my best self?' The intention to be 'my best self', guided my decision making and it also guided the volunteers on Team Orange during the campaigns.

For community activists seeking to make a change, especially in rural and regional Australia, the message is this: turn up, speak up and sign up. Whether it be for the school council, local council or fire brigade, put your hand up, step up and get elected. As a leader, transform your vision into action and bring your community with you.

In closing, a big call out to Ruth for making this guide happen, for bringing together the knowledge developed on the Indi campaigns and first-hand experiences on other local and state campaigns along with her extensive research on the topic. It is our hope that the experiences from the Orange campaigns will assist a wider audience to learn about what it takes to successfully get elected as an independent.

To the many people who feel disillusioned and disappointed about the state of politics and find it hard to imagine a way forward, this guide is for you. If you are interested in delivering sustainable change in your community, state or nation, ask yourself, 'If not now, then when? If not me, then who?'

As a reader of this guide, I encourage you to get more involved in politics. Remember: don't get mad, get elected! Get campaigning and good luck.

Cathy McGowan AO, former independent Federal Member of Parliament, Indi 2013–2019

Acknowledgements

Two hundred years ago, in early 19th century Ireland, my great, great, great grandfather James McGowan was known as a political 'shit stirrer'. As a poor Irish Catholic, he was a member of an organisation called 'Ribbonmen'. These native Irish citizens rallied against the dominating English landlords fighting for tenants' rights. I imagine that for my Irish forebear having his land confiscated and his rights supressed would make him pretty angry—and the authorities nervous. Convicted in 1817 on trumped up murder charges with no legal evidence, James McGowan was transported from County Mayo in Ireland to Van Diemen's Land on the other side of the world, to a penal colony in Hobart. He had a wife and four children (who were left behind), so at least he wasn't hanged like the four other accused men. Fortunately, McGowan was indentured as a farm hand and after four years of exemplary behaviour, he was awarded his 'ticket of leave' and became a free man. His family soon joined him in the town of Richmond, where he went on to become a prosperous hotel owner throughout Tasmania.

Two centuries later, when I considered standing for election in my local council, I was inspired by my ancestor to become political and advocate for change. Politics runs in the blood. When I was a teenager, my father (Paul McGowan) was a Councillor with Chiltern Council. From a young age, I learnt the value of an effective campaign strategy. With hindsight, I admire my dad's tactic of using family members and the social networks of my mother Marie to assist him to get elected. I recall him dragging his kids door-knocking throughout his rural electorate and enlisting us to hand out his *How to Vote* cards every election day for a decade. In 2008, my retired father attended my swearing in as Mayor of Baw Baw Shire and was a very proud father.

On my mother's side, my gratitude extends to my great grandfather (Albert Terrill) and my grandfather (Jack Terrill) who showed leadership in their communities as Shire Presidents in the Rutherglen region of Northern Victoria in the early and mid-20th century. My great grandmother Mary Ann and grandmother Nell performed their role as Wife of the Shire President admirably, undertaking charity work along with managing farm chores and raising their families.

While on the topic of family, I want to sincerely thank my sister Cathy McGowan, AO, who has generously shared her tips, tools and advice from the successful Indi Orange campaigns as well as penning the foreword for this guide. Cathy was a fiercely independent Member of Parliament and knows a lot about campaigning. In 2019, Cathy supported Helen Haines, the independent candidate for Indi, to follow her into Federal Parliament. History was made as it was the first time an independent candidate had succeeded another in the House of Representatives. Cathy demonstrated how to thrive as a politician and make a difference while still having fun and maintaining integrity. Without Cathy's example of how an independent can successfully campaign and get elected to change the world for the better, this guide may not have been written.

Thank you to Paul, my husband, who provided practical advice, insights and support to write this guide. Also, thank you to my three awesome adult children Finn, Ivy and Albie. In their younger years, they followed family tradition and assisted me on my election campaigns to door knock, hand out *How to Vote* cards and stuff envelopes (and they kept it fun).

I have appreciated the people who contributed their stories and tips for this guide. Thank you Ali Cupper, the late Tim Fischer AC, Cathy McGowan AO, Rebekha Sharkie and Andrew Wilkie for sharing their political insights and to journalist Penny Terry for her advice on being 'broadcast ready'. Thank you Judy Ryan and Jacqui Hawkins, two candidates who provided a reality check on the draft of this guide and contributed their stories as independent and micro party candidates.

The first edition of this guide sold out in less than six weeks in the lead up to the 2019 federal election. There is obviously a demand from readers who wish to know more about political campaigning. This second edition has been revised and updated, incorporating insights from the 2019 federal election.

It takes a team to deliver a book; therefore, I wish to thank Jo Yardley from The Editing House for her editorial management, Sylvie Blair from BookPOD for the book design and Jane Radman from Jane Radman Designs for the cover design.

Finally, thank you to you, the reader, for being curious enough to pick up this guide. I wish you every success in your campaign to stand for public office, be it for your local council, state or territory parliament or federal politics.

Preface

Do you want to do something about the state of politics in this country? Could politics be your next career move? Are you keen to have a crack at standing for your local council or state government? Maybe you fancy yourself as a federal politician? Or perhaps you think politics is not for you but you want to assist someone else to get elected?

If the current state of politics is causing you despair, you're not alone. Many Australians are increasingly disillusioned and are being turned off politics—particularly the brand practiced by the major parties of a Blue, Red or Green stripe. People are angry at the decisions being made (or not being made) by those who have been elected to represent us. Many citizens feel that our representatives are failing us on the big issues, in particular, those living in the so-called 'safe seats' who feel ignored in favour of those living in marginal seats.

Australian citizens need better representation; therefore, we need a greater number of diverse candidates to consider standing for public office. If you've ever considered politics but are not really into party politics or if you are interested in running for public office but are unsure where to start, then you're in the right place. This guide will assist competent, independently-minded candidates to get elected.

It takes great courage to stand for something bigger than yourself. I have worked with many courageous community activists and leaders to help them get elected. This guide is built on the training I have delivered as part of my '*Get Elected*' workshops and webinars as well as my Coach-the-Candidate programs. Now it's time to share that knowledge, and the tips and strategies to successful campaigning with people who want to make a difference but aren't sure how to 'get into politics' and with people who are considering whether to join a political party or 'go it alone' as an independent candidate.

In writing this guide, I've reflected on the experiences of what works and what doesn't. The idea was to put all these resources into one guide, tailored specifically for Australians who are thinking about running for public office. The result is the first national guide for citizens who want to stand for office at the three levels of government - and for the people who will help them win. I hope to encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds to run and

to prompt more women to consider politics. In writing this guide, I apply the pronoun ‘she’ so that women contemplating standing for office can more easily picture themselves in the role.

If you consider politics to be your vocation and a way to stand for something, then this guide will help you through the four essentials of running for office. First, it’s important to believe in yourself, have confidence that you can do it and clarity on where you will stand (Part One). Second, you’ll require a plan for your campaign and a supportive team committed to winning (Part Two). Third is the ability to take effective action to achieve your goal every single day (Part Three). And finally, Part Four is about understanding what is required ‘next’—whether or not you get elected.

My hope is that I can inspire you to step forward, run for office and assume the role of leader—to step into the arena. You can change things. Run to be the change you wish to see in the world. This guide will show you how. As a candidate, a campaign manager or a keen volunteer on a campaign team, we can all make a difference.

It’s time to start planning your campaign and get elected.

How this guide is structured

This is not a typical political guide about campaigning. As a firm believer in the need for more independent voices in the three levels of government, this guide is written primarily for those who want to run their own grass-roots campaign. However, it will also be a useful guide for candidates running as endorsed candidates for a political party.

This guide is divided into four parts:

Part One begins with the questions a potential candidate needs to ask herself when deciding to stand for public office. It examines the role of elected representatives at the local, state and federal levels of government. It assists potential candidates to explore their skills and experience to stand, and the reasons to do it, and where to stand. It also considers the options of running as an Independent or with a party and the timing of when to run.

Once you have decided to stand for office, **Part Two** unpacks the eight aspects for which you need to plan to develop a winning campaign and describes the processes and actions that need to be in place to support a campaign. If you have already decided to run for office and are clear on when and where you will be standing, feel free to jump straight to this section.

Part Three covers the essential actions a candidate must do on the campaign trail from the campaign launch until election day. Here you will learn how to focus campaign actions on what really matters (voters, funds and volunteers) as well as the importance of setting campaign goals to keep your team on track, develop a 100-day countdown plan and schedule your run.

Part Four wraps up the guide with a discussion around *what next?* This explores what you need to consider should you either be successfully elected to office or not.

When most candidates decide to run for public office, they opt to join a party and may have to battle for pre-selection in order to win party endorsement as the preferred candidate. After succeeding that hurdle, the successful candidate is supported by their party to subsequently run a campaign. That

(usually) means they have access to 'on-tap' support like mentors, limited funding and volunteers. They can follow a well-worn party playbook on processes to get elected. Having never stood for pre-selection for endorsement by a major party, I can't advise on that process. But if that is your circumstance, then good luck, and I hope you can gain useful tips from this guide.

If you are an independent, non-party political, partisan candidate or someone who wants to run for a micro party, then this guide will help you design and implement a winning campaign. Aspiring candidates who are members of a major political party will still learn a lot about campaigning by reading this guide (hello to members of the Australian Labor Party, Australian Liberal Party, National Party and Greens).

This guide is practical, full of tips, exercises, checklists and case studies from real campaigns that will help you be successful in *your* campaign. It is suitable for leaders wanting to step forward at all levels of government, from planning a large campaign for federal or state office, or a smaller one for local council. Whether you are running for State or Federal Parliament, or standing for your local council, although the scale of the campaign will be different, many fundamental aspects of a campaign stay the same.

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Introduction

Get activated and become political

> *Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*
>
> —Margaret Mead (Anthropologist)

This guide is inspired by the many community activists who have entered politics as a way to get things done rather than continuously complaining. Leaders want to make a difference for their community and fight for a cause they are passionate about.

This 'how to' guide is designed to show 'ordinary citizens' how they can change the world by standing for public office and getting elected to government. Although the focus is on candidates considering standing as independents or with micro parties, this guide is non-partisan and covers political strategy, tips and tactics that will work for all candidates, regardless of political affiliation or scale of the campaign.

If you have ever thought about running for public office for your local council, state government or federal parliament then this guide will help you get elected. Or, if you want to help someone else get elected and be part of a campaign team, this guide will show you how to do that. If now is not the right time to go into politics, perhaps, by reading this guide, you will be inspired to stand in the future.

It's time for more diversity in representation

If you take a look at the faces of our federal and state Parliaments and local Councils, you won't see much diversity. A principle of democracy is that

governments work more effectively when they represent the desires of their people. But that's not what we see. The seats in the chambers are mainly filled by older white men from professional backgrounds and private school education. Our federal Parliament and most of the state Parliaments are dominated by a 'sea of suits', and men make up approximately two-thirds of the elected representatives—more in local government Councils. Middle-aged white men, being only one-tenth of the population, are over-represented at a ratio of 6:1 in government.[1]

Following the May 2019 federal election, women remain in the minority in the 46th Parliament (although there has been some improvement). Overall, the proportion of women in the Federal Parliament reached 36.6 percent, an increase of 4.3 percent on the previous parliament (August 2016). The proportion of women in the Senate increased by 9.2 percent, to 48.7 percent from 39.5 percent following the May election. In September 2019, gender parity was reached in the Senate following the pre-selection of Victorian Liberal Sarah Henderson to a vacant Senate spot. . The proportion of women in the House of Representatives increased by 1.8 percent, to 30.5 percent from 28.7 percent previously (Parliament of Australia, 2019).[2]

This inequality of representation is slowly changing, but it needs to occur faster. It's time for more diverse voices to be heard in chambers and parliaments across our nation.

If you are a woman or citizen from a culturally diverse background, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, a young person, or someone from the LGBTIQ community, my hope is that this guide will encourage you to give politics a crack. Does your local MP or Councillor fit the stereotype of a 'Stale, Pale Male' who responds to his party's factional puppet strings when it comes to voting rather than the needs of the electorate? Perhaps you are the one to shake this up? Be the change you wish to see?

Our political landscape will never change unless more, diverse and competent citizens stop complaining, step up and start campaigning to get elected.

Australian democracy needs your voice to be heard in order to be more inclusive and reflective of our diverse population. Voters are interested—now, more than ever—in supporting independent candidates. A 2018 poll found that Australian voters were increasingly frustrated with federal politics, with 42 percent 'flirting' with the idea of voting independent. A 2018 report by the Grattan Institute discussed the trend of 'protest politics', whereby those voters who were angry at politicians would vote for 'anyone but them'. This

was demonstrated by the voting patterns in the 2016 senate elections where almost 1:4 voters preferred a micro party or independent above the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal National Coalition or the Australian Greens.[3, 4]

Calling progressive candidates

This guide has been developed for candidates who wish to run for office as an independent or with a micro party rather than with a major party. Perhaps now is the time for Independents to become the antidote to the declining trust Australians have in politicians.

What is needed is forward thinking politicians that will address the issues concerning Australians like rocketing power bills, inaction on climate change, environmental crises (fish kills on the Darling River and coral bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef), endless political scandals, misuse of entitlements, constant party leadership changes and the decreasing affordability of everyday living.

We need politicians who:

- are motivated to broadly consult their constituents in order to effectively represent **all** citizens, not just the rich and powerful donors who fund campaigns and expect 'favours' in return.
- can separate state from church, and who don't endlessly moralise on one hand while doing the opposite in private.
- can represent a diverse, multicultural Australia and legislate for the 21st century.
- won't try to divide us for political gain or take us back to the 1950s.
- who are willing to collaborate with other elected members, and sometimes compromise a little in order to get good things happening.

If you identify with being a 'shit-stirrer community activist' with a passion for progress on environmental, social, or economic justice, then I hope this guide will motivate you to consider politics as a way to publicise the agenda you want to prosecute. Similarly, if you are a 'small liberal' who despairs of the narrow-minded views of your current representative and you want to challenge him or her, then this guide will assist you in your campaign. You may be a 'disaffected Green' who is keen to run for office but can't stand the confines of a party. Perhaps you are a lapsed member of the Australian Labor party and wish to take your own stance on matters, away from having to follow the fixed views of whatever faction to which you were aligned.

Politics needs to be fixed now

If you are reading this guide, you are either interested in politics or wish to change the world—probably both. You may be like many Australians who are increasingly disillusioned by politicians be it at a federal or state level, or local council. No doubt you're frustrated by the inability of those in power to get things done. This was exacerbated by the drawn out debate on marriage equality in 2017, when most Australians simply wanted our federal politicians to vote 'yes' and get on with it. Yet again in 2018, another Prime Minister was 'knifed in the back' and Australians went through another national leadership change for apparently no good reason.

Have you, like many citizens, turned off politics? Do you hate the bullshit, the scandals, the lies, the dirty deals, the back-stabbing and the factional fighting? Do you wonder how it can possibly change? Or are you still interested in democracy and care about how the system can be improved? Do you think you could do a better job than those currently in power? Are you considering standing for public office?

Could politics be your next career move?

Australia needs passionate, competent and progressive citizens who want to change the system by stepping up and standing for election. This coincides with a voter hunger for a new type of politician, an ordinary person, someone 'just like you' who will 'get on with it'.

If you are competent and feel you can bring a different perspective to any of the three levels of government operating in your locality, then perhaps it is time to add the role of 'politician' (defined as someone who holds elected office) to your resume?

The 'political class' is on the nose

In 2017, the Edelman Trust Barometer found that a majority of Australians believed their government is a broken institution.[5] Another study by Australian National University researchers reported on attitudes towards democracy following the July 2016 Australian Election Study and revealed that 40 percent of Australians surveyed said they were not satisfied with democracy in Australia.[6] Such levels of dissatisfaction have not been recorded since the days following the 1975 dismissal of the Whitlam Labor Government.

While current levels of trust in our politicians are low, it's probably going to get worse. The Grattan Institute points to several causes of Australian's falling trust in politics including 'numerous failures of policy, serial changes of leader, the pervasive influence of vested interests, and the self-interest of too many politicians' (Wood, 2019).[7]

It's not just the scandals and in-fighting that is turning off voters. Increasingly, Australians view politicians as being out of touch because their life experiences don't reflect those of the 'average' voter. In 2017, Fairfax media researched the employment backgrounds of federal politicians and found that 'nearly half of all Liberal MPs were former political staffers, party officials or government advisers while inside the Labor caucus, 55% of MPs had previously worked as staffers, electorate officers or advisers before being elected, and 40% have previously worked in roles within the trade union movement'.[8]

I don't wish to disrespect politicians and those who have previously worked as political staffers, trade union representatives or lobbyists; however, their employment experiences prior to getting elected don't represent the working lives of most Australians. In fact, it fuels the perception that politicians are 'out of touch' with ordinary citizens, locked in a 'Canberra bubble' with people like themselves. Perhaps that's why voters are increasingly looking outside the main political parties for people to represent their views—and not the 'same old, same old'. This pattern is not only happening in Australia but is apparent around the world in western democracies.

At the 2019 federal election, a quarter of Australians gave their first voting preference to parties other than the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Liberal-National Coalition; this is a trend that continued from the 2016 federal election and the past decade.[9] Voters want more 'ordinary people' to put their hand up and prioritise a career in politics: people with a vision; people who believe in what they are doing; people who know that power is worth pursuing because when you are 'in the tent rather than on the outside' you can make and influence decisions that will benefit communities, businesses and our planet for the better.

Like shoppers who prefer to do their grocery shopping at smaller independent supermarkets, voters are turning away from the two major parties—the ALP and the Coalition—to independents and micro parties as a way to channel their angst towards the current political system.

Australians continue to vote for independent and minor party candidates who haven't necessarily risen from a political background. For example, at a federal

level, these politicians include Andrew Wilkie, Helen Haines, Zali Steggall and others from micro parties such as Pauline Hanson, Rebekha Sharkie, Jacqui Lambie, and Bob Katter.

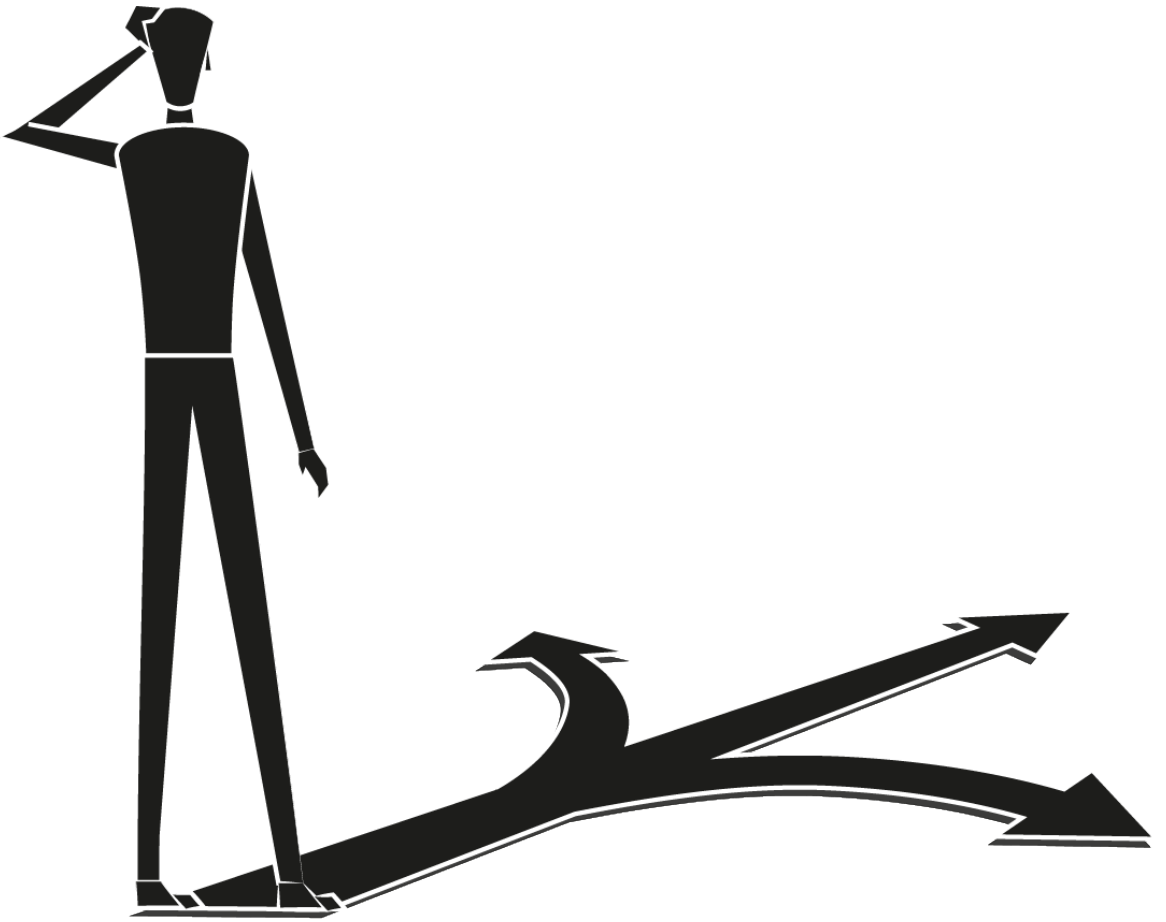
Reasons to consider running for office right now:

- Your country and community need you. There are many problems in the world that need fixing by people who know stuff and are passionate about positive change.
- Australians actually want more diversity in their representation.
- The old duopoly of Red, Blue with a mix of Green is crumbling with 1:4 voters deserting the major parties at the past two Federal Elections.
- People's trust in politicians is at an all-time low.
- There's no time like the present. If you don't do it now or plan to do it soon, you may regret it.
- It's time to stop complaining about things and 'put up or shut up'.
- The electorate wants progressive politicians who look towards 2050 not back to 1950.
- It's time to challenge the stereotype of the typical 'pale, male, stale' politician. On average across all Parliaments, two thirds of chambers are populated by middle-aged white men. Statistically, this demographic makes up about 10 percent of the population. We need waves of quality leaders who reflect the diversity of our community to step up and run.
- There are so many opportunities to stand for public office with a whopping 7,400 potential vacancies come election time across the nation. This includes 537 local government bodies in Australia comprising about 6,600 elected Councillors; just over 600 positions at the various Upper and Lower Houses of State and Territory Governments (ACT and NT have no Upper House); and Federal Parliament with 151 seats in the House of Representatives and 76 in the Senate.

Now that you have the ultimate guide on how to plan and deliver a successful campaign, written specifically for an Australian audience, it is the perfect time to run. With this guide, you can get organised, get going and get elected!

PART ONE

DECIDE



Key questions to consider

> *Tell me what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*
>
> —Mary Oliver, The Summer Day

Do you want to make a positive difference in your community and change things with which you disagree? Maybe now is the time to fulfil that nagging ambition to consider your calling to politics as a way to drive reform on the issues you care about.

If you are reading this, there's a fair chance you are curious about getting elected. But are you really ready to run? Maybe you are unsure how to actually join the dots from your dream to the reality.

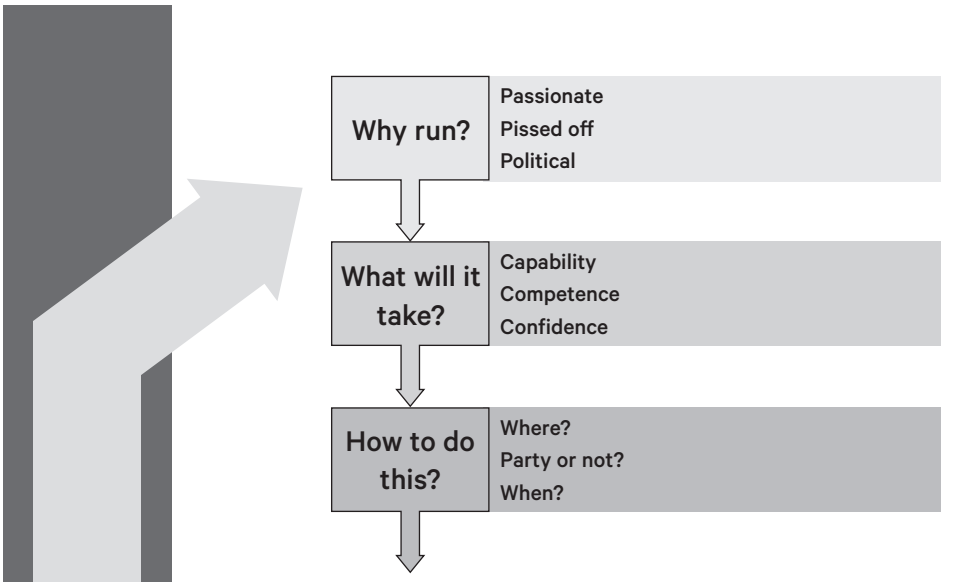


Figure 1: What to consider when deciding to run for public office

Perhaps you are asking yourself questions like:

- Where do I start?
- Do I actually have the skills and competence to be a politician?

- How do I connect and engage with my community and let them know I am running?
- Should I give it a crack at the local council level, state or even at a federal level?
- Should I run as an independent, with a micro party or with one of the major parties?
- In what ward or seat should I stand to maximise my chance of winning?
- What policies will form my platforms?
- Is the time right for me to plunge into this?
- Why do I *really* want to be a politician?
- Would I have a fighting chance against the incumbent or the other competitors?
- What sort of dirt would opponents toss on me, and is my skin thick enough for that?
- Could I actually do this job (physically and mentally)?
- If I did run, could I pull together a team that would work on the campaign and how do I inspire volunteers to join?
- Am I the best candidate or should I support someone else to win?
- How do I go about running a successful campaign?
- How do I avoid the pitfalls that could damage my campaign—especially the ones I've never thought about?
- Am I in this to win? Or is my aim to agitate as an activist and disrupt my opponents' campaign?

And then there are the practical aspects to consider:

- How do I develop my message to cut through the noise from competitors?
- How do I develop procedures and policies and avoid mistakes?
- What on earth is a 'corflute'?
- How can I run an effective social media campaign?
- What do I do about preferencing the other candidates?
- How much time will it take and can I afford the time off work (and costs)?

- What about Internet trolls and haters? How do I manage aggression from people?
- I hate asking people for money but how else can I raise funds for my campaign?
- Is it possible to have some fun while on the campaign trail?
- What if I do get elected? *Faaaar out!*

First things first: make the decision

If you are asking yourself these questions, you are not alone as many new candidates find themselves in this position. Rest assured, you will find the answers within these pages. As you work your way through this guide, you will learn how to avoid the common pitfalls of new campaigners for public office. Along the way you will learn a lot about yourself. You will gain confidence and build your communication skills. All this will enhance your chances of being successfully elected.

Why run?

> *The political process defines and can change our country fundamentally and there's no greater honour than to be part of it and to represent your community.*
>
> —Andrew Wilkie, MP

If you come from a diverse background and can genuinely speak on behalf of communities that traditionally have lacked a voice in government, then you are needed as a politician. In 2018, 78 percent of federal cabinet ministers were male and 79 percent were from an Anglo-Celtic background. Additionally, 70 percent of members of parliament were between 40 and 60 years of age. At the time, most of the State Parliaments weren't much better. South Australia was the worst with 67 percent male representatives and NSW had 61 percent. Victoria had improved with 41 percent of Victoria's parliamentarians being women following the November 2018 election. Tasmania and the two Territories were close to parity.[1]

Put simply: politics matters

The footprint of politics is inescapable in our daily lives. Politicians make decisions that affect us all, even if we are not aware of it. Today, somewhere across Australia, it is likely that in the chambers of your local council, in the Green (Lower House) or Red (Upper House) chambers of State and Territory Parliaments or in Parliament House in Canberra, some politician is making a decision that could impact on your life.

If you have a residence—own a home or rent—you are consigned to a ward, a seat, a division and an electorate. As a citizen, you are assigned one or more local councillors, state members and a federal member, who have theoretically been elected to represent your needs and interests. All citizens are represented by senators from their state or territory and most states also have upper house representatives from their Parliament (except for Queensland and the two Territories).

Political influence impacts your daily life. It starts when you walk along a footpath managed by your local council. It continues as you drive to work along a state government-managed road while adhering to road rules. It makes its way into your playground conversations as you raise concerns about a lack of funding for your child's primary school. It impacts ambulance waiting times at your local health service due to a lack of federal funding, and how our nation manages carbon pollution and how much GST is added to the goods and services you purchase each week.

If you care enough about these and other issues, and if you're clever, compassionate and competent, it's possible that you could stand for election to public office and work hard to make things better. It's even possible that you are cut out to be a noble politician.

How to make the impossible, possible

> *Politics is the art of making possible what seems to be impossible.*
>
> —Hilary Rodham Clinton

You can either sit on the sidelines or 'get your activist on'

If you want to run for politics you must have the desire to change what is, a measure of competence, and the confidence that you can do it. Here are five reasons to consider why you could do it:

1. **It is possible to change things**. If you want to influence the services being delivered from your local council; lobby for changes in health and education at the state government level; or contribute to effective changes in our national legislation at a federal level, then you have to be 'at the table' to be part of political decision making.

2. **It is possible to knock off the incumbent** even if they are 'rusted on' and have been there for ever. If you are tired of your local politician 'doing nothing' or feeling they consistently fail to represent your needs and interests, then you could challenge them—as soon as possible. You might even beat them.

3. **It is possible to grow** by running a campaign and being an activist on the issues you care about. You will learn new skills like public speaking and build your reputation as a community leader. This is an incredible opportunity for personal development, and by stepping up, you are a winner already.

4. **It is possible to serve your community.** When elected, you have the power and access to resources to serve your constituents in a unique way that is unavailable to ordinary citizens. This can make a real difference in people's lives. It is a noble way of helping others.

5. **It is possible to be a diverse representative**. As a community activist from a diverse background, you can represent the voices of groups of people and communities who are under-represented in our councils and parliaments. This includes women, young adults, people with a disability, members of the LGBTIQ community and citizens with a migrant or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

Be clear on your motivation

Successful marathon runners refer to a specific inspiration or motivation to complete a gruelling race. Similarly, once your reason for standing for office is articulated, it will help keep you motivated and focused through the months and years of campaigning.

Do you want to change something you are passionate about? Or do you want to role-model leadership for your community as a woman, young person or Aboriginal? Australia needs more women in politics. According to the Inter Parliamentary Union, Australia ranks 50th in the world for female representation, sandwiched between the Philippines and South Sudan, and we are dropping further down the ranks every few years.[2]

Maybe the motivation comes because you are tired of being ignored by your local representative and feeling that no matter how often you complain or meet with your local Member or Councillor, nothing changes. Perhaps you are uninspired by your representative's leadership. Or maybe you are frustrated by the shouting from the far right or far left that allows little room for voices of the progressive centre. Perhaps you are thinking it's time 'someone' held our political leaders accountable for their decisions and challenged the duopoly of debate of the two major parties.

While there are plenty of ways individuals can make a difference, the one sure way to leave a lasting legacy for your community, state or nation is through political service. Particularly, if you have a progressive mindset that desires a future where an equitable and fair democracy represents the 'silent majority' and the needs, hopes and dreams of ordinary people; and a future where the powerful and elite political class just might have to let go of their iron-clad grip on privilege.

Understand your WHY

> *Your WHY is the purpose, cause or belief that inspires you.*
>
> —Simon Sinek

Every great endeavour begins with a WHY. Simon Sinek, a best-selling author and motivational speaker, says the reason behind your WHY will help you wake up inspired and come home fulfilled. As a candidate, your WHY must make you so hungry for public office that it drives you to get elected and win—Every. Single. Day. It's your 'cause', grounded in your convictions, underpinned by your values and informed by your principles. It's the WHY behind running for office.

Let's consider some typical inspiration behind why people run for public office.

First, people can be annoyed or **pissed off** that the government or local council (or the public service ruled by the laws and policies of government) has done something or is planning to do something with which they disagree. If you are elected, you pledge to change this.

Second, people can be **passionate** about a cause they feel is not getting enough 'air time' or being ignored by their representatives. If you are elected, you pledge to give more resources to prosecute the agenda for this cause.

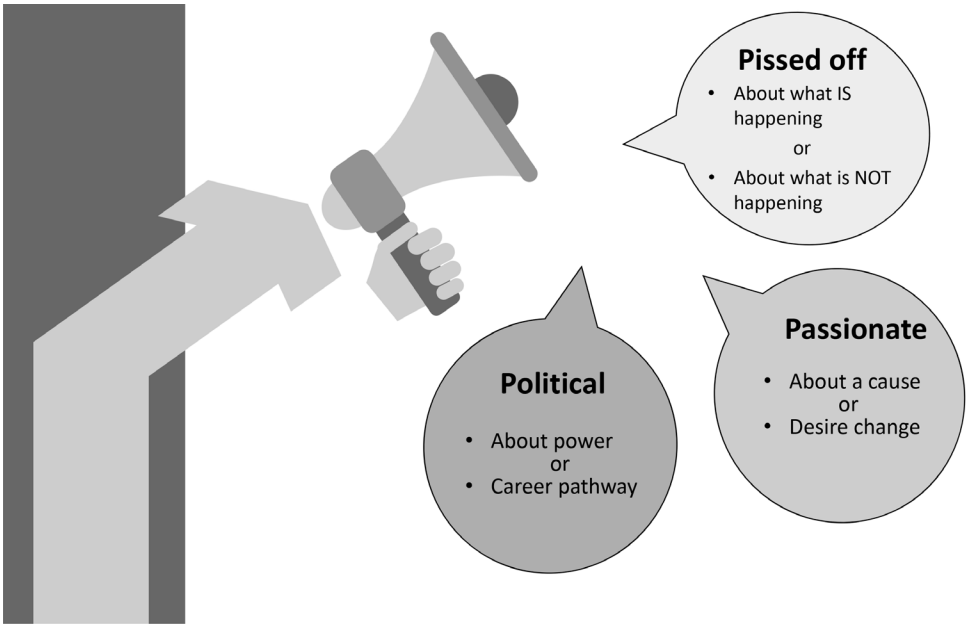


Figure 2: The 3 Ps candidates cite for considering politics

Third, people may be interested in **politics** as a career and enjoy being political. They may like the 'cut and thrust' of political debate, the power, privilege and publicity that comes with the role or they may simply see it as an effective way to make a difference.

It may be a mix of pissed off/passion/politics that determines your WHY, purpose, cause or belief. When you can articulate your WHY, it will activate you to stand. Then it becomes the fuel that inspires you every day of your campaign race to be a successful candidate.

CASE STUDY

The 3Ps and how they activated three candidates

1. When a candidate is **pissed off** about something

   Jacqui Lambie, Senator for Tasmania from 2014–2017 (and re-elected in 2019) began her career by serving in the Australian army for 11 years. She was medically discharged with a chronic back injury. She often talks of her physical and mental battle to recover from her injury and her fight for compensation from Veterans Affairs. She told a reporter in 2015, 'I just couldn't believe that a Government Department could operate the way Veterans Affairs did and get away with it. So that's what got me interested in politics.'[3]

2. When a candidate is **passionate** about a cause

   Andrew Wilkie, Independent MP for the Tasmanian Division of Clark (previously Denison), is a strong advocate for poker machine reform. He says that of the 600,000 Australians who play poker machines weekly, 15 percent are gambling addicts, and they lose almost $5 billion a year. He has pushed for gambling donation reform saying, 'Like tobacco industry donations, it's entirely unethical for political parties to accept close to $1 million in donations from people who profit from the misery of problem gamblers'.[4]

3. When a candidate is keen on **politics** as a career choice or as a way to better serve their community, state or nation.

   Rebekha Sharkie, elected Federal Member for the South Australian seat of Mayo in 2016 and again at a by-election in 2018, had previously worked as a political staffer to several liberal politicians before deciding to stand for office with a micro party. With years of first-hand experience as a volunteer with the South Australian Liberal Party, Rebekha was frustrated that her Federal Member was not delivering what she wanted for her community. So she decided to run herself. In an interview with Rebekha, I asked her to describe her motivation:

   > 'After years of seeing my region being taken for granted, constantly being overlooked for infrastructure investment and being stonewalled on important issues, I became convinced our electorate needed to be more marginal. We were a 'safe'

blue seat and the Liberals used that fact to put in a staffer they had groomed for the role rather than a local. Our community didn't thrive as it should, even when that Liberal MP was selected for the Ministry. There was an alignment of factors that led me to put my hand up as a candidate but, essentially, I decided to be the change I wanted for my community. Fortunately for me, my community was ready for change, and I am so proud and grateful that I was given the opportunity to represent it.'

Rebekha was re-elected for the seat of Mayo in 2019.

Democracy 101

Before delving deeper into this guide, let's take a quick look at some brief facts about Australian democracy:[5]

- The Australian nation/Commonwealth of Australia was created in 1901 when six former British colonies—now Australia's six states—agreed to join together.
- Australia is a representative democracy. In this political system, eligible people vote for candidates to carry out the business of governing on their behalf. Australia's system of government (institutions and practices) reflect British and North American traditions combined in a way that is uniquely Australian.
- The Australian democracy has, at its heart, the following core defining values:
    - Freedom of election and being elected.
    - Freedom of assembly and political participation.
    - Freedom of speech, expression and religious belief.
    - Rule of law.
    - Other basic human rights.
- There is a total of nine parliaments across Australia. One Federal (or National) Parliament, located in Canberra, six State Parliaments and two Territory Legislative Assemblies located in the capital cities of

each State or Territory. Representatives at each level are selected through regular and frequent popular elections.

- In elections, the vast majority of Australian citizens who are 18 years and over have the right to vote (that's more than 16 million Australians). The exceptions:
    - are of unsound mind.
    - are serving prison sentences of three years or more.
    - have been convicted of treason and not pardoned.
    - are not specifically registered as 'itinerant voters' and have not lived at an address for one month.
    - are living overseas long term and with no intention of returning to Australia.
- Voting is compulsory in Australia for all enrolled citizens over the age of 18 years at federal, state and most local government elections. Failure to vote at a federal election without a valid and sufficient reason cops a $20 penalty. The fines vary from State to State, from $55 in NSW to $79 in Victoria.

Standing for election

Candidates in federal elections must be 18 years of age, Australian citizens and eligible voters. There is no requirement that candidates should live in the electorate that they wish to contest, but this may differ for state and local government elections.

Section 44 of the Constitution of Australia, disqualifies the following people from nominating as candidates:[6]

- Citizens and subjects of a foreign power.
- Anyone convicted of an offence punishable by a sentence of 12 months or more.
- Undischarged bankrupts.
- Anyone holding an office of profit under the Crown.
- Anyone with a pecuniary interest in an agreement with the Commonwealth Public Service (except members of incorporated companies with 25 people or more).

The job description: would you apply for this role?

WANTED

Seeking a political candidate.
Opportunities now open.

Are you looking for an exciting public sector job where you can make a positive difference? If you have a strong desire to leave a positive legacy, and have an unwavering conviction in your belief that you can do a better job than the current employee, then this could be the career for you.

In our Australian office, there are three entry levels for this role: Councillor and State or Federal Member of Parliament. The office is located in your electorate but may require successful candidates to relocate to State Parliament House or Canberra for approximately half the year.

OUR CLIENT

The Australian people are governed at three levels from Local Government, State or Territory and Federal. Our nation's success is driven by a passionate team of visionary leaders who strive to make their clients (the Australian people) prosperous, happy and safe. Your constituents are great to work with and mostly leave you alone to do your task. Feedback is delivered spasmodically through the ballot box and can be ruthless if you fail to deliver on your promises and expectations of the role.

THE ROLE

- Reporting to your constituents: you will help drive a strategic direction for the Council, the State or Nation. You will lead performance through the development and guidance of a team of fellow politicians while providing a results-driven and safe working environment that promotes open communication and empowerment across all levels. In addition, you will manage key relationships with stakeholders to ensuring advocacy of your constituents' needs and avoid conflicts of interests.
- You must apply good governance at all levels or severe penalties apply.
- Your daily workload is significant but will vary depending on what areas, issues or portfolios you are interested in and the level of responsibility you desire. There are opportunities for promotion to Mayor, Minister, Premier and, ultimately, Prime Minster depending on the location you choose for the role.
- This role enables you to make an extraordinary difference in your community. There are plenty of perks in this job including payment, variety, potential career progression and opportunities to meet some incredible people.

YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

You will have a track record as an inspiring leader who operates from a place of integrity, compassion and honesty. You will demonstrate excellent communication skills and confidence in your ability to change the world for the better. Your relationship building skills will be second to none and you may require a thick skin as well as the political savvy to adapt to an ever-changing political environment. Innovative thinking is crucial, and you'll also need to enjoy operating in a competitive workplace with long days. You will have an appreciation for good manners, respect for all citizens and the ability to work hard is essential.

You can view more on the issues impacting this role at @twitter #auspol

TO APPLY

To take advantage of this challenging and varied opportunity, please submit your application to the Australian people explaining why you would like their vote. The selection committee is vast and comprises adult citizens. You must convince them why they should put their confidence in you. Please note that when applying for this role, ensure you have accurately met all requirements under the relevant Act and the Australian Constitution.

APPLICATIONS ONGOING

Applications being called for the following positions:

- Apply to the 546 Local Councils across Australia and join 6,600 other Councillors.
- Apply to residents of the six States and two Territories to be an MP: New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the Northern Territory.
- Apply to residents of the 151 seats in the Australia Federal Parliament to join the 151 members of the House of Representatives or the 76 members of the Senate.

[Note: The Australia people are equal opportunity employers and all diverse applications from various cultural backgrounds, gender, political parties or independents will be considered favourably].

Could you do it?

OK, so candidacy interests you. But you're unsure if you have the background, skills or resources to run. Where do you start?

There are three important questions to ask yourself as part of the decision-making stage:

1. Am I convinced I really want to do this job?
2. Am I competent to do this?
3. Have I got the confidence to do this job?

Am I convinced I really want to do this job?

Campaigning can be brutal. The public scrutiny is intense and physical stamina is required for the relentless days on the campaign trail, constant engagement and physical effort. It is like training for a marathon. Only you can decide if your WHY is enough to sustain you. Talking to others about the role and reading inspiring stories or viewing campaign videos from others can assist.

Would you vote for yourself? Are you confident that you are a vote-worthy candidate? Do you believe that the actions you would take as a politician would make a positive difference in your community? If your message for change inspires you first, then it will inspire others. Test it out on family and friends too. If you can't convince yourself that you are a leader worth following, then it will be a big ask to try to convince others.

If you are curious about the job, consider seeing how it works first hand. If you are thinking about running for local government, attend a council meeting to observe what goes on to help you better understand the role. Similarly, if it is state or federal government that interests you, take a trip to your parliament in your capital city or visit Canberra and sit in the public gallery to observe your politicians at work. Alternatively, tune into ABC on the TV or radio to watch or listen to parliamentary debates in real time.

You need to do your job research. Here's some ways you can research the job of being a politician:

- Is there a local, state or federal politician that you admire? Consider contacting them about their job—particularly those holding office at the level in which you are interested. Explore why they do it and ask about the best (and worst) parts of the role. You may be pleasantly surprised by how politicians are willing to chat about what drives them.
- Read some political memoirs of leaders you find inspiring.
- Catch up on political documentaries. Some good ones include *Keating*, *Labor in Power*, *The Killing Season*, *Rats in the Ranks*, *The Howard Years*, *Grassroots* and *Hawke: The Larrikin and the Leader*. If you like fictional political drama perhaps watch *West Wing* or *Borgen*, over *House of Cards*.
- Do you have any reputational vulnerabilities that could be exploited to your embarrassment by a competitor? Consider aspects of your history that could be used against you like past business dealings, relationships or even unfortunate social media postings. Make up a 'dirt file' on yourself (and family members) and assess if it is possible for you to address these and neutralise the risk of attack. When considering any identified vulnerabilities, try to reframe potential negatives with your own narrative rather than leaving things wide open for a competitor candidate to use to discredit you. If it can't be addressed and forgiven, consider the risk of running and your vulnerability to ongoing attack.

Am I competent to do this?

The answer is probably yes. But before you make your decision, it is useful to understand the skills and experience you bring to the role; this is your competency. With a review, you can identify what you still need to learn and then seek assistance from others who are skilled and capable.

Start with a review and audit of your skillset by drawing up your own **Why Me?** inventory. This involves doing an audit on personal attributes that would make you a suitable candidate for office.



Skill audit review:

- What skills and experience do you have with community involvement and employment?
- What are your formal qualifications and learnings from the 'school of hard knocks'?
- Do you have experience in driving change and inspiring others?
- How broad are your networks and relationships (supporters, volunteers, possible endorsements, potential funders), and can you call on others to help your campaign?
- What is your level of knowledge of the electorate, the issues, and how government and advocacy work?
- Can you access useful resources like funding and skilled supporters?
- How strong is your physical and mental stamina?
- Do you like people, and could you respectfully work with those you don't like?
- Are you able to 'get out there' and present yourself to others everyday while pitching your message in an inspiring way?
- Are you well known in your electorate? For example, it can help if you have a solid community profile as a musician, sports person, football player, agri-politician or media celebrity.
- Do you have the courage to hold your head above the parapet and give it a crack?
- Are you hungry to win?
- In practice, are you prepared to take office if you are successful?
- Are you resilient enough to cope if you don't get elected?
- And lastly, are you eligible to stand for office and enrolled to vote?[7]

Have I got the confidence to do this job?

If you doubt your ability to do the job, I encourage you to take a look around your local council chamber or state parliament—you can probably do the job better than some of them. Alternatively, do an internet search on the latest scandal erupting from Canberra. Chances are you will see some rather ineffective politicians or ones with which you vehemently disagree.

Despite your skills and competence you may fear being called a fraud. This self-doubt is often referred to as 'Impostor Syndrome'. According to an article in Forbes Magazine, up to 70 percent of people have suffered from Imposter Syndrome at some point.[8] Indeed, in an article on Overcoming Impostor Syndrome, the Harvard Business Review points out that high achieving, highly successful people often suffer from it, with researchers linking it to 'perfectionism, especially in women and among academics'.[9] Accept it as a common fear; address it and move on.

Other research shows that women have less confidence in their own abilities to run for office, even when they have a successful track record in community activism or high personal and professional skills.[10] This might be one of the reasons why Australian women are under-represented at all levels of government. Read up on how to overcome this, or hire a coach to build your confidence.

Consider where you will stand for office

It's time to decide what level of government attracts you to stand for office.

Eligible Australian candidates can stand for election to public office at three levels. You could be an office holder and representative in federal, state or territory and local governments. Where will you make your run for public office? At the Senate, the House of Representatives, the Upper House (except for Northern Territory, ACT, Queensland), the Lower House or Local Council? Independent candidates have successfully been elected to all levels.

Levels of Government in Australia

1. Commonwealth of Australia Federal Parliament elections

A: House of Representatives (also known as the Lower House)

Elections for the House of Representatives decide which elected representatives will form the national government. There are 151 House of Representatives seats.

Following an election, usually the Australian Labor Party or the Coalition (a formal agreement between the Liberal Party and the National Party) forms government. However, if neither have a majority, it will seek to gain the support of elected representatives from micro parties or independent members to form a minority government (often referred to as 'the cross bench').

House of Representatives elections must be held at least every three years. They are usually held more frequently at the request of the Prime Minister for the Governor-General to 'dissolve' the House. Each Member of the House is elected from a different geographical region called an 'electorate'. Each Member represents on average 150,000 citizens and 100,000 voters.

B: Senate elections

Senate elections determine who sits in the Upper House in the Commonwealth Parliament. Senators represent States or Territories. This is also known as the Upper House or House of Review. Each state has twelve senators and two each from the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory making 76 senators in total.

2. State or Territory Parliament

There is a mix of Lower House and Single House Parliaments, which are elected every three or four years. Some of the States and Territories operate on a fixed term of three or four years while others are decided by the Premier.

3. Local Government

Local Government is known as the third tier of government. There are approximately 537 municipalities across Australia, often called Local Councils or Shires. Each State and Territory has a range of

electoral systems in place to elect Local Councillors, except for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) where local government issues are managed by the ACT Government. Some councils have direct election for the Mayor, where in others, the Mayor is elected by peers and fellow Councillors.

According to the Australian Local Government Association, there are around 537 local government bodies in Australia of which roughly 60–70 percent are regional/rural comprising about 6,600 elected Councillors with an average of just under 10 Councillors per Council.[11] The number of elected Councillors may range from five to 14 per Council, and there can be one to five Councillors per Ward.

Each State and the Northern Territory (NT) has their own independent Electoral Commission that oversees the regulatory aspects such as elections and changes to Local Government Ward or State electorate boundaries. The procedure for managing local government in each State and the NT is outlined in the applicable Local Government Act. Your campaign tactics will differ depending on whether the elections are held in person at a ballot box or through a postal vote.

State or Territory	House	Maximum time between elections	Number of members	Number of electorates
New South Wales	Legislative Assembly	4 years (fixed term)	93	93
	Legislative Council	Half (21) elected every 4 years for 8-year terms	42	1
Queensland	Legislative Assembly	4 years (fixed term)	89 (93 from 2019)	89 (93 from 2019)
Victoria	Legislative Assembly	4 years (fixed term)	88	88
	Legislative Council	4 years (fixed term)	40	8
Tasmania	House of Assembly	4 years	25	5
	Legislative Council	2 or 3 elected every year for 6-year terms	15	15
South Australia	House of Assembly	4 years (fixed term)	47	47
	Legislative Council	Half (11) elected every 4 years for 8-year terms	22	1
Western Australia	Legislative Assembly	4 years (fixed term)	59	59
	Legislative Council	4 years (fixed term)	36	6
Northern Territory	Legislative Assembly	4 years (fixed term)	25	25
Australian Capital Territory	Legislative Assembly	4 years (fixed term)	17	3

Table 1: A summary of states and territories arrangements in Australia. (NSW State Library, July 2018)

Which electorate or seat?

Once you have decided what level of government, consider where will you stand for office?

Every candidate for public office has to decide where she will eventually nominate and stand for election. That is, what *Division, electorate or seat* for a federal or state election or which *municipality/ward* (if your council has wards) for local government?

In determining where you will run, the four main factors to consider are:

1. Where are you eligible to nominate?

   Your first consideration is to ensure you are qualified to nominate for public office in the area you wish to stand. There are several legal requirements that must be met under the relevant legislation for your state or territory, regarding eligibility to nominate for federal, state and local government.

   The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and the equivalent Electoral Commissions for each state or territory will stipulate comprehensive rules that apply for eligibility of a nominating candidate.[12] An important step in your decision making is to go online to the AEC and check if you are enrolled and where you are eligible to nominate.

   Prior to an election, each Electoral Commission publishes a *Candidate Handbook* that becomes every candidate's bible. This handbook outlines and explains the steps to take to qualify as a candidate and to comply with the legal obligations before, during and after an election.

2. Do you want to win or is your campaign goal to be an 'activist'?

   When deciding where to stand for office, you may wish to consider if you are running to win or if you are standing as an activist on an issue you care about (with no intention of actually winning)?

   Sometimes candidates elect to run because they see themselves as 'community activists' who wish to stir up debate on issues like the local environment. Or maybe they want to hold the current incumbent accountable. Often someone will run as a 'dummy' candidate in order to influence preference flow towards their preferred candidate. (See *Dirty Tricks* page 170)

   If you are standing as an activist-only candidate, you still need to meet the eligibility requirements. You also need to consider that you just might win. It's not unheard of for 'dummy candidates' or 'running mates' to get elected.

3. Assess the competition.

   If you are serious about winning, it's important to consider that some competitions are more favourable to contest than others.

These factors include:

- Is the seat being contested by the incumbent or is the competition open? (For example, has the incumbent resigned?)
- How popular is the current incumbent and by what percentage votes did they last win? Your likelihood of getting elected is lower if the incumbent is running again. This is known as the 'advantage of incumbency' and can be hard to fight if the member is half decent. In elections where the incumbent elects not to stand again, the competition is often referred to as an 'open competition' and can be more favourable to new candidates.
- Alternatively, how unpopular is the current incumbent? Are they controversial or do they have a reputation as being 'lazy' or for putting party politics above addressing local issues? If there is a mood for change, your timing could be right to run. Especially if there is pent-up frustration and anger at the current representative or the party she or he represents.
- Is it a by-election? This can arise if a vacancy occurs because of the death, resignation, absence without leave, expulsion, disqualification or ineligibility of a previously elected member or councillor. Again, with no incumbent, this will be an open competition.
- Is it a new seat or ward with no previous representation (i.e. no incumbent)? Boundary redistributions by the relevant electoral commission may create a one-off chance to be a new candidate in a new seat.
- Check out 'the form' of your opponent, what 'dirty political tricks' have they employed in the past, and what funds they can call on to run a campaign. The past predicts the future. If they are 'cashed up' and 'play dirty', are you up for it?
- Is there likely to be a major issue in the campaign that could swing voters your way because you represent an opposing view to the competition? This may assist you to stand out in a crowd.
- Is the locality you are standing for viewed as conservative? Experience at both state and federal elections show that independent candidates are much more likely to win when standing in an electorate regarded as a traditionally conservative seat. That is, the seat is usually seen as a Liberal Party or National seat rather than a Labor seat.

EXERCISE SWOT your competition

Analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of your main challenger(s).

The SWOT matrix is a tried and tested business tool that can be applied to help a potential candidate better understand her competition.

Strengths and weakness are usually related to internal characteristics while opportunities and threats usually focus on the external environment. SWOT is the acronym for this tool. You can analyse your competition by considering the following:

- ***S**trengths*: What characteristics does my competition have that would be considered an advantage over others?
- ***W**eaknesses*: What are the characteristics of my competition that places him or her at a disadvantage relative to other candidates?
- ***O**pportunities*: Is there anything going on that I, as the potential candidate, could exploit to my advantage in a campaign?
- ***T**hreats*: Is there anything happening in the external environment that could cause trouble for me as the potential candidate during the campaign?

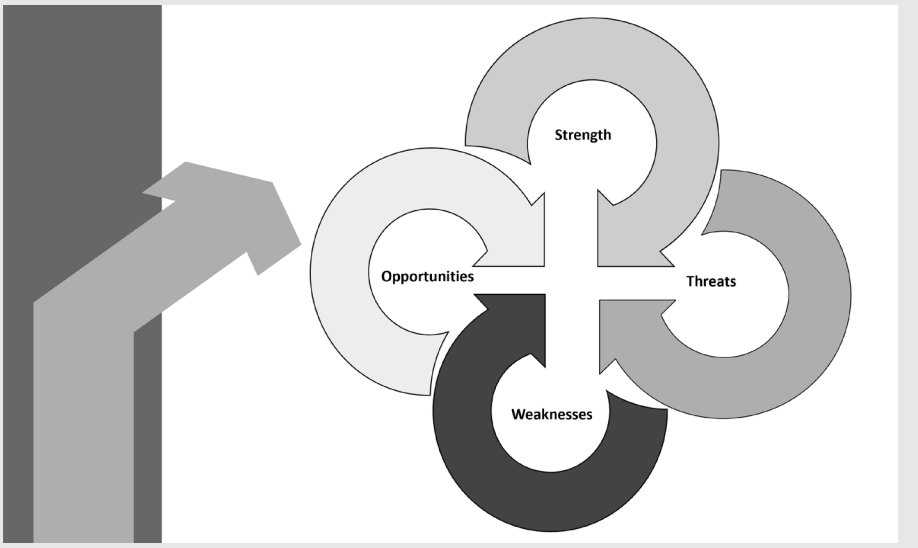


Figure 3: SWOT your competition

4. Understand your ‘magic vote number’.

   As an independent standing in a competitive field, you will need to poll a significant number of first preference votes to get propelled into office. Understanding how many votes you need to get elected can be a useful mathematical exercise to do at this stage of your decision making. This ‘magic vote number’ will become one of your campaign goals. It is a powerful motivation for your team and informs your voter engagement strategy, enabling you to focus your effort where it will count.

   The website of your relevant electoral authority will have historical data on the booth-by-booth voting results in your seat from the previous state and federal elections. Bookmark this site and study it to assess the number of first preference votes you will need to reach the magic vote number you require to be successfully elected.

   By analysing voting changes across the years for the major parties, you will understand the ‘swing’ that may be required in order for you to win the seat. From this data, you can estimate the number of first preference votes you need to source to get elected.

   A psephologist is someone who studies elections. Let’s hear from Australia’s favourite psephologist, Antony Green—an election analyst with the ABC. When writing about independents running for the 2019 Federal Election, Green said, *‘Winning a safe seat requires an independent to poll a minimum of 20 percent, more likely 25–33 percent to get into second place. Success from there requires strong flows of preferences from other parties*’.[13]

   For example, when there is an average of 100,000 voters per federal electorate, this equates to a magic vote number of about 25,000–30,000 first preference votes an independent must secure to have a chance of winning an election.

Get swinging

The ‘swing’ is the mathematical assessment of what is required for that seat to change hands at the next election. It is usually calculated on a two-party-preferred (TPP) basis where the electoral commission, that manages the counting for each state, allocates preferences to the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and Liberal/National Coalition (Coalition) candidates. In cases where either of the final two candidates are not from the ALP or the Coalition, the

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) calls this a 'non classic' seat and the votes are conducted for a two-candidate-preferred (TCP) count.

Knowing the swing required helps you calculate if you are in a 'safe' seat or a marginal one. Traditionally, marginal seats are more competitive to contest for independently minded candidates. However, there are plenty of 'David vs Goliath' examples of so-called 'safe seats' being overturned in election upsets.

The Australian Electoral Commission classifies seats as:

- Marginal (M): when a leading party receives less than 56 percent of the TPP vote.
- Fairly Safe (FS): when a leading party receives between 56–60 percent of the TPP vote.
- Safe (S): when a leading party receives more than 60 percent of the TPP vote.

Party or independent?

Will you join a party or run as an independent?

The voting patterns of Australians can be compared to the grocery shopping habits of Australians. In the past, people traditionally shopped at either at Coles or Woolworths. Increasingly, shoppers are no longer loyal to just one supermarket chain. Research has found that more than three quarters of Australians literally 'shop around' to buy their groceries over a four-week period.[14] Similarly, Australian voters are prepared to 'shop around' when it comes to voting for their local representative. Rather than consistently voting for the same major party at every election, Australians are ditching loyal habits and increasingly voting for independents and candidates from micro parties at both a state and federal level.

More often, voters are seeking to elect someone who isn't necessarily from an employment background of law, union organisation or as a political staffer—which pretty much describes the majority of Australian politicians at a state and federal level.

Which party?

> *It's hard to be an independent candidate and an independent member of parliament but that is far outweighed by the ability to follow your conscience and genuinely represent your community in every matter.*
>
> —Andrew Wilkie, MP

Part of your decision will be whether you join a political party, and if so, which one?

In Federal Parliament, the main parties in the House of Representatives are the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party of Australia and the Nationals (with the last two forming the Coalition) as well as the smaller Australian Greens. There are also many micro parties. A full list is available from the Australian Electoral Commission website—there are dozens from which to take your pick. [15]

In terms of the political spectrum in Australia, people often talk about whether a party is 'right wing' or 'left wing'. When reference is made to the 'right wing', it usually refers to a conservative style of thinking such as a belief in limited government intervention in the 'free market'. These views are often expressed by the Liberal Party and the National Party. There is a number of micro parties that also identify with the 'conservative right'.

'Left wing' parties often claim they offer more 'socially progressive' thinking and may promote greater government intervention in issue like welfare, business obligations and on social justice issues and the environment. This includes the ALP, the Greens and a range of micro parties. Many micro parties also aim to position themselves in the centre of Australian politics.

You probably have a pretty good understanding of where your political beliefs sit. If you are considering joining a party, explore how your beliefs and views compare to the policies and decisions made by the political party you are seeking to join. The ABC Vote Compass is a handy online tool developed by political scientists to assist Australian voters to explore how their personal and political views align with those of candidates. [16]

The toughest element in running as a member of a political party is likely to be the battle to gain pre-selection as the nominated candidate. Many people describe this process as a 'bruising' experience, particularly when the competition is tough. Other times, it may not be a concern simply because no one else wants the job.

Extract from *The Wife Drought*, Annabel Crabb[17]

'The degree of difficulty involved in getting pre-selection as a candidate for a major party ranges from tricky to diabolically difficult, depending on which seat you're going for. If you're contesting a seat your party deems is unwinnable, especially in a time of rampant team despair, it can be refreshingly easy. If you're after a safe seat in a party that is in government or about to be, you are almost certainly in for a long and potentially bruising campaign. It's like trying to get a seat on the ferry in a storm. Anyone can get a wet seat. But getting a dry one involves foresight, early arrival and sharp elbows.'

Most political parties have membership rules on the length of time you need to be a paid-up member before you can run for pre-selection for state or federal elections. It can be difficult to decide to run for a party on a whim when you may first need to spend years building alliances and with correct power factions and sponsorship of decision-makers in the pre-selection committee. This time lag will need to be factored in a long-term plan to stand as a candidate for a major party.

It's not uncommon to hear stories from unsuccessful female candidates who have missed out on pre-selection because they were single, divorced, had young children or 'didn't suit the party profile'. Others failed to pass the hurdle of having the 'right' mentor or lacked membership of the 'right' faction in order to curry favour with the key decision makers, affecting their choice for pre-selection. The data shows it can also be harder to win pre-selection if you are from a minority cultural background in some parties. For example, following the 2019 federal election, women made up just 23 percent of Liberals in Federal Parliament. The Australian Labor Party set quotas for women in pre-selection in 1995 with a goal of gender equality in 2025. In 2019, the percentage of ALP women in Federal Parliament was 47.

According to research by *The Guardian Australia* on diversity in Australia's 45th Federal Parliament, 23 percent of Australians were from a non-English

speaking background. This diversity drops to six percent in the House of Representatives and 14 percent in the Senate when considering politicians who were born in non-English speaking countries and those who were born in Australia of parents born in non-English speaking countries.

You could stand with a micro party

Rebekha Sharkie's journey into politics reflects her dissatisfaction with her previous experience of being a member of a major party. Rebekha had worked as political staffer to several Liberal politicians before putting her hand up to run for the Liberal party in the safe seat of Schubert in 2014. She has successfully contested three campaigns (2016, 2018, and 2019) and tells her story when interviewed for this guide.

'At the time, I was told I would need the blessing of the then Liberal power-brokers, Christopher Pyne and Cory Bernardi, before seeking pre-selection. This appalled me and motivated me to quit the party. Some years and a career change later, I signed up as a volunteer for the Nick Xenophon Team NXT—a micro party that had recently formed in South Australia. Then in 2016, I decided to run for office as a candidate for NXT in Mayo. I eventually won the seat from Liberal MP Jamie Briggs.'

In 2018, Rebekha had to resign from Parliament as part of the Australian parliamentary eligibility crisis. 'I successfully recontested the Mayo by-election in July 2018, this time for the renamed NXT team Centre Alliance and was once more privileged to return to Parliament as the representative for Mayo.'

You could run as an independent

Independent candidates are not affiliated to any political party and have a long history as standing as candidates in Australia. Most elections since federation in 1901 have had at least one independent standing. In Local Government, it is common for candidates not affiliated with any political party to stand for election.

Many candidates run for office as independents as they feel that neither of the major or micro parties adequately represent their views on society, economics or the environment.

Independent candidates may hold views in the centre of the traditional left and right views; to the extreme of either the left or the right; or they may be disillusioned politicians who have resigned from their previous party but remain in, or return to, Parliament (like Rob Oakeshott and Tony Windsor—

independents who held the balance of power federally from 2010–2013). Depending on the issues of the electorate, a candidate may run as an independent to freely advocate for a policy position that is not represented by other candidates affiliated with a political party.

Level/ State	VIC	NSW	QLD	TAS	SA	WA	NT	ACT	AUS.
Federal Senate	None of 12	None of 12	2 of 12	1 of 12	3 of 12	None of 12	None of 2	None of 2	6 of 76
Federal House of Representatives	1 of 38	1 of 47	1 of 30	1 of 5	1 of 10	None of 16	None of 2	None of 3	5 of 151
State Upper House (Council)	10 of 40	8 of 42	N/A	9 of 15	3 of 22	5 of 36	N/A	N/A	35 of 155
State Lower House (Assembly)	3 of 88	6 of 93	6 of 93	None of 25	3 of 47	None of 59	7 of 25	None of 25	25 of 455

Table 2: Distribution of Australian MPs who are independent or affiliated with a micro political party as of July 2019 (Not affiliated with a major party of Liberals, ALP, Nationals or Greens)

Make the decision

In the end, only *you* can weigh up the pros and cons for standing with a party or as an independent. This guide will provide useful tips, no matter what you decide.

When? Now or later?

Is there ever a good time to stand for office? Well, that depends.

'Don't wait for some moment where everything falls into place and you know with 1000% certainty that this is the right time to do it, because that perfect epiphany is probably not going to happen. If you're feeling, "Oh, but I'm still a bit nervous," nervousness is a good thing. That means you are going to be on your toes and that you've got a healthy sense of pressure. Don't wait for that perfect moment because that perfect moment won't come. You just need to go on raw passion and do it.' (Ali Cupper, Independent MP Victorian Parliament, elected 2018)

Demands of the role

There is no doubt that running as a candidate for public office will take significant time and money as well as draw on your emotional and physical energy. Campaigns are exhausting but they always have an end date—election day. Therefore, you also need to consider that if you get elected, the demands of office can be significant.

For state and federal politicians, being the local member is a full-time job with studies showing the average Federal politician working six days a week, on weekends and attending evening events. Many complain of the lack of work/life balance, which can be particularly hard for politicians with young families—both men and women.

Similarly, the role can be demanding for councillors if they have other employment. A survey of Victorian Councillors found that the majority of councillors were aged over 46 and that almost 50 percent of women councillors had caring responsibilities compared to less than 30 percent of male councillors. Approximately two-thirds of Councillors said they spent between 11–30 hours on Councillor duties in addition to other employment. When Councillors were elected as Mayor, most found the role required full time service.[18]

CASE STUDY

Anna Burke, MP (1998–2016)

The accidental Member of Parliament: Be prepared because you never know if you might just win

Sometimes the unlikeliest of circumstances can mean the timing is right, and it favours those who are prepared. Anna Burke was a Member for Chisholm over a 17-year period as a Member of Parliament. She has described herself as the accidental MP.

Prior to running for office in 1997, Anna was a trade union official and HR manager when she was pre-selected by the Labor Party to contest the suburban seat in Melbourne's south east. At the time, Chisholm was held by the high-profile Liberal Health Minister Michael Wooldridge on a comfortable margin.

Annabel Crabb, political journalist interviewed Anna Burke and her husband Steve Burgess and described what happened next.

'There wasn't much competition for the pre-selection. 'It's all right,' Burke said to her husband, Stephen Burgess, 'I can't win'. 'I think it's fair to say that her noble ambition was to knock a couple of percent off his margin and make him really sweat for it', remembers Burgess. 'But then Wooldridge leapfrogged to the safer seat of Casey and all of a sudden Anna Burke was a chance.'

Anna went on to win the seat. In all, she won five elections and held the role of Speaker and Deputy Speaker for the Australian House of Representatives before retiring at the 2016 elections. 'I did think I'd be a one-termer. I never thought I'd last long enough to actually end up with a portrait in the place,' says Anna.

What to consider regarding timing

Prospective politicians have many issues to consider when deciding the optimal time to run for office.

If you are unsure when to run, consider the impact running for office could have on the following:

- Will standing for office enhance or be detrimental to your career right now?
- If you run your own business or are full-time employed, are you able to dedicate time to your campaign during work hours? Note here that time on the campaign trail may require weeks and months away from your 'day job'.
- How will the time imposition of running a campaign impact on your family life and caring responsibilities? And what if you get elected?
- How strong is your current financial situation? Spending time away from paid work on a campaign can create an 'opportunity cost' in terms of lost income if you need to put your employment to one side while running a campaign. It can also affect mortgage repayments.
- Are you prepared for the impact on your lifestyle? Running a campaign means much less time available for recreational and leisure interests.

- Before you start campaigning, do you need to 'skill up' in areas such as public speaking and media presentation, and if so, how much time will it take to be 'campaign ready'?
- Federal and State MPs are paid well, most Councillors are not. If you were to get elected, how will this role impact on your income?
- If you got elected: is your health up to the inevitable stress of office, the long hours and considerable travel?
- Politics can be tough: are you emotionally ready to deal with the 'barbs and arrows' of public office?

CASE STUDY

Ruth McGowan, OAM

Sometimes you just have to jump in and run.

I first ran for politics because I saw Local Government as a great place to 'think globally and act locally'.

It all started in 2006, when for the first time I visited the chamber of my local Council. As a disgruntled resident, I was speaking on behalf of my community against an unsuitable planning application. As I stood to speak, I looked at the decision makers in front of me. Unbelievably, every one of the nine councillors was male. So was the CEO and the four Directors. The chamber was a sea of grey suits. Fourteen men, all making decisions on my community's future and not a woman in sight.

With forceful arguments in the chamber that evening, our community won that planning battle. A few weeks later, I bumped into the Mayor down the street and asked him, 'How can you blokes make good decisions for our community when there are no women councillors?' His reply galvanised me, 'We want more women councillors, but they never stand'. I decided then, that at my next Local Government elections, I would 'lean in' and stand for Council. I would 'be the change' I wanted to see in my community.

At the next election, I nominated, campaigned hard and got elected. But then, it was me and eight men around that Council chamber. At times, it was tough being the only woman. But I loved the role, and successfully juggled being a Councillor with raising a family of three

kids with the support of my husband, while sustaining my science career and various volunteer roles.

I ran again at the next election. That time I was elected Mayor and three more women were elected to council. My local council has never gone back to those days of 'all men'. In fact, it has since won awards for its gender equality initiatives. Now I'm retired from council, and I continue to support women to stand for public office.

Local government is a wonderful place for 'ordinary women to do extraordinary things' as local politicians. Given the widespread disillusionment about the state of politics in our country, women are looking around their council chambers and thinking to themselves 'I can do a better job than him.'

The experience of being a local politician and representing my community was a privilege I will never forget, and I can recommend it.

Sometimes the situation may present itself as a once-in-a-lifetime-opportunity that means you must grab the chance to run. This may be when the issues you care about are uppermost in the minds of your community and you can 'ride a wave' of community angst (hopefully all the way to the ballot box). Or, maybe the current government is 'on the nose' resulting in an appetite by voters for change. Or, the incumbent could be suffering from a lack of support and low polls or retiring and you must 'strike while the iron is hot'.

CASE STUDY

Suzanna Sheed, Seat of Shepparton 2014 and 2018

A pop-up, fast and furious campaign for Shepparton

Suzanna Sheed was an independent candidate, elected to the Victorian Parliament as Member for the seat of Shepparton after a short but successful campaign in 2014 (and again in October 2018). Her first victory was reported as an 'upset of the state election'. She turned a once safe seat held by the National Party for 47 years, into a marginal one with a campaign that was 29 days long.

As an active member of her community with a thriving legal practice, Suzanna decided to run for State Parliament after becoming increasingly frustrated with the major parties and their lack of investment in her rural area and wider region. Sheed announced she would run, less than a month prior to the 2014 Victorian State election. She says she was able to 'take the safest seat in the state with a whopping 32.5 percent swing' because 'people were ready for a change and the timing was right'.

'I have lived in Shepparton for over 32 years now and have witnessed a great deal of change. I believe that our region did not grow and advance in comparison to other regional areas largely due to state and federal governments failing to invest in the region … there was a deep discontent in the community and people were disillusioned with the current parties.

Among the people I talked to, there was a general feeling that nothing was going to change in this electorate. I felt frustrated. It seemed no one with a good chance of taking the seat from the Nationals was going to stand. The idea planted itself in me, and I thought about it for a few days. At that point, I talked with a few people, within the community, who I considered would instantly give me honest feedback on whether I had a chance of making the seat a marginal one if I stood. I also knew that if they felt positive about this, they would help with the campaign.

Within a few days, we had a meeting of 30 people and a fundraising plan was drawn up. The question on everyone's lips was 'could we really win the safest seat in the state with just 29 days to campaign?'

Shortly before the election, we had at least 150 volunteers and we employed advertising, communications, volunteer and community engagement professionals. It was like being in the middle of a storm; we had to keep up the momentum and increase it at all costs up to election day. We had a remarkable campaign team.

While there has been much discussion about how we pulled off this campaign, I think it was much more about this electorate and how people were feeling. People were ready for a change and the timing was right.

The campaign slogan of **Stand up, it's our turn** resonated so strongly. It evoked a response in the electorate. They knew that we had been missing out compared to our neighbouring marginal electorates. But it was still a shock to win, and to cause what was described as 'the upset of the state election'.[19]

When considering when to run, know that there may never be a 'right time'. However, if you leave it until 'later', it may be too late. If you procrastinate, you may lose the opportunity to run and regret it forever. In the end, only you can decide.

This is the end of Part One: Decide. If you are certain of your decision to run for office, you can articulate the reasons why you are standing, and you are clear on the circumstances around when and where you will stand, it is time to prepare for the race of your life. It is time to move to Part Two: Planning your campaign. Let's wrap up with a decision checklist.

> *You will never plough a field if you only turn it over in your mind.*
>
> —Irish Proverb

Part One: Your decision checklist

The time has come to make your big decision. Will you run for office? If so, get clear on when, where, how and why, and use this checklist to weigh up the factors that will help you to make your decision:

1. Have you considered what will happen if you don't run for office? Will you regret it?

You have decided to run for office:

2. Have you checked your eligibility to stand as a candidate for this office and you are definitely, 100 percent, absolutely certain that you are good to go? If not, what are your plans to fix this?

3. You are clear on the reasons why you are running and can answer the following:

   a. I am passionate about ..._____

   b. I am pissed off about ..._____

   c. In politics, I can serve ... _____

   d. Or, is it something else that motivates you to stand for office? _____

   _____

4. Have you considered the benefits that will flow when you run for office for:

   a. Yourself ... _____

   b. Your cause ..._____

   c. Your community ..._____

5. Are you clear on whether you will stand as an independent or will you be affiliated with a major or micro party? If the latter, do you understand the processes to become the party-endorsed candidate?

   _____

   _____

6. Are you certain of which level of government you will run for office?

   - ❍ Federal Parliament (Senate or House of Representative?)
   - ❍ State or Territory Parliament (Upper House or Lower House?) or
   - ❍ Local Council (which Ward?)_____

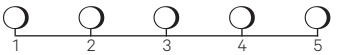
7. Have you considered the costs and financial implications of what will be needed to run an effective campaign, such as the need to take time off paid work, fund your mortgage repayments or manage your care duties?

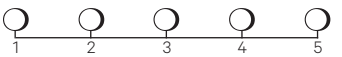
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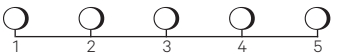
8. Be very clear on the timeline for when you will nominate as the candidate. Will it be in the upcoming election? Or the one after that? Or the one after that?

   _____

9. Consider how ready you are to do this. Tick what applies to you on a scale of 1–5 where 1 = not at all and 5 = absolutely)

   a. I have the conviction to do this. 

   b. I have the confidence to do this. 

   c. I have the competence to do this. 

   (If you rate yourself as anything less than a 4, do you have plans to build your capability to get to ‘absolutely’?)

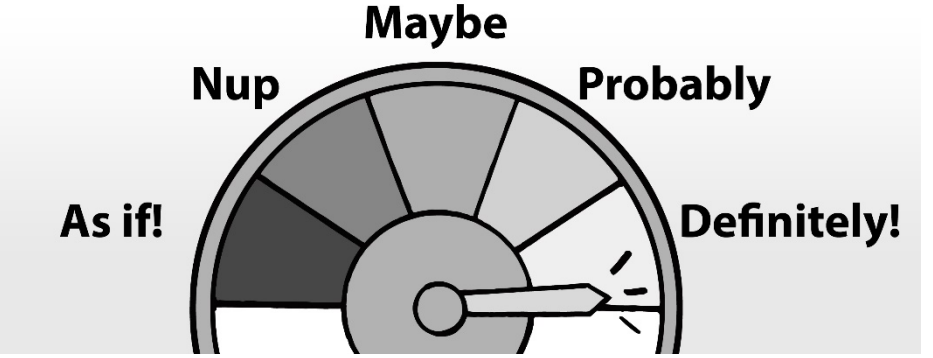
   _____

10. Finally, consider your responses to this checklist very carefully. Discuss this with those closest to you (including mentors). Consider engaging a professional coach to assist with clarifying your goals and to help scope the various options open to you.

This is a big decision. Draw on your heart, your head and your gut to decide.

If you decide yes, you must be clear on the time to run and where you will nominate as a candidate as well as whether you will be affiliated with a party or run as an independent. Be really clear on the reasons why you are running for office, consider the difference you can make in your community

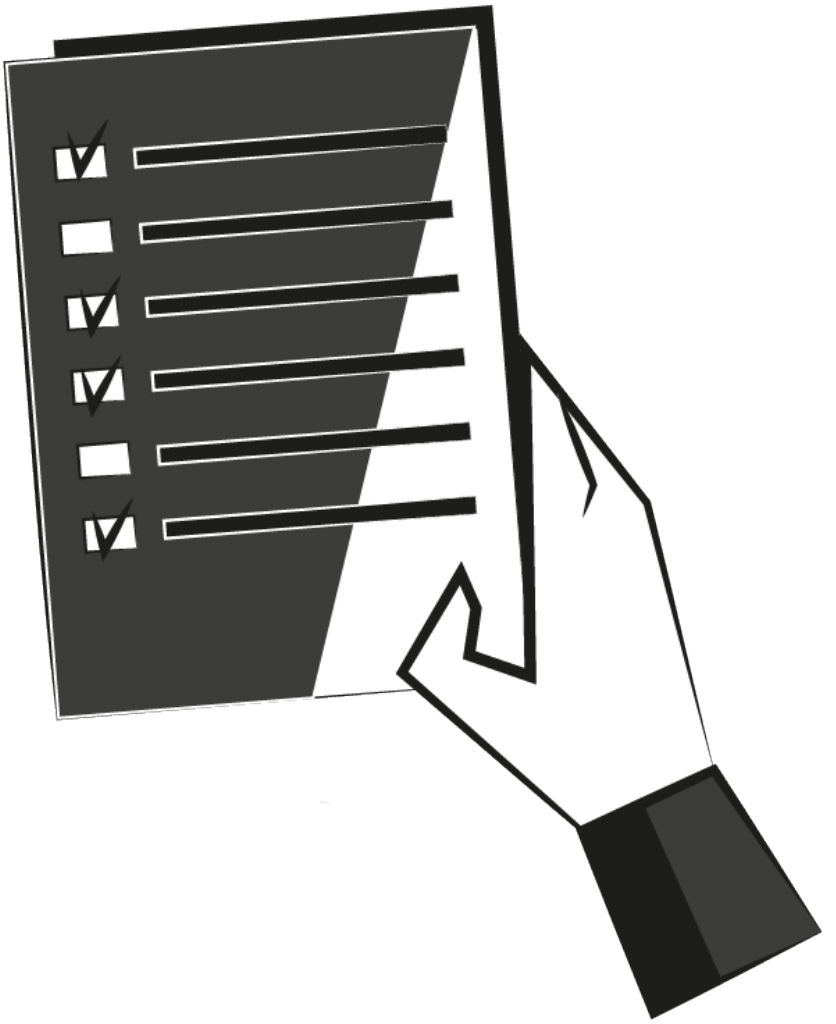
and undertake a realistic assessment of the implications on your life, family, employment, career and finances.



If it is still a big, fat YES, then congratulations on your decision. It is now time to take a deep breath and jump into Part Two: **Planning your campaign,** where we will consider everything you need to know to plan a winning campaign.

PART TWO

PLAN



The 8 components of every winning campaign

It's time to plan your work, then work your plan

Congratulations! You have decided to run for public office. Now the real work begins as you develop a winning campaign plan.

Part One of this guide considered the issues that needed to be factored into your decision to run for office. By now, as part of that commitment, you will have clarified the circumstances of where you will stand including the level of government and the ward/seat/electorate where you will run. You will also have decided whether to stand as an independent or with a micro or major party.

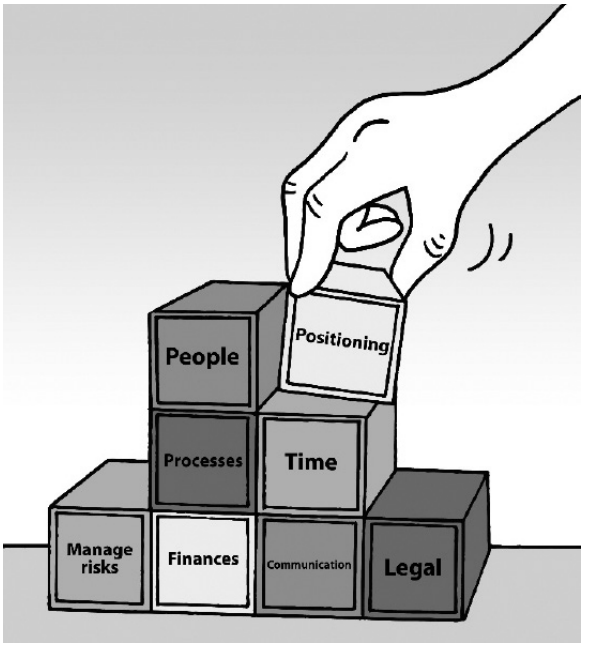
Part Two of this guide is designed to assist you with the actions you will put in place that will support your intention to run for office and get elected. Every successful general or war-time leader knowns that to win a battle you must have a plan. Indeed, one of the greatest military strategists of all time, the ancient Chinese General Sun Tzu noted (approximately 2500 years ago) that 'A wise leader plans success' and specifically, that 'Every battle is won before it is fought'. His book *The Art of War* has significantly influenced military thinking over the ages and is often applied to political strategy and tactics.[1]

Campaign strategy documents consistently use the language of war and battle metaphors. After all, it is a war of sorts between competing sides fighting for victory over each other. But a candidate's war is about ideology and beliefs of different sides rather than fighting over physical territory and logistical borders. Instead of bullets, the battle is fought with words, ideas, policies and promises.

Most traditional campaign guides list three essential elements to consider: time, people and finances. I want to add five additional elements that will assist in delivering a winning campaign. In addition to time, people and finances, when planning a campaign, a candidate needs to also consider their positioning, processes, communication, legal and risk management.

It you have decided to run for office, the next step is to start developing a campaign plan to take you to election day. You will need to do this as soon as possible after making your decision. No plan is perfect, but it is true that

'those who fail to plan, plan to fail' and a 'pretty good' plan that isn't perfect is better than a 'perfect' plan that fails to eventuate.



You must develop a flexible plan that can be adjusted in response to surprises, attacks and new agendas that arise. Every plan is based on what we expect will happen, and that is based on what we know and understand. It is also important to plan for 'what might happen', the known risks and the unforeseen and unintended consequences that can trip up a candidate.

> TIPS Once you have decided in your mind, even before officially announcing, set yourself a list of actions you can take every single day to stay focused and committed to your goal of getting elected.

Position yourself

The first part of your plan to get elected involves thinking about your position and defining what is special about you in a market of competing candidates. What is your point of difference? Let's examine this in more detail.

Candidates can learn a lot about positioning themselves as the preferred candidate in voters' minds from the commercial world. To stay successful, manufacturers regularly conduct market research on who is purchasing their product or service and who could be buying it. This research informs the company marketing strategy. Similarly, while we are talking about politics in this guide, sometimes a candidate is not that different from a 'product' such as a low-calorie soft drink or a washing powder for sensitive skin. In the marketplace, all products must distinguish themselves from their competitors. This is the same for candidates on the ballot paper.

Here we consider six aspects of brand marketing that could assist a candidate to better position themselves in a crowded candidate market. This will help you to become clearer on your 'market position' before you launch your campaign and inform your campaign planning.

Understand the positioning of 'brand you'

1. **Who is your customer?**

   First, identify who may be the 'typical' potential voter that could support you as their preferred candidate (also see the section: Who are your voters?). To understand this further, gather and analyse the available data on potential voters in your electorate. To do this, divide your potential voters into three groups:

   - Supporters: those who will definitely vote for you.
   - Swingers: those who could be persuaded to change their traditional pattern of voting and support you instead.
   - Lost cause: those who are rusted on to another candidate or party.

2. **What is the customer's problem?**

   Pinpoint the issues of concern in your community.

   - What is keeping people awake at night?
   - What do they care about?
   - What are the 'pain points' in terms of interactions with the level of government you are standing for? (This is explored below with tips on how to pinpoint the issues.)

3. **What do they think could fix their problem?**

   Understand what changes, outputs and outcomes they want to see. What change do they want?

4. **How are you a solution to their problem?**

   As a candidate, what differentiates you from your competition, or the incumbent and the other challengers. (This will be explored further in the Communications section when you will craft a powerful message.)

5. **What makes your product unique?**

   Draft your 'values proposition': what makes you a compelling 'buy'? What is your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)? The USP is what makes you different from and better than your competition and is explored further in this chapter.

6. **Can they be confident you will fix the problem?**

   How would you position yourself as a skilled, competent problem-solver, who listens to constituents? What's so special about you that will enable you to deliver what your electorate wants as a political representative?

Who are your voters?

In working out how to position yourself as a candidate of choice, you need to understand your potential voters. The two important questions: How many potential voters are in the area where you are running? How do they usually vote?

As a candidate, a key strategy to every campaign is gathering the data to help you understand the characteristics of your potential voters. Here's where it is useful for every candidate to make friends with a psephologist. A good 'numbers' person on your campaign team can help you identify your market and understand who your potential 'buyers' (voters) are before you launch your product (you). That way you know where to focus your efforts.

> Psephology (from the Greek word *psephos* 'pebble' as the Greeks used pebbles as ballots) is a branch of political science that deals with the study and scientific analysis of elections.

1. **How many potential voters do you have?**

   There are approximately 17 million Australians registered to vote. How many do you need to reach to persuade people to put you as their preferred candidate? The AEC and your state/territory Electoral Commissions will have the statistics on the number of enrolled citizens in your seat, electorate, or municipality.[2]

2. **How do the citizens in your locality usually vote?**

   Every candidate needs to understand the voting intentions of the three different types of voters (those who will support you, those who won't and then there are the 'maybes'). Develop a campaign plan that keeps supporters happy, reaches the swingers, and minimise wasting resources on those who won't ever change.

   You can discover where your potential voters sit by 'doing the numbers'. Understand your magic vote number by analysing the intentions and past voting behaviour of constituents in the ward, electorate or seat where you intend to campaign. Hopefully most candidates will already have a number of 'ready-made' supporters who can assist the campaign and endorse you as a candidate. For larger scale campaigns, this may number in the hundreds where for a smaller campaign this may include family, relatives and friends who are pretty likely to vote for you anyway.

   But what about those beyond your supporters? A 'typical voter' is either a 'rusted-on' supporter of a major party or a swinger. The latter group is growing in Australian elections with some estimates putting them at one-third of the voters, especially in rural and regional areas. This group is potentially open to voting for candidates from micro-parties and independents. To find out where your potential voters sit, you can view the past history and two-party-preferred voting patterns of voters in your electorate. The Electoral Commission websites also help you investigate past voting patterns of your potential constituents.

   This enables you to 'do the numbers' and analyse the voting behaviour of citizens who live in your ward/electorate/seat. Other sites like ABC Australia Votes recorded voting results from the recent 2019 federal election that will provide information on the background of voters in the area where you plan to run.[3] If you can, try to estimate the 'raw number' of voters that would fall into each category. This will assist you to comprehend the scale of the task ahead of you and the potential number of voters you may need to persuade to 'buy you'.

Analysis of voting behaviour also informs you of how you may target the future timing of your campaign. For instance, the 2018 Victorian Government State Election saw record numbers of voters deciding to vote early at early voting centres (also known as pre-poll booths). For candidates planning their campaign, this can make campaigning a bit more complicated. On the one hand, there is usually only one early voting centre per electorate making it easier to reach significant amounts of voters in the weeks before election day. On the other hand, it means the pressure is on to have most of your policy announcements made well before the two (and sometimes three) weeks before election day as well as the need to have considerable resources available to staff the early voting centre with people handing out your How to vote cards for the weeks before election day.

TIPS Apply the electoral commission data to develop your personal 'map of the battlefield'. Download or purchase the file of the official map of your electorate, with the electoral boundaries outlined. Print it in a large format and have it laminated. Put it on the campaign HQ wall for the team to see and use. Put pins on the booths and colour markers to identify the regions the team and candidate will need to reach in order to drive a swing towards the candidate. This will also be useful to mark the areas that have been visited by the candidate, door knocking targets, events, etc.

Other methods to gather data on your potential constituents

A. You can research demographic data about the residents in your electorate or municipality using the latest Census results.[4] Examine the statistics on the following to get a feel for who you may need to reach in your campaign:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Income (SEIFA index)
- Homeowners vs. renters
- Religion
- Children
- Education and schooling.

B. The Vote Compass website is a useful snapshot of the current political landscape in state and federal elections and can alert you to hot-button issues that are firing up voters.[5]

C. If you are curious about the average income of people in your locality, see the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA Index). This index is produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and provides a rank of different areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage.[6]

Pinpoint the issues people care about

> *Seek first to understand, then to be understood.*
>
> —Steven Covey

To build a strong position as the preferred choice in voters' minds, a candidate needs to understand the issues of interest to voters. What are your potential voters angry about? What excites them? What annoys them or inspires them? A candidate must understand what changes and outputs voters want to see. Then they can craft the message that resonates on the issues voters care about.

To position yourself as a candidate people will vote for, you need to understand the voters' 'pain points'—particularly those of swinging voters. When you can articulate the issue(s), your next step is to explain how you will fix it in simple, clear language.

Let's assume you have done your numbers and have a pretty good idea of how your potential constituents voted in the past. Next you need to find out what stirs them up when it comes to politics. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Gather the results of any opinion polls conducted in your area or state. Analyse these polls for trends and themes.
- Conduct your own local issues research. Analyse letters to the local newspapers, listen to local talkback radio, and check out the comment feed on your local Facebook community forum. Gather data from anywhere that helps you get a better feel for the issues in your area.

- Conduct research on the opposition, the incumbent and main challenger(s). Refer to the SWOT analysis you conducted in Part One.
- Seek to understand all you can about your potential constituents from the research you conducted on your potential voters.
- As the campaign progresses, you will also be able to feed in data from interactions with citizens through 'meet the candidate' forums and door knocking.

It is useful to gather 'intel' on your opponent and/or the incumbent. Observe what they are talking about and where they are going. A simple way to do this is to set up a 'Google Alert' on their name, which will send updates to your inbox every time they are featured in the news.

Who gives a toss?

In general, studies of Australian citizens identify the following issues as the ones voters say they care about:

- Taxation
- Foreign policy
- Immigration
- Mental health
- Environment
- Education
- Healthcare
- Economy and employment
- Defence
- Housing affordability
- Cost of living.



For more information you can sign up for the *Essential Report* that canvasses voters' intentions and opinions.[7]

CASE STUDY

Cathy McGowan, AO Independent MP, Federal Seat of Indi 2013–2019

Find out what your community cares about

In 2013, the Voices for Indi community group applied a community consultation process across the electorate of Indi called Kitchen Table Conversations (initially designed by the Victorian Women's Trust), in order to listen to and report on the interests, concerns and ideas of people living in this part of north-east Victoria. In her first campaign as an independent candidate for Indi at the 2013 Federal Election, Cathy McGowan listened as people spoke about their vision for the community, attributes of an effective representative, and their problems.

The information from the Kitchen Table Conversations was collated, printed, distributed widely and provided the focus for many local community forums. At these forums, solutions were discussed, action groups formed and volunteers put their hands up to be involved in the Indi campaign.

As Cathy listened she heard the following concerns:

- The train line between Melbourne and Wodonga was constantly failing and the rolling stock was falling apart.
  People wanted this fixed.

- Education levels were lower in comparison to the cities and access to tertiary education was expensive and involved travel away from home.
  People wanted improved education funding for rural students.

- Hospitals lacked funding and access to mental health services was limited.
  People wanted more funding for hospitals, more doctors and specialist services.

- Tele-communication was poor, with many areas having poor or non-existent mobile phone coverage or phones constantly dropping out.
  People wanted mobile phone blackspots fixed.

- The Liberal party incumbent at the time was seen as 'remote' and 'too focused on Canberra, not Indi'.
  People wanted a 'nice Member' who would be respectful and 'show up' to community events.

- Indi was a 'safe seat' and so missed out on government funds.
  People said they no longer wanted to be taken for granted.

What is your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)?

Your USP is a marketing term that can be applied to assist you carve out your niche for voters. It explains the main feature or the perceived benefit of a candidate that makes them unique from the other candidates competing for votes. To position yourself as a preferred candidate, you need to be clear on your unique offer compared with your competition, which is most likely the incumbent and other challengers. For example, perhaps the incumbent candidate is perceived by voters as someone who has 'done nothing' for the electorate and seem to be taking the community for granted in their campaign. Maybe an Internet search on your competitor shows she or he has previously been involved in some shady activities. This could raise suspicions about her integrity and other skeletons. Perhaps your competitor is seen as 'more of the same'? Many independents who run for office are motivated to provide voters with an opportunity to support a candidate who isn't the 'same old, same old' type of politician. Increasingly, Australia's Federal politicians are being drawn from similar backgrounds, leading to allegations that our national political leadership is politically elitist.

In early 2019, *The Age* newspaper reported that in the thirty years since 1988, Parliament has failed to reflect the diversity of our nation and how, 'the Government and Opposition benches swell with white men, political staffers, unionists, lawyers and bankers. A study of parliamentary records of the 45th Parliament found teachers—the most common route into federal politics three decades ago—had been replaced by political operatives, with up to 40 percent of all MPs and 50 percent of all Labor representatives hailing from backgrounds as political staffers. Labor and The Greens have made progress on female representation, but since the 2019 federal election just over one-third of Federal MPs are women—36.6 percent federally, compared with 51 percent of the population.[8] *The Age* adds 'Culturally and ethnically, Parliament is in a time warp. Since 1988, the proportion of Australians born overseas has

risen from 22 percent to 33 percent, but their representation in Parliament has stalled at 11 percent.'[9]

Do these statistics reflect you or are you different? Considering the need for diversity in public office, how unique are you? If you are not 'more of the same old', consider how you can use this point of difference in your campaign.

VOTERS ARE HUNGRY FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Gabrielle Chan, author of *Rusted Off: Why country Australia is fed up* says 'voters are breaking from the mob to vote for outsiders'.

'Major political parties have taught voters they cannot trust that governments will deliver on their promises or keep their Prime Minister in place, so voters are in the process of teaching political parties that they can't trust their traditional allegiances. Politicians acknowledge this fact but don't really know what to do about it. The unpredictability of voter behaviour has made it less likely that governments can achieve anything. Australian politics has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Most politicians know that voters are breaking from the mob to vote for outsiders. Most politicians know that people are unhappy with the volatility.

The anger, meantime, continues towards all levels of governments—federal, state, local—because Government with a capital G is seen as the problem. The neglected class feel like they are doing their job, but politicians, governments and media are not doing theirs. It is 'the vibe,' as they say in *The Castle*."[10]

Build your understanding of the issues and the results people want to see delivered by their elected representative. Focus on your ability to deliver these changes, compared to the incumbent or other challengers. The next step will be to apply this analysis to craft a simple and powerful message that will help you to stand out from the crowd as you plan your communications.

Ultimately, your message signals to voters that you understand their issues and that you know the changes voters want to see. It also flags how you are different from your competitors in your ability to uniquely deliver. Spend time developing your USP. In a crowded field, it can be the main reason why

people will swing from their previous vote to put you as No. 1 even if they have never voted independent or for a micro party before.

Keep your USP simple. When Cathy McGowan first campaigned for Indi, she stood out because she was:

- Local ('born and bred' in Indi).
- Independent (not a member of a major party).
- Effective (a strong track record of achieving in her community and her own business).

These three words became the foundation of her campaign message. Other differentiating points were the use of the colour orange extensively through the Indi campaign from the candidate's car, flags, t-shirts and advertising. Integrity and professionalism was a hallmark of the campaign and volunteers were asked to sign a values pledge promising to be 'their best selves'.

> *Everything should be as simple as it can be, but not simpler.*
>
> —Einstein

Build processes

Don't wing it; make processes a priority.

A winning campaign must be constructed with strong foundations. It is built from carefully crafted processes and procedures that cover virtually every aspect of what goes in or comes out of the campaign, from the beginning to beyond election day. These processes are established to manage all aspects of the campaign like complying with your legal obligations, managing data and finances, budgeting, directing volunteers, diary scheduling and pumping out your communications.

Processes ensure consistency in how every aspect of your campaign is managed. This reduces the risks of something 'slipping through the cracks' and derailing the campaign.

For example:

- A good diary scheduling process results in the candidate turning up on time to events that matter.
- A robust financial and budgeting system means that a candidate is not in debt following an election and meets compliance obligations.
- A consistent brand which has processes for the use of the campaign colours, font, logos, images, slogan etc. that reinforces the candidate's profile and reduces confusion.
- A consistent procedure for volunteers reduces the risks of supporters 'going rogue' and damaging the campaign.
- A detailed schedule of the electoral and legal obligations ensure the candidate lawfully complies with all the necessary steps prior to and following an election.

Without clear direction and standard processes, the campaign team will find it difficult to stay aligned to the main goal of getting the candidate elected. Consistency in the processes and clear communication of what is expected is vital to any campaign. Don't take the risk of 'winging it' with a 'she'll be right' approach. Take the time to establish processes in the planning phase so that by the time you announce you are running and launch the campaign, your team knows what they need to do, when they need to do it and how they should do it.

Processes assist a candidate to meet the requirements of the law. Disregarding the rules is at your peril. For instance, in the moment a candidate nominates there are forms to complete regarding eligibility. To understand the importance of this we need look no further than the dual citizenship crisis that engulfed Australian federal politics in 2017 and 2018. During that time, eighteen politicians were forced to resign from the House and Senate (or were ruled ineligible by the High Court) because they failed to check their processes regarding Section 44 of the Constitution on dual citizenship. Several candidates lost their seat because they did not correctly complete their paperwork.

If you are a candidate representing one of the major political parties, you will likely be provided with a raft of party procedures to follow (hopefully with some guidance from the party). If you are an independent candidate, you will probably have to start from scratch and design your own processes to manage people, funds and time.

Your aim should be to keep the processes simple but detailed enough to cover all your required steps and sufficiently secure to avoid embarrassing leaks. Put simply, in any campaign there will be information coming in and information going out. This information needs to be managed and that requires sorting, analysis and storage. It is at this 'management intersection' where a campaign team needs to develop systems, guidelines and standard operation procedures (SOPs).

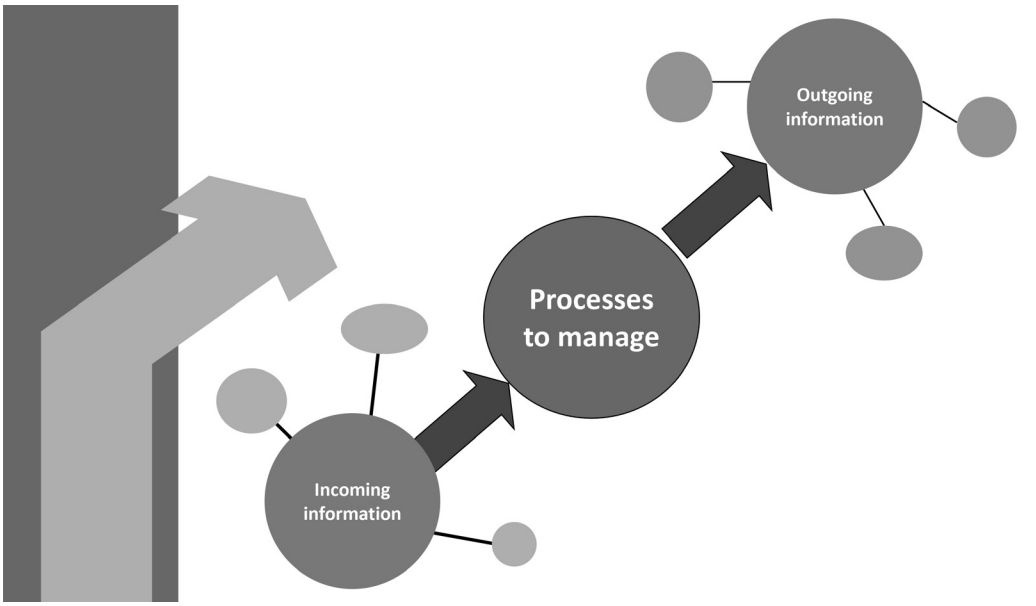


Figure 4: Information management

Here are some examples of INCOMING information. You will need to consider how you will manage these:

- Database to register ALL the contacts with whom the candidate needs to engage.
- Timeline deadlines from the Electoral Commission nationally and in your state or territory.
- Diarising candidate's events and invitations to avoid double booking.
- Blogs on the campaign website.
- Legal requirements with which the candidate must comply.
- Establish the campaign budget and set fundraising targets.
- Easy donation options (online etc.).

- Managing posts for Facebook and other social media feeds.
- Build a media contact database of local journalists, newsletters to distribute press releases.
- Understand voter metrics from past elections such as booth trends to inform your targeted strategy.
- Understand voter intentions from professional polling (yours and those of the challenger(s) or incumbent).
- Understand voting patterns in early voting centres.
- Develop a process to respond to constituent enquiries to the candidate.
- Build a database of photos and images of the candidate (updated with photos from the campaign trail).

In order for a candidate to get elected, information must flow smoothly from the candidate to the campaign team, volunteers, voters, the broader community, media, regulators and potential donors.

Here are some examples of OUTGOING information. You will need to consider how you will manage the outward facing processes:

- Manage volunteers. Ensure you can reach them regularly with emails and text blasts to keep them engaged and invite them to show up to events, join town walks, hand out brochures, etc.
- Remind everyone on the team of the deadlines and how to comply with the legal obligations.
- Attend candidate forums and present your policy and vision to voters.
- Keep website and social media updated such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter feeds.
- Managing advertising on social media, press, TV, YouTube videos, radio, billboards. In urban areas, consider buses and street posters.
- Inform potential donors of how they can donate, the fundraising target and progress towards the goal.
- Regularly send out media releases to press and community newsletter, radio, etc.
- Responding to policy surveys or questionnaires from various organisations on your positions on a range of issues.

- Develop privacy guidelines to protect the confidentiality of campaign material.
- Have a system to send out 'thank you' response to donors and other special contributors.
- Communicate upcoming training to volunteers: the who, what, where, when, how, etc.
- Develop procedures to manage campaign tasks such as door knocking, reaching early voters, handing out flyers on election day and scrutineering.

Depending on the scale of your campaign, at the very least you will need processes to ensure that you are meeting your legal obligations. Processes to track your campaign donations will need to be provided to the Electoral Commission at the end of the campaign. You will also need a budget to manage your campaign expenditure including the spend on communication outputs.

You will need a system to communicate with all your team members. Some candidates use a basic group email or apps like WhatsApp or team collaboration spaces like Slack.Com and programs like Nation Builder.

All teams need an IT-savvy person, so allocate these tasks to them and find a cyber-secure method to collaborate with your team as soon as you can. Clear and consistently applied communication processes help avoid duplication of tasks by members of the campaign team.

Typical campaign processes

This table details fifteen typical processes candidates may need to consider for an effective campaign in the areas of campaign management, managing volunteers and supporting the candidate.

How detailed a campaign team will be in developing some of these suggested processes will depend on the scale of the campaign and the level of public office that is being contested. Candidates who are considering running for office for a state government or federal seat will, by the nature of the race, have a larger campaign team than someone standing for their local council. They can, therefore, delegate the development of these processes to those with the skills and background to design and deliver the support needed. In a smaller campaign, such as one for local government, some team members

will wear several hats and the candidate will be responsible for developing many of these processes herself.

This table is not an exhaustive list but it covers the basic processes to consider over the course of a campaign—large or small.

Focus area	Whose job is this?	Consider developing these processes
Campaign Management		
Campaign implementation	The Campaign Manager is the 'right hand' of the candidate. This person is across all aspects of the campaign.	The Campaign Manager oversees the development of processes for the campaign and monitors and manages the risks. The Campaign Manager will: ✓ Manage budget and approve outgoing expenditure ✓ Collect poll data ✓ Provide advice to the candidate and the team if there is a need to adjust the campaign at all ✓ Work with the team to put in place processes and training for all volunteers ✓ Ensure all the campaign material is authorised (from them or the candidate)
Meet the legal obligations	The Legal Adviser will manage the processes to meet all legal obligations prior to, during and after the campaign, so the candidate maintains her good reputation.	Processes must ensure everything the candidate does and all campaign actions must be legal. The Legal Adviser will: ✓ Ensure the candidate is eligible to stand for office ✓ Meet the deadlines of the relevant electoral commission such as the requirements and timelines that enable a citizen to nominate ✓ Ensure all products that need to be authorised comply ✓ Meet the reporting obligations around donations are met ✓ Volunteers know what they need to do when running events
Administration management	The Campaign Coordinator works with the Campaign Manager to coordinate the campaign.	The Campaign Coordinator will liaise with the candidate and the Campaign Manager to implement systems to: ✓ Coordinate processes to manage incoming and outgoing data ✓ Organise meetings for the campaign team, take the minutes and follow up on actions ✓ Respond to campaign team members' issues ✓ Manage logistics ✓ Liaise with the Data/IT manager to ensure privacy is maintained ✓ Support the Campaign Manager ✓ Report back to the candidate and Campaign Manager on progress towards campaign goals

Manage donations	The Fundraiser Manager implements procedures to encourage people to donate and manage funds.	These systems assist the candidate to raise funds for the campaign while meeting all legal obligations. The Fundraiser Manager works with the Campaign Manager to: ✓ Establish the campaign budget and set fundraising targets ✓ Establish a system to track and report ingoing and outgoing flow of funds ✓ Establish simple processes for people to donate in a way that protects privacy and security of bank details ✓ Work with the candidate's Diary Manager to schedule time for the candidate to approach people in their community, local businesses or high-value donors and ask them for funds ✓ Consider the option to set up phone banking systems ✓ Establish processes to thank donors (phone calls, cards) including personal thank you messages from the candidate ✓ Liaise with the Legal Adviser to meet reporting requirements for donations before, during and after a campaign ✓ Establish the processes for holding fundraising events (see Manage an Event)
Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	The Data/IT Manager implements processes that encourages supporters to join the campaign, (either through donating funds or volunteering) and communication systems for the team and supporters.	An effective CRM process ensures campaign supporters stay in touch, are treated with respect and feel valued. Consider including these elements in the data management system where you can: ✓ Integrate people's contact details when they subscribe on the candidate's website in order to compile a supporters' email list based on various categories (for example, in which part of the electorate people live) ✓ Manage texts and posts on various social media platforms ✓ Generate automatic thank you emails when people donate ✓ Communicate with supporters who 'opt in' for campaign communication (such as email blasts) ✓ Use CRM software ✓ Manage confidential communication within the campaign ✓ Utilise data provided to candidates by the electoral commission, for example, contact details of enrolled citizens in your electorate, seat or ward

Focus area	Whose job is this?	Consider developing these processes
The campaign 'look'	The Media and Marketing Manager develops and implements the communication strategy.	Develop a look for the campaign material that is consistent across all products. This cements the brand of the candidate in the minds of the voter. This could include: ✓ Graphic design elements that are on all products from flyers to posters, banners, t-shirts etc. ✓ The colour used to promote the candidate ✓ Professional photos ✓ Logo ✓ Font ✓ Main message points ✓ Authorisation
Managing and Training Volunteers		
Training strategy	The Training Coordinator develops and implements the volunteer training strategy.	A training strategy is designed and delivered to equip campaign volunteers with the skills they need to support the candidate to get elected. It will include the following elements: ✓ Work with the campaign team to develop a list of all the different areas in which volunteers need training ✓ Plan the different types of training to be delivered and the details of when and where the training will be held and who will deliver it ✓ Link to the campaign strategy timeline so that people are trained up and ready to go before the deadlines (for example, scrutineer training is held well before election day) ✓ Training packages will also include 'door knocking' scripts, handing out How to Vote cards, tips on what to do and what not to do

On-boarding volunteers	The Volunteer Manager manages the 'on-boarding' processes when people sign up to support the candidate.	On-boarding processes help to align supporters with the campaign goals and set out what is expected of volunteers. It also manages the risk of volunteers going off in the wrong direction and misrepresenting the candidate. On-boarding processes could include the following: ✓ When volunteers are signed up, collect their contact details for the campaign database. Include social media contacts to tag in posts ✓ A thank you from the candidate to demonstrate gratitude for the volunteer's support and time commitment ✓ Consider requesting volunteers to sign a commitment to the behaviour and values expected on the campaign (The Orange campaign pledge asked volunteers to maintain confidentiality, be respectful and show 'our best selves' in all dealings with everyone). If you do this, provide a copy of the pledge back to the volunteer for their records ✓ Once a volunteer has signed on, capture their intention to support the campaign by asking what tasks or jobs they want to do? What they are good at? How they can contribute? Provide volunteers with an on-boarding kit that contains: ✓ A welcome letter from the candidate ✓ Factsheets on ward/electorate ✓ Information about the candidate ✓ Background to why the candidate is running and the issues on which she is running ✓ A candidate profile including the main messages of the campaign and policies and the 'why vote for me' pitch ✓ Details of the various tasks volunteers can do to support the campaign ✓ Timeline of events for involvement (include training and 'meet the candidate' forums) ✓ How volunteers can get involved in supporting the candidate through social and traditional media

Focus area	Whose job is this?	Consider developing these processes
Managing and Training Volunteers		
Canvassing voters	The Volunteer Manager oversees the plan for reaching voters with door-knocking, canvassing and a training program.	Canvassing residents and seeking their support is a proven way for a candidate to raise their profile and become better known throughout an electorate. The processes for this winning campaign tactic include the following: ✓ Develop a door knocking plan of the priority areas to target and when the door knocking will be conducted ✓ The plan may include door knocking with teams of supporters, with or without the candidate ✓ A training workshop to instruct volunteers on how to door knock, what to say, and how to manage any potential safety risks ✓ Systems for door knocking volunteers to feedback any issues to the campaign team to act on (such as 'this is what voters in North Ward want Council to do'.) ✓ Develop the 'must have' list of what a volunteer needs to door knock. This includes the following: » A 'buddy' to door knock with for safety and companionship » Candidate's brochure or About Me postcard » Wear the campaign t-shirt, hat etc. » A second postcard for the 'Sorry I missed you' message for absentee residents with the candidate's details » Clipboard, notebook and pen to note down concerns and a feedback form to capture any issues for the candidate to subsequently manage » Spare corflutes or posters if a resident wants to put them up » Map of the streets/area to cover » Wear a name tag that says who you are (or who you are representing) » Merchandise such as magnets, buttons, stickers etc. (the 'merch') » Spare volunteer forms if residents wish to also join the campaign » Statements on the candidate's policies, if they ask for more » Wear jeans to avoid potential dog bites » Take water, hat, sunscreen (or beany and scarf) » Wear comfy shoes

Hosting an event	The Volunteer Manager supports volunteers to plan events for the candidate in order to raise the candidate's profile and provide fundraising opportunities.	Develop guidelines for volunteers on 'how to hold an event' so there is consistency in the process. This makes it easy for volunteers to know what to do, especially when it involves the candidate. The guidelines and processes can cover the following: ✓ The event objective (for example, to raise $X dollars) ✓ Details of everyone who is involved in organising, including the key contact ✓ Date and time of the event ✓ Expectations of how the candidate will be involved ✓ Budget and expenses ✓ Sourcing donations to keep costs to a minimum e.g. using private venues, donated wine or food, people bring a plate, items for auction, etc. ✓ Legal and authorising requirements (for example, do you need a liquor licence) ✓ Provide tips for managing ticket sales ✓ Food and alcohol management issues (for example, do waitstaff require Responsible Serving of Alcohol qualifications?) ✓ Advertising, promotion and media plans and where the campaign team can get support ✓ Event 'set-up' support ✓ Good governance requirements to meet around funds and finances ✓ Post event clean-up and reporting ✓ Where the Event Coordinator needs to liaise with the campaign team about who will do what and by when (for example, contact the diary manager in advance to schedule the candidate to attend)

Focus area	Whose job is this?	Consider developing these processes
Managing and Training Volunteers		
Endorsing the candidate	The Volunteer Manager supports volunteers with guidelines on how they can promote the candidate.	Volunteers can be empowered to demonstrate their support for the candidate. For example, volunteers can use their personal social media to endorse the candidate. However, this needs to be carefully managed to avoid missteps online that could damage the reputation of the candidate. Processes that work with volunteers to promote and endorse the candidate can cover such things as: ✓ A checklist of what volunteers need to know when putting up a yard sign/corflute e.g how to meet Council by-laws for sign erection on private property (not on trees), how to display and when to take them down ✓ Teach volunteers how to tweet, take photos and vlogs (video blogs), use hashtags effectively ✓ How to endorse the candidate on social media platforms by respectfully engaging others, and through traditional media such as letters to the editor, talk-back radio
Polling booth	The Campaign Manager works with the team to develop a poll strategy to maximise votes in the weeks ahead of election day at the early voting centre (EVC) and on election day.	For state and federal elections, the early voting strategy is an increasingly important part of the campaign. Usually, each electorate has at least one early voting centre (EVC) that is established two or three weeks prior to the election. You will need an early voting strategy that ensures the EVC is well resourced with volunteers and regular visits scheduled in by the candidate to meet potential voters. The strategy can include the following processes: ✓ Specific training for volunteers who will go 'on the line' at the EVC and election day booths on what to do and how to attract voters' attention ✓ A shift roster so at least 2–3 volunteers are assigned at any one time on the polling booth ✓ Scheduled time for the candidate to hand out flyers ✓ 'Survivor kits' for the volunteers to include sunscreen, hats, umbrellas, food, water etc. ✓ A set-up and set-down coordinator who sets-up at the EVC daily with posters, A-frames, flags and banners (and gazebo if there is no shelter) and who put this equipment away in a secured space each evening. This coordinator must be aware of and comply with the electoral commission rules for what is allowed to be placed where at the EVC and booths. ✓ A system to continuously resource booth volunteers with How To Vote cards (so they never run out) ✓ A supporter to bring food, coffee, and relief to the booth volunteers who are handing out 'on the line' ✓ A de-briefing process so that EVC volunteers can debrief after each day and provide relevant feedback to campaign HQ, including where messages and resourcing may need to adapt.

Manage election day	The Volunteer Coordinator works with a Scrutineer Manager and a Booth Coordinator to develop the plan for election day.	Volunteers handing out How to Vote (H2V) cards at polling booths on election day are vital in assisting a candidate to get elected. This process requires significant coordination. Ideally, the Booth Coordinator designs a program to ensure every booth has volunteers assigned to it on election day, especially the larger ones. The strategy should cover the following aspects: ✓ A map of all booths across the electorate including the potential numbers of voters per booth based on historical voting patterns ✓ A 'booth captain' who will coordinate volunteers on the larger booths ✓ A roster of who does what shifts over the day. A web-based roster like Google Sheets is ideal ✓ Details of 'back-up' volunteers who can assist, if needed, on election day ✓ 'Survivor kits' for the volunteers to include sunscreen, hats, umbrellas, food, water etc. ✓ A pre-election day plan to deliver the election material: H2V cards, candidate t-shirts for volunteers to wear, flyers, posters, flags, A-Frames, corflute etc. Organise to bring these items to the booth the night before or early morning (depending on the rules that may apply) and collected afterwards ✓ Information on how to hand out the H2V cards. This covers how to pitch the candidate and her message as well as how to ask for a second preference if a voter has already made up their mind ✓ Tips for volunteers on how to be prepared for all weather conditions and caring for yourself and others including how to manage objectionable behaviour/comments from rude people, the importance of being friendly, smiling to everyone and reaching people with the H2V cards as they enter and leave ✓ Actions a volunteer can take if there is an issue (for example, a volunteer no-show or how to report unacceptable behaviour from people handing out for other candidates) ✓ Instructions on how to set up the booth (in the early morning or the night before) to promote the candidate. Include information explaining the rules for electioneering on election day such as the distance in front of a booth that must not be breached by people handing out H2V cards

Focus area	Whose job is this?	Consider developing these processes
		Once voting finishes at 6 pm, the role of the scrutineers becomes crucial. This job can take hours (sometimes days) so skilled volunteers with time to assist on normal work days are extremely valuable, especially when every vote counts. Training in the legalities of being a scrutineer is complicated and must follow the legal requirements of the relevant Act. Each electoral commission releases a Candidate Handbook (and some also release a Scrutineer Handbook) prior to an election, which are available to candidates when they register. This guide outlines the obligations of scrutineers and must be read by every volunteer in this role. Scrutineer volunteers can be trained before election day on what to do (and what not to do) when counting. This training could also include tips on the following: ✓ What to look for in terms of possible irregularities in the ballot papers ✓ How to argue for votes that should rightfully be assigned to their candidate ✓ How to gather intelligence to pass back to the campaign headquarters on the voting trends and booth results (the 'gut feel' can be useful while everyone is waiting for an official election announcement)
Supporting the Candidate		
Diary management	The Diary Manager is the person responsible for scheduling the candidate's diary.	An online diary managed by one person is crucial so everyone can see what the candidate is doing in the weeks and months prior to an election. Scheduling minimises the risk of events clashing and helps to prioritise the most important events for the candidate. A well-managed diary means the candidate arrives where she needs to be on time and is ready to meet, greet, talk and promote her campaign. The Candidate, Campaign Manager and the Diary Manager will develop a 'triage scheduling policy' that will determine the priority events a candidate will attend and when to say 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe' to an invitation. Clear guidelines inform the decision making around what event is worth a candidate's time. The Diary Manager will develop processes that manage the following: ✓ Only the scheduler can add or delete so there is no doubling up ✓ The Diary Manager will source and reply to invitations with polite acceptance or regretfully decline ✓ Provide the event brief (include maps of the venue) and who will be attending to the candidate before each event so they are fully informed ✓ Transport and accommodation for the candidate ✓ A follow-up with the Campaign Manager on any issues arising from the event that need further management

Other support	Driver	Candidates often need to travel long distances around their electorate to attend functions and meet voters, particularly in rural areas. ✓ A volunteer driver can transport the candidate enabling her to rest, refresh, make phone calls, do social media and prepare for the next event ✓ The driver needs to be briefed on the location of the next event ✓ Confirm if it will be the driver's personal vehicle used for transport or the candidate's. (Some candidates prefer to use their own vehicle to also advertise their campaign on the vehicle.)
	Minder	A candidate minder is someone who 'looks out for' the candidate at events, manages her personal safety and helps to keep the candidate punctual. They may protect the candidate from tricky situations, for example, if she is being harassed or cornered by an irate citizen. The minder can consider working with the candidate to develop the following processes: ✓ Some candidates develop special 'signals' they use when they need to be skilfully moved on from a situation by their minder ✓ Minders can also brief the candidate on what is next and keep them on time ✓ Stock the candidate's transport vehicle with pamphlets, posters, merchandise, food, water etc.

Table 3: Basic campaign processes to consider

People power

A good candidate can win a debate, but a campaign team comprised of skilled people wins the election.

Readers who follow a team sport know ‘a champion team will always beat a team of champions’ because individuals don’t win a grand final—teams do. Just as a sporting team relies on the skills and experience of a diverse group of players to win a game, a candidate relies on her team in the same way. The candidate may be the star player but she can’t win an election without a skilled team behind her, helping to score the goals.

While a candidate’s team may be comprised mostly of volunteers, for larger campaigns the team may also include a number of paid staff to help manage some of the more technical aspects of the campaign.

In the early stages of planning a campaign, a candidate needs to consider the various tasks that must be completed in the approaching weeks and months. The next step for candidates is to find people with suitable skills and experience to help you manage the tasks that will assist in delivering a professional campaign. Let’s explore those roles further.

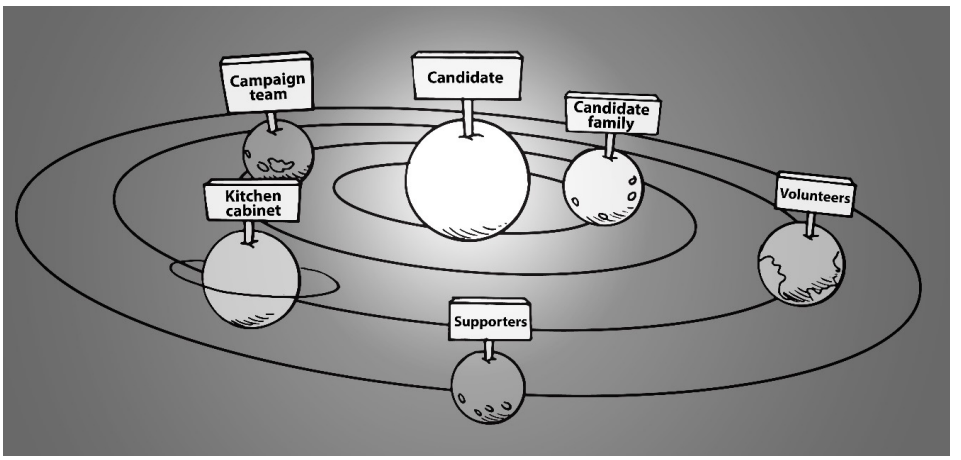
For most independent candidates, many of the management roles on the campaign team will be filled by volunteers who are helping the candidate as a ‘labour of love’. These are family members, relatives and friends or supporters of your cause. Hopefully, as the word spreads throughout a community, more people come on board to help with the campaign. Ideally, a groundswell of volunteers numbering in the hundreds (or thousands) come together in a ‘grassroots’ movement to be part of your team.

If you know a lawyer, ask if they can step into the legal advisory role for a few months. What about a friend who is an accountant? Maybe ask them to help manage the budget and the finances? Maybe you have a relative or friend who is a great organiser of events at the local school? Ask them to come on board as the Volunteer Manager. You might also know someone who is retired, with office administration expertise and has time on their hands to help but doesn’t particularly wish to be involved with canvassing votes. Ask them to be your Diary Manager. Your nephew or niece may be a whiz at social media and can help set up a Snapchat or an Instagram account for you.

The six pillars of a champion campaign team

At the core of a candidate's team, there are six key roles responsible for every aspect of a successful campaign. For smaller scale campaigns, the roles will often overlap, and some team members will wear several hats as dedicated volunteers. For larger scale campaigns, these categories may include paid staff and volunteers. Some volunteers may not even personally know the candidate but support her cause for change.

In a typical campaign there are six basic roles that people will play as part of an effective campaign team. First, there is the **candidate** who is supported by her **family and close friends**. Then there is the **team** that is responsible for managing the processes and tasks along the timeline of the campaign. In this team, there is an 'inner circle' of **trusted advisers**, often referred to as the Kitchen Cabinet. The bulk of the on-the-ground work is done by the **volunteers**—the foot soldiers. The **supporters** group may not be directly involved in the day-to-day aspects of the campaign but supports the candidate either financially or through endorsements.



1. Candidate

The candidate is the centre of the campaign universe. Other members of the team are like the planets revolving around the sun; they all have different orbits but are central to the sun who spins in a broader galaxy.

The candidate is the 'talent' of the campaign. You are reading this guide either as a current (or future) candidate yourself, or perhaps you are supporting someone else to run for office. This is the most important role of the campaign team. It is useful to identify any possible weak spots you may have as the 'top talent' and work on areas you can improve.

EXERCISE **How do you rate as a candidate?**

Imagine you are facing a pre-selection process for a major party. The head of the committee is grilling you in order to assess your suitability to stand as a potential candidate. Rate your answers in response to these 15 questions:

1	2	3	4	5
All the time	Often	Some of the time	Rarely	Never

- Are you a good listener and able to convey to people that you 'get' them and understand their issues?
- Can you project confidence and demonstrate through speaking that you would be a strong advocate on future constituents' issues?
- Can you provide an example of a time when you were able to convince people that you could do something about their problems if you had their support?
- Are you a person of integrity, without skeletons in your closet that could make you vulnerable to attacks?
- Do you have a good network of family, friends and others that you can tap into, to support you with your campaign—either as volunteers or financially?
- Are you able to show up, and be nice and friendly to strangers because you genuinely enjoy talking with people?
- Do you project competence and professionalism and a confidence that you can win?
- Are you competitive and prepared to never give up until it's over?
- Do you have the physical stamina to 'go into battle' and endure a long race?
- Can you clearly articulate your beliefs in the heat of an argument without losing your cool?
- Can you speak clearly, confidently and do 'good media'?
- Are you able to show genuine gratitude to team members and volunteers for their support?

- Are you careful of making mistakes and mindful of risk?
- Are you able to articulate how you are different to the incumbent and other challengers while staying respectful?
- Can you talk about a number of issues impacting on the electorate rather than trying to be a 'single issue' candidate who sees everything through the prism of one thing?

Add up your score; ideally, it is under 40. The lower your score, the better your talent and the more likely you are to run an effective campaign. How do you think the pre-selection committee would rate your answers? Finally, ask yourself if you would take the punt and pre-select you as the candidate? This quiz can show where you may need to strengthen your capability as a candidate.

2. The candidate's family

The candidate needs people she can trust, who have her back no matter what. Family stay in the orbit of the candidate but resist the urge to interfere.

Partners, spouses, siblings, kids and very close friends all play an important role in providing physical and emotional backup for the candidate (while remaining out of the spotlight). They may also be members of the campaign team as they can (usually) be trusted 100% to be there for the candidate when she needs confidential support.

Here are a list of ways in which family members can play a role in supporting the candidate:

- Support behind the scenes. This can include anything from helping with domestic chores to providing a confidence boost before the candidate has to go on stage and deliver a speech.
- Drive the candidate to and from events, support when door knocking and help with leaflet drops.
- Cook delicious, nutritious meals and supply food and drinking water on the campaign trail, which is surprisingly easy to forget if you are a busy candidate.
- Be a 'minder' at forums who can gently guide the candidate to move on if she is cornered by 'time-wasters' who might make her late for the next appointment as well as protecting her from aggressive

people. A secret signal or word from the candidate to the minder in difficult situations can assist here.

- Provide a confidential sounding board for ideas and strategies.
- Mind pets and animals when a candidate is away on the campaign trail.
- Book the candidate respite breaks like an occasional movie night.

At the end of a long day on the campaign trail, sometimes all the candidate needs is to be looked after and a meal prepared for her. Perhaps she needs someone to sit with in companionable silence—no talking about the campaign.

3. Campaign team

Just as an engine composed of many parts and hidden under the hood drives a car, an efficient campaign team in the background is essential to power any campaign.

Successful candidates rely on the support of a diverse team comprised of skilled and experienced people in various roles. Everyone has a job to do and they are resourced to do it. The focus of each role is to help get the candidate elected.

The scale of your campaign and where you are running will inform the size of your team and role allocation. In smaller campaigns (running for a small local council on a tight budget), some members of the campaign team may assume multiple roles. For example, in a local government campaign, a husband and wife team can successfully work together to get a candidate elected to local council. In larger campaigns, like the 2016 Indi campaign there were over 700 people on Team Orange working to get Cathy McGowan successfully re-elected.

Often candidates running for a major party can afford to employ staff for the larger roles in a team. For example, consultants who specialise in running entire campaigns. Many independents and candidates from the micro parties rely on good will from volunteers to take time off and assist in the campaign by joining the campaign team. The amount of people-power support needed for your campaign may be scaled up or down depending on the size of your campaign. Ultimately, whatever level of public office you are contesting, there are fundamental roles that every campaign team needs to consider.

When you look under the hood of a high-performing motor vehicle, you'll hopefully see a well-oiled, functioning engine with many parts working together to drive the car forward. Similarly, in an effective campaign team there will be different members with different roles and everyone is working together to get the candidate elected.

There are approximately 16 main roles that comprise a typical campaign team. Some of these roles may be combined, depending on the scale of your campaign. These are:

- Campaign Manager
- Campaign Coordinator
- Communications Manager
- Political Mentor/Adviser
- Policy Adviser
- Media and Marketing Manager
- Photographer
- Legal Adviser
- IT and Data Management
- Diary Manager/Scheduler
- Finance Manager
- Fundraising Manager
- Volunteer Manager
- Training Coordinator
- Booth Coordinator
- Driver/Minder.

Campaign Manager

The Campaign Manager works hand-in-hand on a day-to-day basis with the candidate. This person oversees every aspect of the campaign, for example, fundraising, budget, operations, volunteers, hiring staff or consultants. They are the candidate's right-hand person and oversee the implementation of the campaign vision while keeping the team on track. Sometimes they may also endorse the campaign/electoral material. This role suits someone with excellent project management and people skills.

Campaign Coordinator

The Campaign Coordinator is responsible for working with the candidate and the team to coordinate the administrative aspects of the campaign. This role is the 'glue' that holds the campaign team together. The Campaign Coordinator has an overview of the whole campaign, manages team meetings, takes and records minutes and delegates any tasks that have fallen through the cracks. They are the 'go to' person for problem solving when others are unavailable and can take the 'team temperature' for feedback to the Campaign Manager.

Communications Manager

The Communications Manager is an experienced communicator responsible for oversight of all media (social and traditional), message and product development. The person in this role often has a journalism background.

Political Mentor/Adviser

The Political Mentor/Adviser is a sounding board for the candidate on political strategy. They provide advice on a suitable response by the candidate to problems and opportunities. They are often a former politician and can provide valuable insight and political savvy for the candidate.

Policy Adviser

For larger campaigns, the Policy Adviser can assist the candidate to develop her policies on issues of interest to the electorate.

Media and Marketing Manager

The Media and Marketing Manager reports to the Communications Manager and organises advertising, interviews, and social and conventional media interactions for the candidate. They also manage the merchandise (for example, t-shirts, stickers, buttons, fridge magnets, shopping lists, posters that you can give away or sell as fundraisers). This person often has a media/communications or public relations background.

Photographer

The photographer works closely with the Media and Communications Manager to take the photos of the candidate on the campaign trail

and at various events. The photos taken are used on the candidate's website and social media feeds.

Legal Adviser

The Legal Adviser provides advice on the legal obligations of the candidate and requirements under the various State or Federal Acts. This person often has a legal background.

IT and Data Manager

The IT and Data Manager is technologically savvy. They are responsible for creating the candidate's campaign website, and tracking incoming and outgoing communication by managing the CRM and other information systems.

Diary Manager

The Diary Manager organises the candidate's diary and schedules time to ensure the candidate is where she needs to be every single day of the campaign. This involves responding to and seeking out invitations for potential events where the candidate can get in front of voters and raise her profile. The Diary Manager also provides the brief and directions before an event, books the transport or accommodation and works with the broader team to coordinate events.

Finance Manager

The Finance Manager will have a background in accounting or finance. This person manages the overall campaign budget. Their task is to manage the systems and processes that record the incoming and outgoing funds for the campaign, manage donations and approve expenditure with guidance from the candidate. They ensure the campaign team meets the legal obligation for reporting financial expenditure.

Fundraiser Manager

This role is vital for raising funds that will fuel the campaign. The Fundraising Manager needs to identify and work with the team to fill gaps in the budget by raising funds. This may be achieved through fundraising events, on-line donation portals, 'phone banking' or working with the candidate to personally approach high-value donors, with a funding request. The role would suit an enthusiastic person who is good at encouraging other people to donate their money to a good cause.

Volunteer Manager

Without volunteers there is no campaign. The 'vols' are involved in everything from fundraising to door knocking to helping on election day. They also help with scrutineering. However, the recruitment of great volunteers needs to be managed by a person who is skilled in working with people. The Volunteer Manager works to assess volunteers' skills, induct them into the team culture and allocate volunteers' tasks. They also need to thank people and keep things fun.

Training Coordinator

The Training Coordinator works with the Volunteer Manager. This role coordinates the training of volunteers. It involves putting systems in place for volunteers in the specific areas where skills are needed. This can involve training on how to carry out door-knocking, running a fundraiser or scrutineering. People with a background in adult education are often great at this role.

Booth Coordinator

The Booth Coordinator works with the Volunteer Coordinator. This role is particularly important in state and federal Elections where volunteers are needed to staff the many polling booths on election day (and the early voting centre). Hundreds of volunteers may be needed to hand out the candidates' How to Vote cards at dozens of booths across the electorate. Friendly volunteers can play a vital role in encouraging 'undecided' voters to support the candidate, especially in tight competitions where every vote counts.

Driver/Minder

The Driver/Minder can be a close family member or friend who provides day-to-day support for the candidate both practically and emotionally during the campaign.

The detailed actions expected of people in these roles is further detailed in Table 3: Basic Campaign Processes to Consider.

4. Kitchen Cabinet: the inner circle of advisers

For many of us, the kitchen is where we eat nourishing food with family and friends. It is somewhere safe to share stories and ask for advice.

When a candidate is out on the campaign trail, a Kitchen Cabinet can be a vital support. It is useful to know who the members of this group will be before the campaign hits full pace. This 'inner circle' group is comprised of trusted friends and associates who provide on-demand support and a sounding board as a candidate's closest unofficial advisers.

The Kitchen Cabinet listens, strategises and provides the candidate confidential advice without fear or favour. They always have the candidate's back. Even if sometimes there are disagreements in opinions, members of the Kitchen Cabinet will always respect the candidate's final decision because, after all, it is her campaign.

The inner advisers could include the Campaign Manager and members from the broader team such as those with policy making and communications experience or a legal and financial background. The Cabinet may also include a close relative like the candidate's partner. It is useful to include a political mentor in this group, someone with political experience who is 'politically savvy'.

5. Volunteers

At the heart of any campaign are the dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who support the candidate by 'doing stuff'. These are the ground troops of any campaign, the foot soldiers on the front line. They know the streets to door knock and the community groups to whom the candidate must speak. They also help raise the candidate's profile by endorsing her legitimacy as a potential representative.

> *Those who do not use local guides are unable to obtain the advantages of the ground.*
>
> —Sun Tzu

Volunteers are the 'local guides' for a candidate. The involvement of ordinary citizens in supporting a candidate to get elected is a critical element to the success of any campaign, particularly for independent candidates who can start at a disadvantage as they may not be as well-known as the incumbent or have a 'party machine' behind them. An independent candidate starts from scratch; therefore, they must build their

volunteer team if they are to take the 'advantages of the ground' in the contest to win public office.

To get elected, it is crucial that time and effort is dedicated to attracting and mobilising volunteers. For Cathy McGowan's Indi Campaigns (2013 and 2016), she was able to build a team of hundreds of volunteers, known as Team Orange. This was a deliberate strategy to democratise participation and support grassroots engagement in politics. Cathy explained 'People felt engaged and part of the process. Many volunteers and supporters said they became interested in politics for the first time and were disillusioned with the major parties. They want politics to be carried out in a respectful and positive manner, with policy the focus rather than personality.'

Cathy worked hard to involve volunteers from diverse backgrounds on her campaign trail, for example, working with youth groups to hold forums on the issues affecting young people in the electorate. One of her aims was to re-energise democracy by harnessing the power of people who wished to make the world better through politics. 'As a candidate, when you invite a volunteer to be part of something they believe in, you are also empowering citizens to play an active part in supporting a robust democracy'.

Team Orange became a significant legacy of the Indi campaign. In 2019, the independent successor to Cathy McGowan, Helen Haines, worked with Cathy and 1700 volunteers to make history as the first independent candidate to succeed another independent candidate in the House of Representatives. Indi provides the example of how hundreds of volunteers—known as the 'Orange Army'—were energised by being engaged in a political campaign. Some of these volunteers went on to stand for office as Independents in Local Government elections as well as State Government elections. Others continue to consider future options to stand for office.

When Cathy McGowan stood in the House of Representatives and delivered her first speech to Federal Parliament in December 2013, she talked about the 'not-so-secret ingredients' of her campaign. Her 'secret' was to effectively harness the power of volunteers who wanted to 'do politics differently'. The power was in mobilising people to become involved at the planning stage so that by the time Cathy launched her campaign, she had a team of warriors at her back committed to getting her elected.

Here's how Cathy thanked the volunteers in her first speech to Parliament in December 2013:

> 'To the volunteers, all of you, who staffed the polling booths, ran offices at Alexandra, Wangaratta, Wodonga and Benalla, the door knockers, those who made the coffees, cups of tea and arranged food, the people who ran classes and shared their skills, the scrutineers, organisers of local gatherings, the young people, the lawyers, designers, marketers, diary keepers, accountants, the reporters, journalists and the 'makers' of all things orange—all of you: thank you for your courage, your belief and conviction that we could do it. THANK YOU!'

Volunteers not only assist with a myriad of tasks on the campaign; they build support for the candidate by formally endorsing the candidate sending a message of support to their family, friends and community. When a volunteer shares the candidate's values and vision for change, they become a serious force in helping a candidate get elected.

How many volunteers do you need?

For a smaller scale campaign, you may only need a few willing helpers. For a larger scale campaign, you will need a lot more volunteers to help with the tasks that will get you elected.

In a 2018 interview with The Age journalist Max Koslowski, Tony Windsor, a former Independent in both the NSW and Federal Parliaments, talked about the advice he has often shared with candidates over his 22 years in office. Mr Windsor reported that he told Independents to consider this threshold of support:

> 'When they say, 'I want to run as an independent, and I think I can win. What do I need to do?' The first thing I say is 'can you go and get 50 friends and get them to support you? And then ask them to do particular jobs and raise money. If you've still got 50, run... If you can gain a groundswell of support and those people are prepared to get out in front, they'll all have relatives and friends they talk to at the pub.'[11]

Signing up volunteers

Sometimes all it takes is a personal 'ask' from the candidate and people jump at the chance to come on board and be part of something bigger than themselves.

Managing campaign volunteers can be a huge job, which is why this task is often delegated to a highly competent Volunteer Manager who is a good 'people person'. Depending on the scale and size of the campaign, there are any number of tasks that a candidate can delegate to volunteers. These include:

- Assist the candidate with door knocking and canvassing potential voters.
- Hand out flyers with the candidate at venues such as local train stations, bus stops, shops and supermarkets.
- Write letters to the local paper in support of or to defend the candidate.
- Organise fundraising events or movie nights at their home.
- Donate money to the campaign.
- Find creative ways to promote the candidate.
- Do endorsements for media highlighting the benefits of the candidate.
- Help to curate social media.
- Endorse the candidate through their own social media feed.
- Put up corflutes and yard signs that may be erected in supporters' gardens or on farm gates in rural areas.
- Staff the booths at early voting centres and on election day to hand out H2V cards. Local volunteers interacting with voters can make a huge difference.
- Scrutineer at the close of the poll to ensure the integrity of the voting process.
- Have fun!

Don't forget to look after your volunteers

Military history shows that no battle was ever won without foot soldiers. We know that having willing warriors alone won't lead to victory in battle. History also tells us that 'an army marches on its belly'. All soldiers—and by extension, volunteers in your campaign team—must be nourished and looked after.

As a candidate, consider your volunteers as a precious asset. Remember to give them regular, positive feedback and ensure there are clear processes for on-boarding, supporting and managing volunteers.

It is the candidate's job to create a positive culture and demonstrate leadership; it doesn't just happen. A positive culture, where volunteers are respected and reaffirmed, requires effort and attention. From the moment they sign up to the moment they pack up the booth on election day, volunteers must be treated with respect and gratitude. By the nature of the support, volunteers are not helping a candidate for money. Many are involved because they want to be part of a positive movement for change.

Building a sense of connection is important for volunteers. In the three Independent for Indi campaigns, regional campaign 'hubs' were established for the duration of the campaign across the electorate. Local community hubs in vacant shops or loaned offices became hives of activity, offering a warm welcome and a place for engagement, discussion and debriefing. Regular hands-on training sessions gave volunteers opportunities to learn new skills, meet others and discuss political actions.

Volunteers are valued for their 'footwork' and hard work. Their skills, creativity and ideas are essential to every campaign. While controls and protocols are required to manage the risks around a volunteer workforce, there also needs to be thought given to creating an environment where ideas can thrive. This adds to the flexibility needed in a campaign.

If a candidate is ungrateful or appearing to be 'up themselves', volunteers will desert the campaign in droves. Therefore, a candidate needs processes to regularly thank their volunteers for all the hours and effort they put into the campaign. A 'pissed off' volunteer is a dangerous liability for the campaign. If an angry volunteer has reason to believe they have been treated badly, they may seek 'payback' and attempt to damage the candidate's reputation. No campaign wants its volunteers to be the story. Encourage volunteers to be mindful that how they act and what they say in public can reflect back on the candidate—positively and negatively.

Team Yellow's game plan

Jacqui Hawkins is a young woman passionate about politics, family, community and sport. She ran as an Independent candidate for the state seat of Benambra in the 2018 Victorian State Election. With her Team Yellow and strong grassroots campaigning, Jacqui's campaign pushed one of Victoria's safest Liberal seats Benambra into marginal territory. Jacqui is mad about soccer and says she couldn't have achieved what she did without her Team Yellow behind her.

‘Setting up your campaign team is like getting a soccer team together. You have your defence, your attack and your game plan. You have an audience of interest building, a crowd of supporters, the opposition supporters and spectators keenly looking on.

Before the game kicks off, you’ve taken into account the opposition’s strengths and weaknesses and you know about the audience you are playing to and need to play to (your electorate). The team’s aim is to convert the most goals that will win you the game (get you elected). Once the starting whistle is blown, it’s game on, you’re campaigning. This is when the team takes to the pitch and starts executing the game strategy.’

6. Supporters

In order to get elected, a candidate must successfully gain the support of the broader community to build funds and to canvass votes. This means heading out into the ‘galaxy’ of the electorate and beyond.

There are three groups of broader supporters. The first group may already know and support you. Or they may be aligned to your values, and support your vision. This group is open to hearing more about your advocacy on the issues they care about.

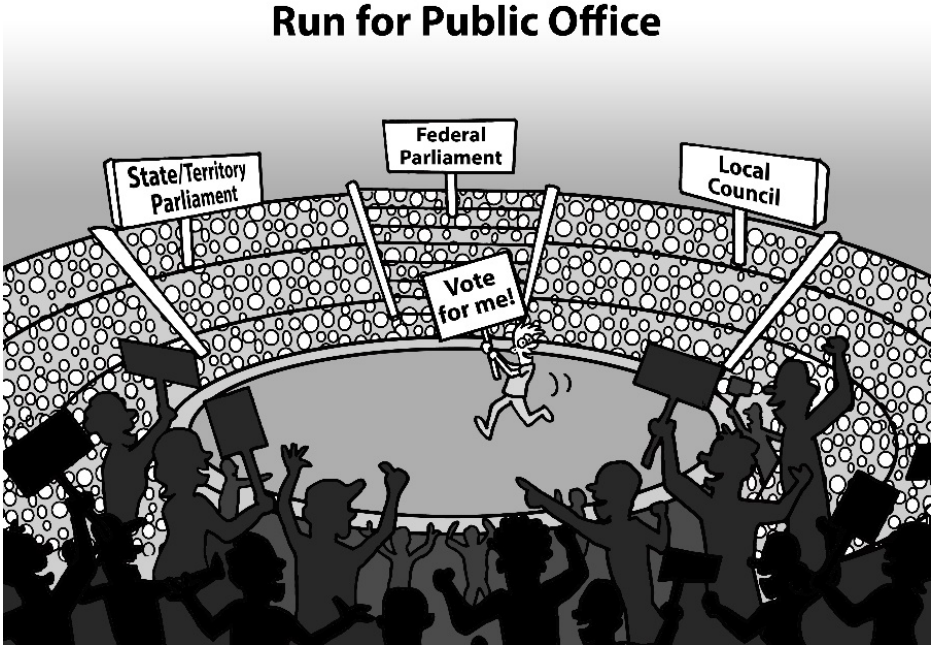
A second group of potential supporters may want to support you because you represent something different to the current party in power (or the incumbent), and they are seeking change. The increasing number of independent representatives in state and federal parliament is evidence that voters are looking for something other than candidates from the main parties. Depending on the mood of the country, your chances may often rely on how voters feel about the ‘vibe’ of the country and what their feelings are regarding the party in power (federally and at a state level).

The third group of potential supporters may dislike the incumbent (or other candidates) to the extent that they will support anything other than your competitor (or the party he represents). As an example, when Cathy McGowan first contested Indi in 2013, what was billed as ‘the battle for Indi’ attracted significant media attention as the competition grew. The press depicted the contest as a ‘David vs Goliath’ battle between a long-term, unpopular Liberal incumbent in a safe seat and an ‘upstart’ independent. The national spotlight shone on Indi with media reporting that the then sitting Member

(Sophie Mirabella) was disliked by many people. As news spread that there was a chance an independent could win Indi, donations began to flow into the Indi campaign from not only within the electorate but from national and international donors.

A campaign plan must have strategies in place to reach non-aligned supporters from all three support groups. These groups will support your campaign as potential volunteers, donors and ultimately as people who will vote for you.

On election day, a candidate is electable when she has been able to raise her profile with broader supporters and translate this into votes. If she is a Councillor candidate, she should be well known across her Ward and Municipality. If she is running for State or Federal Parliament, she should work hard to become well known across her Electorate and perhaps beyond.



Plan your time

The earlier you start your campaign, the more effective you will be. So, what are you waiting for?

While it is said that time stands still for no man—or woman—this is never truer than when said in the context of the relentless march towards election day.

While the scale may change for different levels of a campaign, the principles of time management for candidates stays the same. The campaign always finishes on polling day, even if the results may not be confirmed for a few days. Everything after election day (or E-Day) is, by definition, not the campaign (until the next one begins).

Whether you are a candidate running a large campaign in a super-competitive federal seat or standing for your local council in a small Ward, the date that voters go to the poll is the magnet for the end of your campaign. The sooner you set your focus on this day (and the early voting period in the weeks before), the more effective you will be in planning your precious time over the campaign. Once you start your campaign, you will inexorably be drawn towards E-Day on the calendar. In most municipal or state and territory elections in Australia, that date is fixed; hence, it is never too early to start planning to run for public office. In fact, the sooner the better—even two to three years out and especially if you need to factor in leave from your paid employment.

In federal elections, the situation is a bit trickier as the poll date can be set anytime within a three-year cycle by the Prime Minister. Campaigns can be short (four weeks) or long (up to three months). It is wise to use the best available intelligence as to when a federal election might be called and be ready for it all to change in an instant if a snap-poll is called. Be prepared.

> *In the previous two years, I had a plan based on the feedback from my community (collected from surveys and community forums) and I worked hard on the priority issues my community wanted addressed and delivered outcomes. I won office, because I heeded the maxim of previous Prime Minister John Howard that you 'can't fatten a pig on market day'.*
>
> —Rebekha Sharkie on her approach to her second campaign for a by-election in the seat of Mayo, 2018.

Short campaigns can be fast and furious, as early voting centres may open a couple of weeks before election day, leaving little time to establish a presence once an election is called. This is why the work to get elected must be done well ahead of an election being called.

Many candidates work a 'day job' in addition to running for public office and will have to consider whether they need to take time off to work on their campaign. In some cases, candidates may need to take official leave or resign from their employment in order to be an eligible candidate. Check the requirements in the relevant Electoral Commission's *Candidate Handbook*. If the handbook is not yet available online for your election, read the one from the previous election as much will stay the same between elections.

Viewed simply in the table below, there are three stages of a campaign: before, during and after the election.

	TIME		
	Before announcing	**During the campaign**	**After the election**
ACTIONS	Ensure you meet the legal requirements to nominate	Begin the 300- or 100-day count down	When the polls close, have a party to thank supporters
	Manage or eliminate all previous social media risks	Communications 1. Manage the media: social, traditional, earned 2. Advertising 3. Brochures, flyers, merchandise, H2V cards	Personally thank all your major donors
	Build profile	Build and manage the database	Consider the future: Reflect, Recover, Review
	Assemble your team and delegate process development	Fundraise	Submit relevant returns to the Electoral Commission
	Clarify your WHY and confirm the main campaign messages	Organise volunteers (training, tasks, management, communications)	Have a Plan B in case you wish to request a countback
	Map out your 3-year, 2-year, 300- or 100-day plan	Talk about your policies	Take down corflutes, promotional material, billboards, posters, etc.
	Announce you are the candidate	Hold events, more events and even more events	Take a holiday

Table 4: The three stages of the campaign: map your actions

How often is there a Federal Election?

According to the Australian Parliamentary Library that lists the dates and timing of all elections in Australia, 'the calling of a Commonwealth election is partly a matter of political judgement and timing, a constitutional and legislative framework governs the electoral timetable and process'.

The maximum term of the House of Representatives is set by Section 28 of the Constitution, which states: *Every House of Representatives shall continue for three years from the first meeting of the House, and no longer, but may be sooner dissolved by the Governor-General.*

An analysis of past federal elections shows that Federal Parliament usually only lasts for 32 months—139 weeks or 973 days. The Senate lasts for three or six years. Compare this with State Government, which usually lasts for four years, and most Local Councils which are also every four years. For both State and Local levels with a fixed term, a four-year term is 208 weeks—1460 days.

Planning to meet your campaign deadlines

If you have ever caught an aeroplane, you will know that a flight is never delayed for a tardy passenger. When catching an international flight, you are most likely to have already organised your up-to-date passport and visa well before your departure date. On the day, you will probably allow plenty of time to get to the airport to check-in and go through customs. You do not want to miss that flight.

The same holds for campaign deadlines such as candidate enrolment dates and filling in the paperwork. If you miss the crucial dates for action, there are no second chances. The election goes on without you. These are known as the 'hard' deadlines. Alternatively, the 'soft' deadlines are ones that have some flexibility built in like when a radio advertisement may be aired.

A thorough campaign timeline is fundamental to every successful campaign. The candidate and the campaign team will develop this timeline by working backwards from election day and populating the calendar with all the tasks that need to be completed and by what dates. This will ensure all requirements are met on time.

Planning the timeline is crucial to this stage of pre-planning the campaign race. For many candidates, planning can actually commence years out from the election time. For example, in some jurisdictions a candidate must live in the ward or seat where they wish to nominate for office. Hence some candidates select the state or locality where they will live based on the future prospects of running for office in that state, seat or ward years before they actively begin their campaign. This gives them time to build their networks and profile.

It is possible to build a fast and furious or 'pop-up' campaign over a short time. In January 2019, Zali Steggall, OAM, announced that she intended to contest the Federal seat of Warringah as an independent candidate. Over the next three and half months, 'Team Zali' was able to mobilise thousands of supporters and 1400 volunteers in a campaign where the voters of Warringah rejected the policies of the Liberal Party incumbent of 25 years, the former Prime Minister, Tony Abbott.

How to get started

It is time to get started. Whether your election is three years away, one year or closer—there is no time to waste.

First, purchase a large wall calendar to place on the walls at campaign headquarters (HQ). Ideally, choose an 18-month calendar or two 12-month calendars side by side. At the early stages of your campaign, HQ may simply be your kitchen, home office or a specific place from which you plan to run the campaign. Secondly, download the *Candidate Handbook* from the website of your relevant Electoral Commission.



Stand in front of your new calendar and circle election day in RED. This is your election day, E-Day. Begin to populate your campaign timeline by considering the following:

- Work backwards from election day and fill in the timelines for enrolment as required by the Australian Electoral Commission or your State/Territory Commission. These are non-negotiable legal deadlines and must be met in order for you to be an eligible candidate. Include the actual times as sometimes the deadline can be set for midday rather than close of business.
- Do you live in the electorate or ward where you want to run? If this is important to you, you may need to consider the electoral

boundaries and ensure you are enrolled to vote in your desired locality.

- If you wish to do bulk mail outs, check Australian Post deadlines for delivery of bulk or un-addressed mail so it is timed to reach voters prior to the election period. This can be especially important if you are contesting postal elections (some local council elections).
- Set a date to announce your candidacy and consider holding an additional campaign launch event to raise your profile.
- Allocate one person to be the diary manager where their role is to maintain an online, updated master-schedule calendar for you and the team with all your events meticulously scheduled, recorded and updated.
- On the schedule include media opportunities, and events like fundraisers or meet the candidate forums.
- Start to manage any social media risks before you make the announcement that you are running.

Communications planning: it's time to get ready to run



As a candidate planning to run for office and before we proceed to the next stage of this guide, check in and measure your progress so far. Have you considered these planning steps for your campaign?

- You've worked out your position in terms of the policies and platforms on which you will campaign. This is in response to your research that identified the issues about which voters are concerned.
- You can clearly differentiate yourself from the competition as a unique candidate.
- You are confident you have good processes in place to manage your inward and outward communication flow.
- You have a team that is able to come on board and assist in a campaign.

- You are starting to build a wider base of volunteers and supporters who are keen to help you get elected.
- You know the essential deadlines you have to meet and you have an action plan that will take you up to the election period.

The next step is to develop your communication plan. That is a strategic plan to get you in front of the voters. It will include a well-crafted message so that come the election voters will put you above your competitors.

Eurovision and your campaign

Avid viewers of the European singing-talent quest, Eurovision, may be familiar with the saying that 'Winning is all about the singer, the song and the dress'. Similarly, a successful election campaign is fundamentally about building your brand through your message, your look and your performance so that people will ultimately select you as the winner of the competition.

Like Eurovision, in your campaign:

- The **singer** and the 'talent' of the campaign is, of course, the candidate.
- The **song** is your message that is 'sung' through your communication strategy.
- The **dress** is the 'look' of the candidate's brand, which includes the visuals that underpin your message.

The Candidate

Brand you

Nearly every election comes down to a competition between various candidates, unless you have the rare experience of running in an uncontested seat where you are automatically elected (some small, municipal wards). In a typical election, there are several candidates contesting the seat. In marketing terms, the candidates can be likened to 'products' that are chosen by consumers. For a voter, it's a bit like choosing from boxes of cereal lined up on a shelf. Each have different attributes and various sizes but eventually only one ends up in your shopping trolley.

Ultimately, to be successful, a candidate and her 'brand' must stand out as No. 1 on the ballot paper so that consumers (voters) pick her above the other products (candidates).

It can be easier to raise your profile in an area if you are already well known, for example, choosing to stand for State Parliament after previously serving a term as the local mayor. If you live in rural and regional Australia, or if you are an outstanding retired sports star or a well-known agri-politician, this is a common pathway for candidates to build their profile, particularly for men. For instance, three former Victorian Farmers Federation presidents have been elected to the Victorian Parliament and a fourth (Andrew Broad) was elected to Federal Parliament in 2013. The list of former AFL footy players in politics at a local, state and federal level is a long one. Zali Steggall, OAM, MP, had an Olympic career spanning ten years. Prior to standing as an independent candidate for Warringah, she was known as Australia's most internationally successful alpine skier, winning a bronze medal in slalom at the 1998 Winter Olympics and a World Championship gold medal in 1999.

If a candidate is not well known in their electorate, the challenge is to raise their profile and awareness of their 'brand'. A candidate can achieve this with the delivery of a well-designed communications plan, based on the candidate's message and their brand—a combination of message, look, and logo, etc.



Before you announce you are running for office, clear your digital footprint and buy your 'digital real-estate'. (See more in *Dirty Tricks* page 170.)

A word on your appearance

Machiavelli, the famous 16th century political philosopher, was right when he said, 'Men in general judge more from appearances than from reality'. A candidate's appearance can influence other people's perception of how they would behave if elected to office and how much people can trust them.

In a perfect world, what people wear shouldn't matter as much as what they are advocating for as a candidate. The message should matter more than looks, right? However, the evidence is that people make assumptions about others based on what they are wearing, and candidates can factor this into their campaign branding.

Research has found that 'good looking' candidates are more likely to get elected. Known as the 'attractiveness bias', it appears some voters find it easier to look than listen when it comes to making up their mind about whom to vote for.

According to *US Psychology Today*, current research indicates that citizens 'vote with their eyes, rather than their minds. The result? Better-looking candidates do better in political elections. The attractiveness bias can persist even when additional information about the candidate comes to light'.[12]

A candidate's 'dress code' can often provide a subtle message to potential voters about who they are. Not much has changed since Shakespeare noted that 'the clothes maketh the man'.

Sometimes an idealistic candidate may make the mistake of thinking their message is the main element and neglect paying attention to their appearance in order to avoid being seen as 'vain'. The reality is that the public notices details about a candidate's appearance long before a candidate even stands up to voice the 'vote-for-me' pitch. Assumptions and judgements about appearance strongly influence how citizens vote. The upshot for candidates is that if what you're wearing on the campaign trail is distracting from your message, you run the risk that people may look at you or your photo and decide not to vote for you.

However, in the end, it's not all about looks. After all, it's also said that 'Politics is showbiz for ugly people'. Cast an eye over the front benches of State and Federal Parliaments and it's obvious that voters don't always elect politicians who rate highly in the looks department.

More and more, voters are seeking out candidates that are not 'career politicians'. A candidate can make this work for them despite the attractiveness bias. It is still important to project an image of someone who is competent to do the job of being an elected representative so 'scrub up' and look presentable. Most voters want to support candidates who are skilled and capable, someone whom they can trust to listen and solve problems. Looking professional reinforces this perception.

Conveying your best image in a communications plan is not just about a fabulous campaign photo. It is ultimately about your message and that can be communicated through your language, style and tone. This will position you as a suitable candidate for office.

The message

Craft your message

A great advertising slogan underpins every campaign. It makes you 'Think Different' (Apple) and 'Keeps Going and Going' (Energizer) so you 'Just Do It' (Nike) and buy the 'Finger Licking Good' product (KFC).

The first step in planning your campaign communication strategy is to craft the basic message of the campaign. Every political campaign is fundamentally built on a pitch to the electorate that says 'vote for me because ...'

The candidate's message is designed to convince voters to support the candidate come the election. A winning campaign message establishes why you are the ideal candidate so that voters have a clear choice between you and the incumbent or the competition. A well-crafted message will convey your conviction and help connect you to the average voter. It shows you care about the things that matter to them. It also signals your competency to fulfil the role of public office.

When crafting your message, there are three aspects to consider. A campaign message must **resonate** with the issues of voters. It must **differentiate** you from your competition (the incumbent or main challengers) and it must **motivate** voters to support you on the ballot.

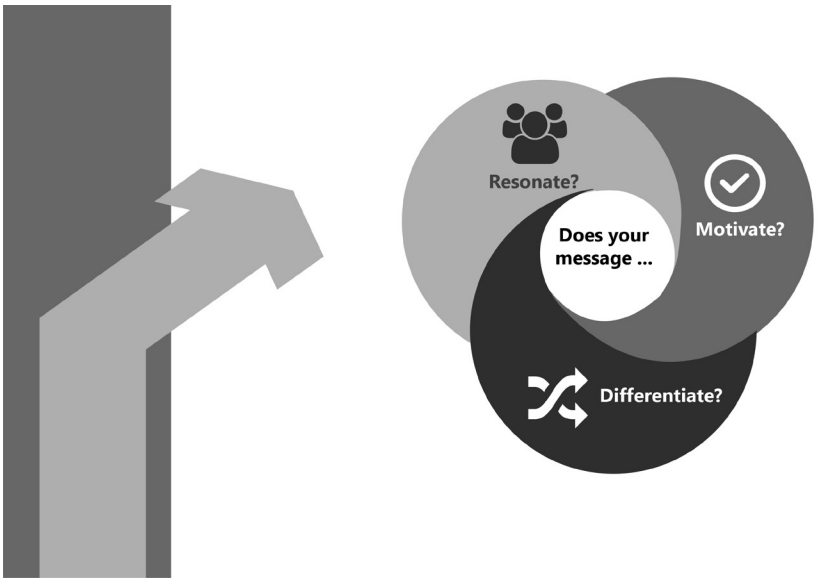


Figure 5: Crafting your message

1. **Make your message RESONATE**

   A winning campaign message must talk about the issues that resonate with voters. A successful candidate gets elected not only by conveying that she 'gets' the issues voters care about but that she has the capability to do something about it.

   Earlier in this guide you considered the demographics of your voters; therefore, you have begun to understand more about their 'pain points'. Now it's time to craft your message in a winning way that addresses voters' issues. Your message should focus on the matters relevant to the level of government that you are contesting.

   Some of the issues people are likely to care about for the three levels of government typically include:

   - Local Council: roads, rates, rubbish, planning, Councillor behaviour, kindergartens, facilities (pools, libraries), assets, services.
   - State and Territory Government: health/hospitals, primary and high school education, crime/police, roads, rail, employment, taxes, 'liveability', infrastructure.
   - Federal Government: the national economy, security, tertiary/TAFE education, infrastructure projects, climate change, refugees and immigration, communication (internet and mobile phone coverage), taxes, jobs, workplace laws, GST, Medicare.

   If you want to know more about what voters care about, study these sources:

   - Local newspapers.
   - Letters to the editor.
   - Talkback radio.
   - Results from previous elections.
   - Any polls that have been conducted on voters' intentions.
   - Feedback from your door knocking.
   - Once nominated, candidates will receive emails from interest groups seeking to lobby and understand your position on various issues.
   - 'Meet the candidate' forums and the questions raised.

- Comments on social media (such as Facebook community pages or the comment stream on your competitor's social media).

Craft your message so it resonates with your voting community. Plug in. Listen. Reflect. Then test your message with your friends, neighbours and family. If they don't care about what you are saying and how you are saying it, then neither will your voters. Re-work it until it resonates.

2. Make your message DIFFERENTIATE you from competitors

Running for public office is a competition. Ultimately, there can only be one winner on election day; you win and get elected or you become an 'also ran'. So how do you stand out from your competitors?

At this planning stage, it is time to consider the positive ways in which you are different to your competitors. Then you can build a winning message that articulates your 'edge' and means you can ultimately differentiate yourself as a positive choice in voters' minds when they come to make their vote.

You need to craft a message that cuts through and assists you to stand out from the crowd. Anyone who has tried to manage a huge ballot paper in a small voting booth knows the competition can be significant. For instance, in the May 2019 federal elections, 458 candidates contested 40 Senate seats and 1,056 candidates contested 151 seats in the House of Representatives: 1514 in total.[13]

On average, state seats may run a field of five to six candidates. This might be slightly less for a local council ward or it could be a lot more. In the 2016 Victorian Local Council elections, the City of Wyndham Council had a record 95 candidates vying for 11 positions.

To win, you must position yourself as the preferred candidate with a clear, credible message that differentiates you from your competition, and the incumbent or main challengers. This can be a challenge in areas that are known for 'rusted-on' voters who consistently vote No. 1 for 'their' political party. If you are contesting a seat where a large majority of the primary vote will routinely favour either the ALP or the Coalition, you have to work very hard to change habitual voting behaviour.

EXERCISE **Compare how you contrast with your main competitor(s)**

Step 1: Refer to the SWOT analysis (Part One) that helped you to better understand your competitors' strengths and weaknesses. Consider that analysis as you craft your message to convey how you would make a better representative. There may also be other candidates that could nominate at the last minute.

Step 2: Study the differences that potentially make you a stronger bet for public office than your competition. Does your competition have a weak spot that you can subtly address (while staying respectful)?

Step 3: List the skills, background and experience you bring to the electorate that your competitor doesn't. If you can, share something quirky about yourself as this makes you a more memorable candidate in voters' minds. (Former conservative UK Prime Minster, Margaret Thatcher is considered one of the most influential politicians of the 20th century and famously used the fact that she grew up as a 'grocer's daughter' to appeal to working class voters.)

Step 4: List the aspects of your competition that are in contrast to you. In this step, gather your 'intel' from a range of sources such as:

- Web search of news items.
- Personal details, business, political, and civic involvement.
- Any media clips (radio, TV, social media).
- Groups they belong to including service, religious, sporting and community clubs.
- Where they stand on key issues?
- What do locals say?
- Results from previous campaigns they may have run.
- Political party support base (Who funds him or her? Who advises or mentors him or her?)

Step 5: Once you have gathered this data, it's time to draw up the Leesburg Grid on yourself, as a candidate, and on your main challenger and opponent(s) to help plan out your messaging and strategy.

EXERCISE **The Leesburg Grid**



1. List what your campaign team thinks about your strengths: what you have to say about you.
2. List what your campaign team thinks are the best lines of attack on your opponent: what you have to say about your opponent.
3. List what your opponent is likely saying about you and what they think are the best lines of attack on your candidacy. Be honest! Time to consider any skeletons in the closet that could be attacked.
4. List what your opponent might say about themselves. What does your opponent think their own strengths are?

When you have completed the Leesburg Grid, you will be able to highlight your strengths and craft a message that will differentiate you from your opponent. Your message could subtly address your competition on their perceived weaknesses and seek to negate their apparent strengths. It will also assist you to negate potential attacks from your competition in the future (see *What Could Go Wrong*? page 169).

3. Make your message MOTIVATE voters

Ultimately, to get elected, people must be motivated to vote for you over your competition. In addition, if you are standing as an independent or as a candidate with a micro party, you must motivate voters to switch to you rather than following their habitual voting patterns.

A candidate can plan to motivate potential voters by developing a message and campaign strategy that specifically targets swinging voters on the issues about which they care. The message encourages voters to switch from the major parties to you because you can fix things that others can't.

By this stage of the plan, consider if you have:

- Calculated your 'magic vote number' that shows the swing and number of first preference votes you would need to get elected? This will help you understand how many voters you need to persuade to vote for you.
- Built a directory list of all the issues voters in your ward or electorate are concerned about? This will help you position yourself to reach supporters and swinging voters with conversations on the things about which they care.
- Developed a plan to address some of these issues with actions? This will help build your credibility as a competent representative who will change things for the better when you get elected.

The 4-by-3 formula to craft your message

Let's assume that at this stage you have a good understanding of the issues that resonate in your local area; you can articulate how you differ from your main challenger(s); and you have an action plan to address the issues of the swinging voters so they are motivated to vote for you. With this research behind you, it is time to craft the campaign messages.

People lead busy lives and are constantly exposed to information and bombarded with data from a variety of sources. How will your message cut through this constant 'white noise' of information overload??

The best a candidate can expect voters to remember about you is one or two things. Certainly, no more than three main messages. Therefore, it's

crucial to condense your main campaign messages to approximately three simple statements that can be discussed at different opportunities. The 4-by-3 formula is a practical way to pull this all together. It will assist you to scale up or down your main points depending on what you need to communicate and how you plan to do this.



Four steps to developing your campaign message

1. Imagine you are writing your big picture manifesto: write what you stand for and your plans for change (once elected). If you don't know where to start, select your top three themes and write one page on each. Think back to your Unique Selling Position and the issues you identified that were on voters' minds. Write about WHY you are running; the ISSUES you are hoping to address; and the ACTION you would take if you were in office. Consider your strengths and how you contrast to the rest of the candidates.
2. In this next step, try to refine the three pages down to three, smaller paragraphs of approximately 170 words on each issue. Imagine you are writing up some talking points for a five-minute speech. Keep it simple, inspiring and practical.
3. Then, see if you can reduce each of the paragraphs down to three sentences of 25—35 words or fewer. Imagine you are drafting a 100-word statement or an advertisement in a newsletter.
4. Finally, try to capture your message in three words. Imagine this as a campaign slogan on a t-shirt or a bumper sticker.

When you are done, it's time to practise your response to the question: *Why are you running for office?*

Try responding out loud with a 20-second answer, a one-minute answer and a five-minute answer. Keep the message clear, concise and authentic. Work on capturing your WHY, the main ISSUES you will address and your ACTION to fix things up. The challenge is to 'sell yourself' to you first. Would you vote for you? If not, keep adjusting your answer until you would.

At a very basic analysis, a message should have three parts:

- I am a capable representative.

- I 'get' what you are annoyed about, and I am able to change these things for the better, and more effectively than my competition.
- Vote for me please.

Once you start campaigning, you will constantly be saying to people 'I am running for public office because ....' So, it's worthwhile taking the time, in this planning stage, to craft a range of responses that can be applied and modified to suit any situation.

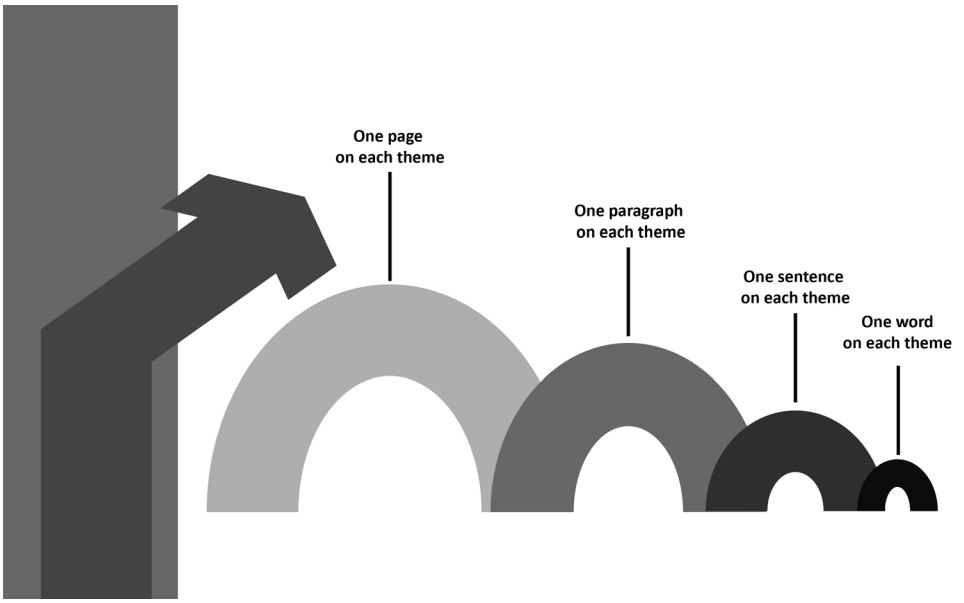


Figure 6: Structuring your message

Does it pass the Pub Test?

A candidate needs a strong message that convinces 'ordinary people' to vote for her. In Australia, this is known as 'passing the pub test' where it is literally tried out at a pub, local cafe, church, sporting or service club you attend.

Is your message good enough to convince ordinary people to vote for you? It should be one, short, interesting sentence. If you sat at the local watering hole or cafe and began talking about your campaign, could you convince ordinary people to vote for you? Does it differentiate *you* from the opposition? Does it motivate them to vote for *you*?

Ask someone, whose opinion you trust, to listen as you spruik your message. Do you come across as:

- Believable?
- Authentic?
- Trustworthy?
- Decent?
- Honest?
- Capable?
- Caring?
- A 'good bloke' or a 'great woman'?
- Charismatic?



Does your slogan also work as a bumper sticker?

Test it against these classic political slogans:

- Gough Whitlam: It's time
- Kevin Rudd 2007: Kevin '07
- Barak Obama: Yes we can
- Kerryn Phelps: Your independent voice
- Jacqui Lambie: Putting Tasmania first
- Don Chipp: Keep the bastards honest
- Rebekha Sharkie: Doing politics differently

Communications planning

You've worked out WHAT you need to say in your messages. You understand WHO you need to reach with your pitch. Now, it's time to write your communications plan which will set out HOW you will deliver your message to voters.

Your campaign communications plan gets your message out to voters, by utilising support from team members who come from a journalism, PR, social media, or marketing and advertising background, you can take your campaign to the next stage.

A typical communications plan builds a strategy to reach the media (both traditional and social) with the aim of raising a candidate's profile through her brand, press and advertising. The plan also considers a strategy to directly reach voters through the mail (addressed or un-addressed letters), phone banking and SMS messaging. The plan considers how to best mobilise supporters through products like t-shirts, yard signs or corflutes, stickers and posters. It's built on an image of the candidate and consistently reflects her message right down to the logo, colours, font and campaign slogan. For a contemporary example of a powerful, memorable and symbolic brand identity, see the design of US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who had friends to help design unique communication material as a successful first-time candidate.[14]

A communications plan will consider ways to generate media, for the candidate, through free and paid opportunities. Free media is also known as 'earned media' and refers to publicity gained through promotional efforts other than paid advertising. Examples of earned media includes stories about the candidate at an event that appears on the TV, radio or newspaper. It may also could include letters to the editor from the candidate or when a candidate calls talkback radio on an issue of concern to voters.

Endorsements

Consider the potential impact when a well-known and respected person is willing, for no fee, to endorse a candidate as a person who is worth voting for. It's priceless and needs to be considered in the communications plan.

For example, consider a strategy for encouraging endorsements on social media where a re-tweet or Facebook or Instagram share by an enthusiastic supporter can reach a much broader network for the candidate and carry the authority of a friend's recommendation. This is the stage to engage with younger members of your team, the Millennials and Gen Z kids. While they may not have much experience in campaigning they usually know a lot about social media and their experience can be invaluable to a campaign. They can also swing a lot of other young people (and their relatives) over to your campaign as supporters and voters.

Paid media can be effective in raising the candidate's profile with voters. This includes advertisements on local TV, radio, newspapers and billboards or the sides of buses and bus-stops. It can be particularly effective by targeting certain demographics of voters through social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Google ads and promotions on Twitter and Instagram. Digital marketing campaigns also focus on software that enables the marketing plan

to implement 'geo-targeting' of content and advertising, that is, place-based messaging on local issues of concerns. The Palmer United Party used this strategy in the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election by geo-targeting voters through text messages promoting different election promises depending on the recipient's location. This lead to some backlash from voters concerned about their privacy being breached.[15]

Traditional media

Traditional media might be old but it isn't dead yet. Voters still watch TV, listen to the radio and read the newspaper, so it is an important consideration for a candidate who wants to communicate her message out to the electorate.



In 2017, a survey by the consulting firm Deloitte found:

'Not only is watching TV and video content on any device the preferred entertainment activity for 59% of Australians (alongside browsing the internet), we are also watching more videos or TV show content each week than ever before and we are binge watching for longer'. It also mentioned that traditional forms of accessing news such as TV, print newspapers, radio and magazines was stable and used by 55% of respondents in 2017 compared with 54% in 2016.[16]

Get social

A candidate must start building their social media strategy before officially announcing they will run for office. This enables them to establish a presence that they will maintain throughout their campaign and build a following. Promoting their message on social media platforms enables a candidate to be agile and respond to the issues of the day, adapting the message immediately depending on the situation or breaking news.

A Sensis study on Australian's social media use reported that eight out of ten citizens are regular users of social media. So, if 80 percent of your voting public are on social media, then it follows that every campaign must have a strong presence there too. The report also found that social media use was particularly high among 18–29 year olds (99 percent penetration) compared with 86 percent among 40–49 year olds, and 47 percent for those aged 65+.[17]

Most voters are digitally savvy. They expect their candidate to be across a range of platforms. A social media strategy enables a candidate to meet them where they are—online. A communications plan for social media needs to establish the candidate's presence on various social media platforms, as well as an advertising and endorsement strategy.

At this planning stage, it is a good idea to purchase your 'social media real estate' so it is not 'stolen' by your competitor (discussed further in *Dirty Tricks* page 170). This will include buying your website name (yourname.com & yourname.com.au). If you have a slogan, you may want to purchase the domain name. You would also be wise to work with your IT support person to set up your Facebook page, even if you are not yet ready to launch as it doesn't have to be published yet. This could be [your name] for [your seat or ward].

To reach voters, these are the following social media platforms that a candidate could consider:

Essential

- Set up the candidate's website with the capability to capture contact details of subscribers and supporters and enable people to make donations. The candidate can also post regular 'on the trail' blogs on the site.
- Develop an email list for communicating with team members, volunteers and general supporters and integrate with a CRM.

- Set up a Facebook page to link with other community groups and post updates.
- Get on Instagram to regularly post photos of the campaign trail.
- Connect with Twitter to stay in touch with local media and breaking news in your seat.

Other options

- Snapchat for happy snaps, stories and dispatches from the campaign trail.
- YouTube for online video and advertisements.
- SMS (short messages service) for voters (best to use with supporters who have opted in, in order to avoid backlash on privacy issues).

Promotion and marketing

- Tailored advertising on Google, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Building endorsements.

Social media tips

#Hashtags

Hashtags link your campaign narrative into the larger conversations happening on social media. Some examples include: #NSWVotes2019, #AusPol, #VicElection, #SAVotes, #IndiTalks. You can customise common hashtags to reflect your campaign with #[name]Council, #[SeatName]Votes. When you post, don't forget to use the relevant hashtags and maybe even craft one of your own.

Memes

When you are trying to be memorable and stand out in a crowd, memes (used carefully) can be a great way to build your brand recognition. Memes (photos or GIFs with text) can be innovative and are a fun way to connect with younger voters.

Instagram

It's said that 'a picture is worth a thousand words' and Instagram is the perfect tool for this. Plus it's free. It's also a good way to reach millennial and younger

voters. In addition to posting photos, you can upload a story (for example, a video about the campaign launch) to your account and decorate it with captions, GIFs, emoji's and more.

Hootsuite

This free app allows you to manage all of your social media accounts in one visual dashboard. It means you can reduce the time spent bouncing between various social media tabs and re-logging into various accounts. Posts can be scheduled to go live when there is an optimal number of people online.

Short videos

Short and snappy videos are great way to tell your followers and community what you've been up to on the campaign trail and what you stand for. This tool keeps your campaign agile and able to respond in a timely manner to hot issues as they arise building views and interaction on social platforms. It also is a great way to display endorsement videos.

Other communication

The Merch (election products)

Every time there is an interaction between a potential voter and the candidate, there should be an exchange of a product from the campaign. In this way, you can always leave people with something to remember you—the candidate. The product could be a leaflet, sticker, poster or product for supporters to use like a t-shirt or yard sign. It can include a H2V card or About Me postcard to leave at a resident's property when door knocking.

Here is a reminder of the various ways to keep the candidate in voter's minds:

- The merchandise: t-shirts, stickers, magnets, water bottles, badges, pet bandanas, balloons, etc.
- Postcards for door knocking.
- Corflutes, posters, yard signs.
- H2V cards.
- Car decal for the candidate's vehicle.

Endorsements

A communications plan can also include a strategy for capturing endorsements of the candidate by other people. In the commercial world, media generated by influencers is a valuable marketing strategy that has led to the rise of Instagram celebrities. Similarly, when a candidate is endorsed by a third party who is respected locally and who is influential in the community, this can help build the candidate's positive profile.

Endorsements are gold when voters are looking for shortcuts to help them make up their mind on who to elect. If a candidate is relatively unknown, voters can potentially be influenced by the recommendations of friends or relatives by way of 'If she likes him, then she must be OK. I'll vote for her'. People trust a friend more than a would-be politician.

An effective communications plan considers ways to capture endorsements for the candidate from high-profile citizens and well-respected locals. This will increase her popularity and reputation as enthusiastic supporters spread the message on behalf of the candidate. The aim is to translate this support into greater voter awareness as well as (hopefully) more funds being donated to the campaign. Supporters can be encouraged to endorse the candidate by writing a letter to the editor in favour of the candidate, making a call to a talkback radio show and talking about what the candidate's platform means to them.

Endorsements can be deliberately produced by filming comments from supporters and promoting clips on YouTube and cameo roles on TV ads. Or, they can be more subtle like a candidate's photo on a pamphlet or the name of someone with a high-profile as the official authoriser of campaign material.

The communication plan could include the following:

- An overarching plan with the communications goals defined and the tactics to reach these goals outlined. For example, it will include a strategy to build or maintain relations with local journalists and a budget for communications.
- A press kit on a USB or dedicated part of the candidate's website that includes press releases on local issues, policy statements, a fact sheet about the candidate, upcoming events at which the candidate will be appearing, logos and photos.

- Two types of business cards: one with contact details of the candidate and the other with contact details of the Media Manager.
- A database of all local, relevant media contacts (and state and national if running for state and federal elections).
- Database of local newsletters and their deadlines for print throughout the campaign.
- A 'style guide' for the campaign communications that includes the design elements and a photo library of professional images of the candidate.
- Database of supporters who can be reached for email updates or 'blasts'.
- Social media platforms set up and ready to launch.
- An upcoming events schedule for the candidate.
- A person who is willing to authorise all election material (this could be the candidate, or a well-known local 'celebrity' and usually requires a residential address to be included).
- Merchandise such as hats, t-shirts, lapel buttons or badges, pens, pencils or balloons.
- List of supporters who would be happy to go 'on the record' with positive comments and endorse the candidate.
- Draft social media platforms ready to go live: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.
- Include video clips of the candidate speaking, TV advertisements on a USB or on the candidate's website.
- An advertising strategy to cover TV and radio, newspaper and local newsletter advertising, billboards or other advertising (for example, on buses or bus stops and train stations).
- A plan to access the list of enrolled voters for the Division or Ward in which the candidate is seeking election. This is usually available from the State or Federal Electoral Commission after the close of the rolls and provided to candidates without charge.
- A plan to deliver flyers for direct mail including meeting the deadlines for Australian Post bulk or un-addressed mail.

Manage the campaign finances

Money to a campaign is like yeast to a loaf of bread—it makes it rise.

Building a campaign 'war chest' and managing the finances and budget can often be the most difficult aspect of a campaign. While some candidates are able to self-fund their campaign, most candidates will need to develop a plan to source additional funds in order to meet their campaign goals, especially for larger campaigns. Regardless of the size of the race you are running, every campaign team needs to put in place systems and processes to support a campaign budget and provide the ability to report back on spending.

Good processes and scrupulous financial management are critical to every successful campaign. A candidate needs to work with her team to develop a realistic campaign budget that will assist the team to achieve the campaign goals. This will include a line-of-approval process that enables the candidate to be consulted on major financial decisions while allowing scope for smaller purchases to be made quickly and in a timely manner.

The systems to manage the campaign finances must also be managed with care in order to meet good governance and legal obligations. In order to comply with Australian electoral laws, candidates are required to report back on the details of political donations and expenditure within a specified time frame. These returns may be audited.

Source funds for your campaign

Campaign funding is like fuel for a car. Without it you can't start your campaign or hit the road on the campaign trail.

Fundraising is essential to nearly every campaign, except if you are self-funded or running a small race for your local council. For the majority of candidates, without financial support from donors, it may be difficult to pursue your agenda and sell your message.

You might not like it, but in order to run an effective campaign, most candidates will need to ask potential donors for money. A challenging part of a campaign is to know when it is the right time to ask for financial support from strangers. It's a tough situation; you need to get out there and sell yourself knowing that some people will say 'yes' and other times you will be rejected. Few candidates get elected through using their own funds unless they are running a small campaign for a local council or they are a millionaire and can self-fund

their campaign. Receiving donations is the most common way candidates are able to gather the financial resources needed to build a campaign war chest that funds their campaign.

In the early planning stage of a campaign, systems need to be established that will assist the candidate to approach donors, lock in their investment and show gratitude. These systems also support the finance manager to update the campaign's financial targets and provide a progress update for the rest of the team with fundraising goals to motivate future efforts.

There are a range of online systems that can assist campaigns with fundraising. These can be tried and tested in the stage before the official campaign launch. At a basic level, smaller campaigns can use a spreadsheet to record incoming donations. Larger campaigns will need to consider a program to receive payments like Nation Builder, PayPal or Go Fund Me. Eventbrite is one of several useful sites for managing ticket sales at events. Some candidates have also used websites such as MyCause for political fundraising at a local, state and federal level. (See Further Information at the back of this guide.)

Many online tools have the capacity for candidates to reach potential donors by sending 'email blasts' to registered supporters. Phone banking (or telemarketing) is an increasingly important strategy of the major parties whereby, candidate teams operate like a call centre and canvass people by phone to either volunteer for the campaign, donate or support the candidate. If your team is going to establish a phone bank, there are useful resources online offering tips on how to do this. It is important to get these systems in place early as part of your initial campaign planning.

The Pitch

> *If you don't ask, you don't get.*
>
> Ruth McGowan

It's the candidate's job to ask potential donors to contribute to the campaign. If you are a great candidate, you may be surprised to find there are a number of potential donors out there who are supportive of why you are running for office, who can be easily persuaded to make a financial contribution. Some may want to know specifically where their money is going so it's useful for candidates to create a specific 'Fund Menu' as part of their pitch (for example,

'help us fund a radio advertisement with a $2,000 donation' or 'your $100 donation will print four corflutes'.

Here are a few more funding pitch examples:

- Funding me is an investment in good representation because I am standing for ...
- I'm being out-spent by the major parties who are finally taking this seat seriously after years of neglect. Please help the little guy win: David CAN beat Goliath and with your help we can send a message to Canberra/parliament/council.
- We are being outspent 5:1 by the opposition because it doesn't want to see an independent candidate get elected here who will ...

You want to be memorable but be wary of offending. Fisherman Craig Garland stood as an Independent candidate in the Tasmanian Federal by-election for the seat of Braddon in July 2018. His unusual (and ultimately unsuccessful) pitch on his flyers was *Stand up and fight or bend over and take it. The choice is yours!*

A word on seeking donations

When considering whom a candidate might approach to seek financial support, a team should consider from whom they will and won't accept donations. A candidate needs to be mindful of not accepting donations that come with an expectation of influence. Be wary of accepting funds from organisations and groups that contradict the policies for which you are standing. Due diligence is important to ensure you accept 'clean' donations that don't contradict your platform. You must also comply with electoral laws about not accepting large, anonymous donations and financial limits on gifts. Activist groups often develop pledges for candidates as a guide for ethical behaviour. Depending on the group's aim, it will seek commitments from candidates to sign the pledge saying they will only accept 'ethical funding' for their campaigns.

Manage the money

Money can't buy you love but it can sure help a candidate raise their profile. Running a larger campaign requires a significant financial investment to fund advertising. Even a small-scale campaign must fund the brochures and yard signs that assist in getting the candidate recognised throughout the electorate.

The cost of a typical campaign ranges from $2,000–$7,000 for a Local Council campaign to State and Federal campaigns that cost $30k–$100K. This can be higher if the seat is hotly contested by the major parties who can throw in significant resources to keep 'their' seat. In many cases, a candidate will contribute a significant personal investment to their campaign—the rest must come from fundraising and donations.

During the campaign planning stage, a candidate will have established a team of supporters, one of whom will be tasked with managing the finances. This role is responsible for developing a financial strategy and budget for the campaign. It can help to include friends with experience in accounting for this role or, for a larger campaign, hire someone for this role.

Establishing good financial processes in the early days of planning will help the candidate easily identify how much money she may have in the bank at any given moment. This supports an agile campaign that can respond quickly to opportunities as they arise like booking local radio advertisements in response to an announcement by your competition.

The processes to manage the campaign finances should be established before a candidate announces she is running for office. Established and functional systems enable the candidate to hit the ground running and capitalise on potential donations at announcement time, when publicity surrounding the candidate is high.

Financial budgeting and management processes, as outlined earlier in this guide, include systems to manage donations, real-time tracking of expenditure, and approval and delegation processes. Good governance is paramount to these processes as it ensures accountability and transparency. Ultimately, the candidate must comply with the legal requirements for financial donations and reporting that have been established by the relevant Electoral Commission.

TIPS Financial management tips:

- When running a larger campaign, it is good practice to establish a separate bank account for the campaign that includes a separate campaign-specific credit card, which is not be used for funding expenses such as personal spending by the candidate or expenses associated with friends and family.
- Establish approval and tracking processes for any expenditure. This keeps things transparent and accountable.
- Have a good system for managing your receipts.
- Your system must enable you to produce clear records of every cent that has come into or out of the campaign.
- Avoid taking out a loan to fund your campaign. If you lose the election, you could find yourself in a difficult financial position.

Budgeting

A budget assists the campaign team to spend what is needed to win—no more, no less. It is an imperative tool for maintaining financial discipline. A candidate should avoid the risk of going into significant personal debt by spending too much of their own funds, but at the same time they don't want to lose an election wishing they had spent 'just a little more' on essentials like advertising. A budget is a rational way to manage forecast spending needs and reduce the risk of over-spending.

Clear processes need to be established for the campaign budget: what will be spent, when to spend, financial approval and delegation. These processes assist the team to stick to the budget and avoid the temptation to spend more.

What do you include in your campaign budget?

These items can be scaled up or down, depending on the size of your team and campaign.

- Office operations (include internet, rent, heating, etc.)
- Salaries for members of the campaign team
- Supporter database engagement system

- Purchase of software or apps
- Website set up
- Product design (all branding)
- Fuel to travel
- Fundraising fees (PayPal etc.)
- Office supplies
- Direct mail to constituents (addressed) or bulk mail out (unaddressed)
- Media production (radio ads, TV, video)
- Digital advertising
- Postcards
- Car decal
- Business cards
- Corflutes/yard signs
- Vinyl, pull-up, tear-drop banners and A-frames for election period
- Newspaper and newsletter advertising
- Door knocking expenses (self and volunteers)
- Fundraising events
- Printing
- Postage
- Letterhead and envelopes
- Overnight travel
- Enrolment costs.

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4
Incoming				
Personal contribution				
Donations				
Outgoing				
Social media and IT				
Advertising (online, traditional)				
Print (flyers, posters)				
Merchandise (t-shirts, pens, etc) Event expenditure Bulk mail (unaddressed)				
Other (nomination fees etc.)				
All expenses				
All income				
Total cash on hand				

Table 5: A basic campaign budget

Meet your legal obligations

Whether you are running a campaign for local, state or federal office you need to make compliance a priority or suffer the penalties.

There are many election-related laws by which a candidate must comply in order to get elected. Your obligations, as a candidate, start before you nominate and go beyond election day. Failing to comply with the relevant legal obligations can scuttle a campaign and lead to considerable fines and even jail time.

In the early stages of planning, aim to get someone with a background in legal or compliance on the campaign team. If you have a friend who practises law ask him or her to come and help you with your campaign. The legal or 'probity

adviser' role will assist the candidate to meet the myriad of legal requirements of standing for public office.

Now is also the time to read and understand the *Candidate Handbook* produced by the relevant electoral authority. This handbook outlines the legal requirements a candidate must meet. In fact, this handbook should be compulsory reading for every candidate and every member of her team. Depending on the level of office the candidate is trying to win, there is a range of obligations that must be met. These include rules around nominating for office, registration, reporting and disclosure requirements and obligations regarding authorisation of material.

The rules differ in each jurisdiction and will be different for each State and Territory, and for federal campaigns. One common rule, however, is that the candidate is responsible for confirming their eligibility to run for office. If they aren't eligible, it's game over. (Who will ever forget Australia's dual citizenship saga?)

Here are examples of some of the legal requirements about which a candidate needs to be aware:

- Understand the rules around who can nominate for office. This describes obligations for citizenship and where a candidate lives. A candidate's previous financial history or criminal record may be a consideration: for example, there may be restrictions on someone who has recently declared bankruptcy.
- If you are a candidate in a Federal Election and need to confirm your eligibility you must check out the AEC qualification checklist available from their website (Section 44 of the Constitution).
- Understand what a candidate may need to do to get on the ballot. For example, a federal independent candidate for the House of Representatives requires 100 signatures of citizens on the electoral role. Candidates for micro or major parties will need to meet party-specific rules for nomination.
- Once nominated, a candidate will need to understand the forms that need to be filed. These will include personal contact details and conflict of interest disclosures.
- For larger campaigns, the campaign legal adviser may also ensure there are due diligence 'in-house' processes set up. This

could include police checks for volunteers, probity checks on the financial manager and a general 'pledge' form for all volunteers that manages confidentiality and security of campaign documents.

- During the campaign, there will be a need to meet the legal requirements for reporting on funds such as receipts from fundraising activities and meeting the donation disclosure limits and rules surrounding the identity of donors.
- State and Federal Government legislation allows a candidate or registered political party to apply for a reimbursement of electoral expenditure. Understand the rules and how it may apply to your campaign funding. Sometimes you may even be eligible for additional government support such as funding to develop policy.
- The legal adviser can also ensure there are processes in place for compliance at fundraising events. For example, making sure the event organisers have obtained the appropriate liquor licence, and bar staff have Responsible Serving of Alcohol (RSA) certification if serving alcohol.
- Be aware of the rules around authorising the candidate's election material. This can apply to all printing products from stickers to posters to postcards and pamphlets. It can also apply to social media platforms. Research the rules and set yourself up early in the campaign to comply.
- Many Local Councils have by-laws governing where political signs can be placed. It is, therefore, wise to research the by-laws before nailing a poster to a tree in a local park or tacking posters to telephone poles—both are usually not allowed.
- Candidates running a large-scale campaign may employ staff to assist with various gaps in the campaign team skillset. Sometimes the jobs simply cannot be met by volunteers and in these cases the Campaign Manager needs to ensure the requirements for employing casual members of staff are met.
- There are rules around how campaign team members can distribute material at the early voting centres and poll booths. These rules differ on a state-by-state basis and can cover everything from how far people are allowed to stand away from the polling booth door, where banners are allowed to be hung, and banning campaign material (t-shirts) from being taken into the booth at elections. Again, read the *Candidate Handbook* and ensure your team complies.

- At the close of election day, scrutineers assist with observing probity around counting. The electoral authority will often produce a separate *Scrutineer Handbook,* which advises the rules that must be followed to ensure integrity of the vote counting process. For example, scrutineers can observe officials counting the ballots but they are not allowed to touch a vote.
- Once elected, a candidate must comply with the obligations around the campaign returns and disclosures.

Reporting expenditures and returns

Every candidate, whether standing for local, state or federal office, whether they received donations or whether they are successful, is required to report to the government on the financial spending over their official campaign period. Just as ordinary citizens must file an annual tax return, the official campaign return must be accurate and completed on time or penalties can apply.

The candidate must also understand the requirements of the relevant authority for reporting on campaign expenditure. This will include understanding the rules around donation disclosure and limits on campaign spending which vary for the different levels of public office. When candidates register to stand for office, they will usually receive candidate information kits that include copies of election donation return forms.

The following examples are drawn from various state electoral authorities and demonstrate the range of requirements (correct at the time of writing). This list shows the various rules but it is not exhaustive or comprehensive. Always check with your relevant electoral authority and to keep up to date with reporting requirements.

- In the 2018 Tasmanian Local Government elections, the relevant regulations established expenditure limits of $16,000 per financial year for electoral spending in the larger Councils and an expenditure limit of $10,000 for candidates in smaller municipal areas.
- In the 2016 Victorian Local Government elections, within 40 days of election day, all candidates were required to provide the Council's Chief Executive Officer with an election campaign donation return that detailed any gifts, goods or services worth $500 or more that were received during the donation period for use in connection with

the candidate's campaign. In addition, these campaign donation return forms were required to be made available for public inspection either on the relevant Council's website or at the Council Offices for four years after the election.

- The Electoral Commission of Queensland has strict rules for Local and State government candidates to minimise corruption risks. This includes a Prohibited Donors Scheme. In 2018, laws were introduced that banned political donations from property developers and industry bodies that have property developers as the majority of their members. In Queensland it is illegal to make or accept prohibited donations, and it is also illegal to solicit someone to make a donation on behalf of a prohibited donor.
- The Western Australia Electoral Commission publishes annual returns online that lists the details of all donations and gifts received by political parties. The report is tabled in Parliament and provides a fascinating insight into what parties receive the largest donations.
- The Electoral Commission of South Australia rules that donors have reporting obligations under Part 13A of the *Electoral Act 1985*. This stipulates that donors must lodge a return with the Electoral Commissioner if the donation to a candidate or relevant entity (a registered political party, associated entity or third party) is more than $5,000 (indexed).
- The NSW Electoral Commission specifies strict rules about who can make political donations. There are certain corporations and individuals who are banned from making political donations. For example, a donor must be enrolled to vote in NSW elections, have an ABN and be an individual or entity who has been approved to make political donations. These rules and the prohibited donor list are outlined in full on the Electoral Commission website.

Plan to reduce the risks

By now you will have been thinking about your campaign and planning for the next stage: getting out there and running. Before moving on, let's explore how you and the team can work to mitigate risks and reduce the chance of a campaign disaster.

Once you have launched your campaign and made your official announcement, it is likely that at some stage there will be a stuff up (to use the non-technical

term for a catastrophic risk). Things go wrong, either as a fault of the candidate or by the actions of members of the campaign team. Hopefully, when that stuff up happens, it will be small, controllable and of little impact.

Who can forget Hillary Clinton's 'deplorables' comment? Some commentators say that one word lost her the election with 'Middle-America' in 2016. When planning the campaign, it is wise to prepare for the worst when even the best laid plans go haywire. Think about your Plan B in response to a negative front-page about a campaign slip-up. Consider how you might respond and get back on the front foot by controlling the potential damage from bad press.

What could go wrong?

The following scenarios are examples of risks you need to consider.

- The press decides to focus on the candidate's weakness that the candidate has tried to hide, for example, previous criminal charges.
- Damaging leaks to the press of internal, sensitive documents such as internal polling results.
- An inappropriate 'off the record' comment, which may have involved colourful language by the candidate, gets reported.
- An old post on social media that depicts the candidate in an unfavourable light is suddenly published, for example, a past recording of the candidate performing misogynist rap lyrics.
- Volunteers 'go rogue'. They may misrepresent the candidate views, get into a physical altercation with an opponent or fail to adhere to signage by-laws when placing corflutes.
- Dissatisfied staff or volunteers resign from the team and go to the media with damaging allegations of how they were mistreated by the candidate.
- Unaccounted money goes missing from the campaign.
- The competition buys up the social media 'real estate' of the candidate and produces unflattering posts and 'fake news'.
- Processes break down and there is poor communication with volunteers resulting in mistakes and resentment.
- Potential donors are dissatisfied with how they have been asked to help fund the campaign and so fail to donate funds.

- The campaign gets dirty with attack advertisements and other 'dirty tricks' by the competition.
- The candidate's family gets attacked in the media.

Develop the campaign risk register

There is potential for one or more of these scenarios to be an issue for a candidate's campaign. At this early stage of planning a campaign, it is a good time to be mindful of the Scout motto *'Be prepared'*. A smart candidate should sit with their campaign team and discuss these, and other, possible scenarios.

In the planning stage, the candidate can work with the campaign team to develop the campaign risk register. The risk register is a guide for the team on how to go into damage control when something bad happens. The aim is for the candidate and her campaign team to develop a potential response if X, Y or Z were to occur.

From these discussions, prepare a simple risk management matrix. The first step is to list all the possible risks the candidate and her team can think of. Then discuss the likelihood of each risk occurring against the possible consequence. A risk matrix template is useful to apply.

	Consequence				
Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Almost certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High

Figure 7: Risk matrix template

When potential and likely risks have been identified and mapped against the consequences, the team can suggest how to prevent (or treat) any risks that might fall into the medium, high or extreme risk categories. Where it is not

possible to prevent the risk, the team can develop practical strategies for dealing with the problems up front if they should occur.

Ultimately, the aim of this exercise is to identify any gaps in the campaign team processes that need to be addressed as part of the planning stage. A 'risk register' can be developed and then added to once the candidate is actually running their race.

Treat the risks

Some treatment responses to identified risks could be:

- Assume all your emails, social media posts, tweets and photos could be leaked to the media or analysed by your competition. Nothing is ever really 'off the record'. Use the phone or personal meetings for significant conversations, and don't leave confidential campaign documents lying around as hard copies.
- Historical social media posts are a notorious repository of potentially damaging stories for a candidate, especially for younger candidates who have only ever known instant, virtual, digital communication. Before making the announcement that a candidate is standing for public office, it may be useful for prospective candidates to take the precautionary step of deleting every social media account and online record they would not like to see on the front page of the newspaper—even in so called 'closed groups'. Then establish a new account with your seat and ward in the title such as [Name] for [Seat/Ward].
- When there is negative media coverage or attacks of 'fake news', the candidate must respond quickly and get on the front foot with the facts.
- Encourage team members to discuss problems at team meetings so they can be addressed in the appropriate way. This avoids bitchiness, gossip and resentment.
- If a mistake has been made by the candidate, be prepared to 'fess up' that you got it wrong and say you're sorry. Address what has happened and explain what you are doing to fix it. Then get back on message about who you are, what you stand for and why people should vote for you.

- Consider buying a separate sim card and phone purely for the campaign. That keeps your home and personal life separate from the campaign.
- Consider the pros and cons of having comments moderated on your social media accounts. Sometimes trolls will deliberately set out to sabotage your accounts with negative comments and personal attacks. Perhaps the Communications Manager can moderate the page and remove inflammatory comments, or you may wish to ignore them, in the interest of free speech.
- Keep an eye on what your opponent(s) are saying about you either at forums or online. Consider a plan for how you may respond to lies and damaging 'stories' about you the candidate. (This will be explored further in the *Dirty Tricks* section.)
- Team members may need to sign a confidentiality agreement covering use of information and data while they are members of the team, and also if they unexpectedly leave.
- Be aware of the potential for data to be stolen. To minimise the risk of cyber hacking, protect the security of your data with strong passwords and backup systems. Offices, houses and cars should always be locked, and phones and laptops should be password protected. Hard copies of confidential documents may be viewed then shredded.
- It's called a 'race' because running a campaign can be arduous and exhausting. Candidates should consider their mental and physical fitness and prepare to maintain wellbeing over what can be a long campaign.

TIPS Do you need another prompt to prepare for the worst?

Consider this question: Is there something in your closet that a vicious competitor could use to compile a 'dirt file' on you? For example, if a candidate has any history of bullying allegations, harassment allegations or a criminal conviction (no matter how minor), this will be used against them by competitors determined to demonstrate why they are not fit for office. Sometimes, even if it's friends and/or family with the history, it may be used against a candidate. Politics can get dirty.

Part Two: Your planning checklist

Part Two of this guide explored the eight essential components that every candidate must consider before officially launching their campaign.

How 'campaign fit' are you? It's time to check in and see if you are ready to run. Just as an athlete must be fit and well trained before commencing a marathon, if you wish to be the first across that election finishing line, it is important to carefully plan and prepare for your campaign race.

This checklist summarises what needs to be in place before a candidate progresses to the next stage which is RUN.

1. **Position**

    - ❍ You understand who your potential voters are; you know their history, likely voting behaviour and what percentage swing of votes you need to get you over the line. You know your magic number of votes you need to get elected.

    - ❍ You have conducted research to understand the issues impacting on your ward/seat/electorate. You know what excites people (or annoys them) about the action (or inaction) of the level of government you are contesting. You get what's going on.

    - ❍ You can articulate your Unique Selling Proposition and explain why you are different to (and better than) other candidates. You can explain why you are unique and worth supporting.

2. **Processes**

    - ❍ You have clear processes and procedures that cover every aspect of what goes in or out of your campaign, from the beginning to beyond election day.

    - ❍ These procedures are documented and communicated to everyone on the team and are easily accessible and updated as needed.

3. **People**

    - ❍ As the candidate you are confident you have the skills, experience and attributes that will take you through to election day as a

successful prospective candidate for public office. You also have the backing of your family who are supportive of your run for office.

- You have pulled together a campaign team comprised of skilled people ready to take on specific campaign tasks, including your talented friends, family and acquaintances.
- You have formed your Kitchen Cabinet—a group of trusted friends who provide a confidential sounding board as unofficial advisers.
- Many enthusiastic volunteers are coming together to assist you to get elected, and you are rolling out your plan to build your volunteer base.
- You and your team have a strategy to reach people with a request to financially support the campaign.

4. Time

- You understand all the deadlines you must meet during the three stages of the campaign: before you announce, during the official campaign and after election day.
- Deadlines are marked on a wall calendar at your campaign HQ and in the electronic diary.
- The imperative to meet deadlines is incorporated into the roles of relevant team members.

5. Communications

- You have established a 'look' for your candidacy that includes professional photos, a logo, slogan, campaign colour, etc.
- You have a message that has been carefully crafted and tested. It resonates with the issues of voters and differentiates you from your opponents as well as motivating people to put you first. You know this because you have tested it on people and can confidently and convincingly say it over and over. You are ready to say this in three words, three sentences or three paragraphs—depending on the occasion.
- You have a media plan ready to go on traditional, social and other media that covers earned (bought) and unearned media

opportunities. You also have a number of endorsements ready to roll out from high profile people in your community.

- You have a communications plan to reach voters directly though the post, text messaging, leaflet drop, door-knocking or canvassing through other avenues ('the commuter run' at public transport stops or street and market stalls).

6. **Finances**

- You have planned a budget for your campaign. You know how much money you are going to spend and how you are going to fund it.

- You have someone who will take on the role of financial manager and assist you in accounting for campaign funds through a solid financial management and budgeting system.

- You have crafted a pitch that invites people to donate to you, and you can thank them when they have financially supported you.

7. **Legal**

- You are eligible to stand for the electorate you wish to represent in public office.

- You understand your legal requirements because you have read the *Candidate Handbook* from back to front and have highlighted all the bits with which you need to comply.

- You have considered your policy on who you will accept donations from (or not).

- You understand your legal reporting requirements and are ready to submit your returns and meet your obligations under the relevant electoral Act by the required date.

- All team members have been briefed on their legal requirements and no one is in any doubt about what they have to do to comply with their obligations under relevant legislation.

8. **Risk management**

- You have conducted a risk assessment with your team that considers 'anything that could go wrong, will go wrong'.

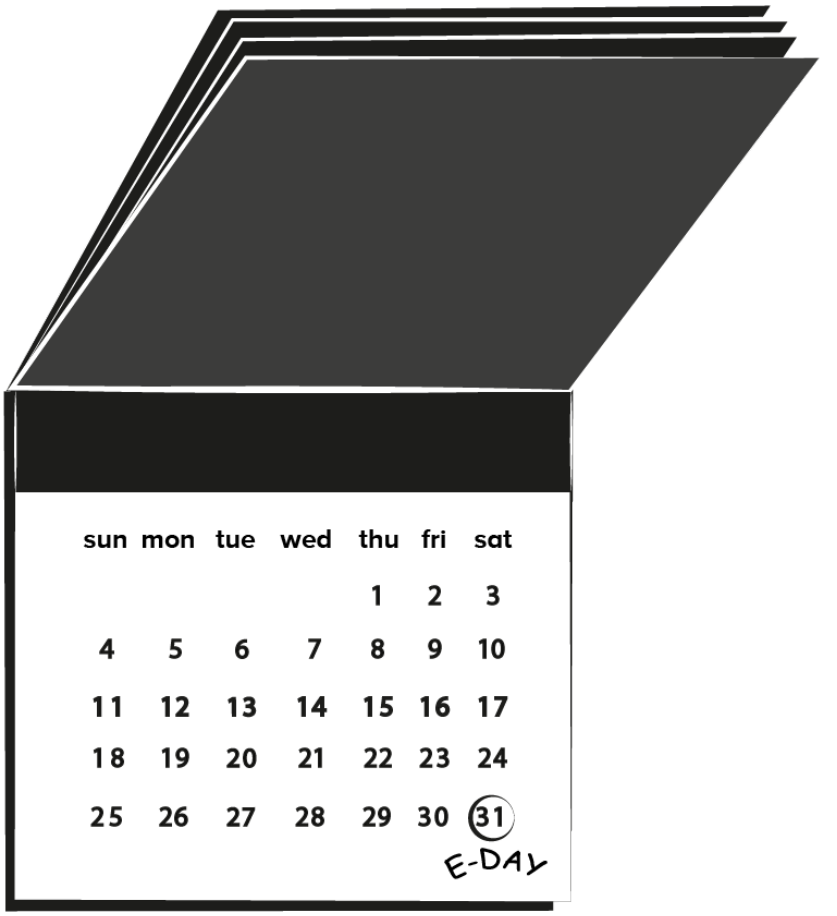
- You have listed the likelihood and impact of bad stuff happening, and you have prioritised the ‘more likely to happen risks’ into a risk register.

- You have a ‘risk treatment’ plan that puts in place strategies to prevent or manage risks.

All done? That’s the planning bit over. It’s time to Get Ready. Set. Now GO and RUN!

PART THREE

RUN



The essentials of a successful campaign

RUN your campaign as a marathon, with a steady pace rather than a sprint.

When you first considered running for office, the election would have seemed so far away. Perhaps now, your election is only a few months or weeks away. Therefore, the time has come to hit the road and run. This period of the election campaign can be the most intense of a candidate's life. As a candidate, you are likely to be under pressure 24/7 until election day. However, if you prepared and planned with assistance from Parts 1 and 2 of this guide, your training is complete and you are 'Campaign Fit'—ready to run the race of your life.

Let's get this race (officially) started

There are three processes to put in place as you officially start your campaign: first, set your goals; second, develop a 100-day countdown plan to incorporate all the actions leading up to the election; and third, build the candidate's schedule.

1. Set your campaign goals

Prior to the official launch of your campaign, it is useful for the candidate to bring her campaign team together to set the team goals. This step develops the big-picture strategy and motivates supporters to see how their intentions align with the goals of the candidate. It also informs the team about what needs to be measured and reported in order to keep the campaign on track.

If you have completed the exercises in this guide, this step should be relatively straightforward as you will already have considered many of the goals for your campaign. As a candidate, your main goal is to get yourself successfully elected to public office. Why else invest time and money in a campaign? (Unless you are in the race to agitate on an issue as an activist, or you may be a 'dummy' candidate—but then you would not have bought this guide).

To reach your goal of getting elected, there are a number of sub-goals that can help get you over the finish line. Consider the following:

- If we know we need an X percentage swing of voters to preference our candidate as number one, then the Magic Number of votes

is Y. Therefore, we need to persuade X number of voters to put [Candidate] as number 1.

- We will have clear campaign procedures in place by [DATE].
- Everyone on the team will understand what they need to do and the delegated lines of authority they need to go through for approval.
- We will have raised X amount of funds by [DATE].
- We will have X number of donors contributing to our campaign by [DATE].
- We will have X number of willing volunteers signed up and in our database by [DATE].
- We aim to have the candidate appear in front of X number of people a week.
- We want X number of people subscribed to our website email list by [DATE].
- Our social media (Facebook, website etc.) will be live by [DATE].
- Our volunteer training schedule will be up and running by [DATE].
- We will comply with all legal obligations and there will be no stuff ups.
- We will establish a phone bank by [DATE] and aim to call X number of potential voters by [DATE].
- We will be professional in all our interactions, and feedback from our volunteers will be sought and respected.
- We will have a robust risk management framework and risk register that is regularly updated.
- We will have X number of media mentions about the candidate in the local media per [day/week/month].
- We will have X number of followers on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. With X number of retweets, shares, etc. each week.
- We will have an early voting plan and election day strategy that enables every booth to be staffed by X number of volunteers (including the early voting centres in the weeks prior to election day).
- Our candidate would have [ACTION TAKEN] on [ISSUE] with the [RESULT].

As a standing agenda item in your regular team meetings, check progress towards these goals. Regularly ask the team: 'What's working well? What do we need to tweak?'

CASE STUDY

A play-it-by-the-numbers campaign goal for Indi

When Cathy McGowan ran for Indi in 2013, her challenge was to get around an electorate of 90,000 voters covering more than 29,000 sq. kms (similar to the size of Belgium). It was a huge area to travel around. Cathy set herself a strategic goal to build a swing towards her and away from the Liberal incumbent. How to put this goal into action? Cathy explained her tactic, 'A goal of mine was to aim to meet 1000 people a week, or more. I was able to achieve this through forums, events, one-on-one conversations and by door-knocking over my large electorate.'

As you head towards your election, how many potential voters do you want to meet a week?

2. Plan the details of the 100-Day Countdown

Previously, in planning to meet the campaign deadlines, it was suggested that you purchase a big wall calendar and mark all the hard deadlines. (If you haven't, do this as soon as possible.)

Now it's time to draw up the final countdown timeline heading towards election day, including the dates when the early voting centres open. This is your 'battle plan' and it will list all the tasks that will require funding, deadlines and the involvement of volunteers and the candidate. It will also allocate tasks to the people who will be in charge of getting it done.

If you are well prepared, this daily countdown should ideally start at least one year out from the election—two years is even better and will help you to be super organised. For simplicity a 100-day plan is used as an example here and it can be adapted to make a 300- or 600-day plan. To assist you and your team to meet all the electoral obligations and deadlines, stick to the *Candidate Handbook*.

ACTION	Days out from the election
Confirm you are eligible to stand for office and ensure you are enrolled to vote (on the electoral roll). Check again which electorate, seat, council or ward you are registered in. The Returning Officer at your Electoral Commission can assist you with this information.	100
Visit the relevant Electoral Commission website in your state or territory (links are on the Australian Electoral Commission website). Download the *Candidate Handbook* and run through the checklist. It will be your legal guide for the next three months. Note timelines for the issue of the writ, when nominations open and close, the time and place for the ballot draw and opening of the early voting centres. Ensure your wall calendar has all the important registration dates and times listed such as the enrolment roll close and nomination times. Be clear on what you are required to submit by when, such as nomination fees, signatures, the candidate statement, voting preferences, photos and other legal requirements.	100
Bring your campaign team together and schedule in everyone's diary, fortnightly or weekly meetings for the next three months. Agree on the app or platform on which you will all stay connected. For your Kitchen Cabinet and close advisers, you may choose to meet more regularly (e.g. Sunday night to plan the week ahead and Friday afternoon to review and wrap up). Start planning your 'preferencing' strategy including setting up meetings with other candidates who have nominated.	99
Refine your budget plan based on the funds you already have and identify what you need to raise.	95
Check that your procedures and processes are clear and delegate authority to your key team members. All processes should ensure your campaign meets the Electoral Commission deadlines and good governance (such as requirements to record political donations and advertising costs).	Whole campaign
Refine your message. Three words, three succinct sentences, three key paragraphs. Use this for your candidate statement, your policy statements and for your election material. Develop and print your election material (flyers, postcards, posters, corflutes, etc.). Pay detailed attention to make sure it meets requirements for authorisation.	95

Launch your social media platforms (Facebook, website, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat etc.) and build a following.	90
Refine your press kit and distribute to local media outlets.	85
Refine the communications and media schedule to include media deadlines, an event schedule, message deadlines e.g. mail outs, email blasts for internal communications to team and volunteers. Raise your profile through bought and earned media.	80 Rest of campaign
Consider if you need a *How to Vote* (H2V) card for election day as part of your preferencing strategy. Design the card so you are ready to list preferences once the ballot draw is confirmed.	70
Officially launch your campaign. Continue to plan and attend many events to raise your profile. Roll out your meet-the-people roadshow.	60–Until election day
Consider how you will distribute your material and put a plan in place (door knocking, bulk mail with Australia Post, leaflet drop, etc.)	55–Until election day
Develop your plan for: 1. Reaching early voters through the early voting centre, absentee and postal voting. 2. Staffing the early voting centres and polling booths on election day and get your team ready to crisscross the electorate. 3. Training and appointing scrutineers.	50
Do the required paperwork for the electoral commission. Nominate. You may be required to complete your nomination form online before printing and lodging it in person with the Returning Officer. Fill in the scrutineer appointment form.	3–4 weeks before election day
The candidate and Campaign Manager attend the automated draw of the ballot at the local electoral commission office (usually the site of early voting centre). This is a good opportunity to meet other candidates and the Returning Officer. Following the draw, the line-up of the ballot will now be finalised and the candidate's H2V cards should be immediately printed so they are ready to be handed out on day one of when the early voting centre opens (which may be the following week). Implement early voting plan.	2–3 weeks (Following the close of nominations for the election)
Organise the 'thank you' after party.	20
Go and Get Elected.	E-Day!

Table 6: Sample plan for 100 days out from election day (include these actions as a minimum)

3. Set the Schedule

As a candidate committed to getting elected, the last few months of a campaign will be strenuous. There will be many demands on your time and countless opportunities to attend functions, forums and various events. However, with so many votes to canvass and with so little time, a candidate must use discretion when allocating where to spend her precious time in the last few months.

The three most important questions to ask before you RSVP

In deciding what events to attend, these three questions help a discerning candidate to determine where to dedicate her time and effort. Ask yourself:

1. Will this get me more votes?
2. Will this assist me to raise more funds for my campaign?
3. Will this help me to sign up more supporters and volunteers?

The answers will help determine what events you attend. In addition to events, there will also be other demands on the candidate's time. They will need to be scheduled into the diary and include:

- Team management: daily meetings with the Campaign Manager (by phone or in person), weekly meetings with the Kitchen Cabinet, and fortnightly meetings with the broader team.
- Communications management: social media posting, blogs, meet the press.
- Media engagements: bought and earned (i.e. paid for and incidental media exposure).
- Candidate electoral obligations: e.g. attending the Electoral Commission to nominate.
- Community events: e.g. 'Meet the candidate' forums.
- Campaign events: e.g. fundraisers.
- Travel between events.
- Voter contact: e.g. door knocking, handing out information at train, bus and ferry stations.
- Wellness time to avoid fatigue: this should be dedicated to sustaining physical and mental health— sleeping, eating properly.

- Attending the early voting centre and election day booths is a vital activity for the candidate on the campaign trail.

This is where a good Diary Manager and scheduling process is vital to a successful campaign. The person in this role assists the candidate to prioritise her time; thereby, enabling her to focus on the 'must do's' over the 'should do' and 'optional'.

The scheduling triage

Triage is an emergency medical term used to prioritise patients' treatments based on the severity of their condition. It was a term derived from the Napoleonic battle fields, where wounded soldiers were divided into three categories for treatment depending on whether they were likely to live regardless of care received, unlikely to live regardless of care received, and the third group was for whom immediate care might make a positive difference.

For busy candidates, there will be an avalanche of invitations for events you will/should/could attend. The candidate must be discerning with her time as she can't be everywhere at once. It is the job of the Diary Manager to receive the invitations on behalf of the candidate and sort them into three piles, as part of the scheduling triage.

The triage filter can assist a candidate to determine whether she will attend an event. Perhaps it will be a fantastic opportunity to meet voters, raise funds and gather supporters? In this case, the answer is an emphatic **yes**. Or will it be a definite **no** as there won't be many people attending? Will it be held in a 'safe' part of her electorate where voters are unlikely to change or will it simply require too much time and effort to attend? Perhaps it will be a **maybe** where the candidate might be able to attend depending on a change of circumstances or if the schedule can be altered?

Drawing on her experiences of attending different events in the early stages of the campaign, the candidate will soon get a feel for what invitations she should attend and those she will regretfully decline. The *Three questions to ask before you RSVP* discussed above will assist. Ideally, the Diary Manager will sort invitations into the three categories (Yes/No/Maybe), then check with the candidate to confirm the priority invitations before responding to the invitee on behalf of the candidate. The Diary Manager will also gather further details or submit an apology when the candidate is unable to make the event.

TIPS A handy motivational matrix

If a candidate finds they are 'stuck' and overwhelmed with the tasks that need to be done, try this motivational matrix. It breaks down the tasks into easy-to-follow categories. Here is an example of how it works.

Stuff that needs to get done	By myself	Me with others	Others to do
Right now (this week)	Get photos done. Purchase a campaign phone with new number.	Ask my friends Bill and Sharon to organise a movie night fundraiser for later this month. Work on draft press release with comms manager.	Ask Jack to set up my Facebook page and take a Snapchat story.
Soon (the next fortnight)	Do a live video for my platforms. Call Aunty Maree and ask if she can help with catering at next month's event.	Do the campaign launch at the park. Ask my friend Jill to door knock with me.	Ask Suzie to put posters up through her chamber of commerce network.
Later (next month)	Write victory speech (and version No. 2 in case I am unsuccessful).	Develop the early voting plan. Organise a stall outside supermarket.	See if Helen can hand out at the local market. Ask Raj to make some A-frames for E-Day.

The next step is to put the event in the candidate's diary and weekly schedule. The schedule needs to be accessible to the other members of the team such as the Campaign Manager; therefore, an electronic diary is preferable over a hard copy. The event entry will include details of:

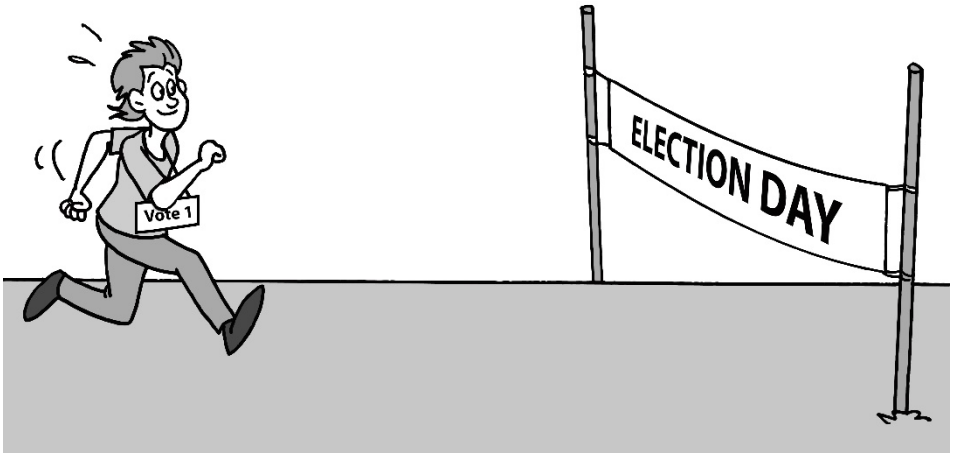
- The name of the event.
- Where it will be held including details e.g. is the room at the back of the public hall?
- Starting and finishing time.
- The topic on which the candidate has been asked to speak.
- Who will be there (other candidates, dignitaries, etc.)?

- Names and contact details of the event organisers to contact in case the candidate is running late.

Ideally, the candidate will receive a printed copy of her upcoming week's schedule with hard copies of the event details and speaking notes. A candidate event folder is perfect for keeping this all together.

Rev up the race tactics

By now you've planned the big-picture strategy for the campaign over the long term. Now it's time to rev up your race tactics: the short-term actions that will get the candidate elected. Your winning tactics need to be applied over the three sections of your campaign race.



Three sections of the race

There is a reason why a campaign is often referred to as a 'race'. As a competitor in a field of candidates, there can only be one winner. And just as marathon runners experience three different sections to a typical race, a candidate can prepare for these three stages: starting, enduring, finishing.

Stage 1: Announcing and the campaign launch

The marathon runner arrives at the start line. They are fit, fuelled and ready to run. The runner steps up to starting line. The race starter fires the gun. The runner jumps out of the starter's block and leaps onto the official track. At this stage, the candidate's race has officially begun.

Stage 2: The day-to-day endurance on the campaign trail

This is similar to the slog of running a long race; you need to stay mindful of pace and timing. The candidate will be 'eating up the miles' as they get out and about attending events, meeting voters, managing media and building support. By pacing themselves, they avoid 'hitting the wall' and they keep the focus on achieving the campaign goals.

Stage 3: The final stretch (often the last three to four weeks leading up to and including election day)

At this stage of the campaign the candidate is often running on pure adrenaline, relying on the momentum toward the election period to get her over the line with the excitement and energy of her team pulling her towards victory. Although facing exhaustion, she must keep pushing through to the finish and until she hears the cheering crowds. Give it all you have as every vote counts. You don't want to get to the end and realise you had more in the tank.

Now is also the time to consider the politics of the race. This raises the question of who you will preference on your ballot paper. Unless you decide not to preference and run an 'open ticket', you will also need to understand the art and science of 'preferencing' to get elected.

Start of the race

Stage 1: Declare, step up, launch

When is the best time to declare? The short answer is 'as soon as you can'.

If you are standing for public office at a local or state level, the election date has probably already been set (well in advance, through fixed terms). If you are running for a federal seat (or perhaps standing in a by-election for local or state government), it may be that an election has just been called and election day is only months or weeks away. Sometimes candidates use the timing of their announcement as a tactic to throw off competitors and get ahead as 'the first one off the block'.

Major parties tend to hold their pre-selections for candidates 12 or 18 months out from an election. This provides their chosen candidate with plenty of time to prepare for the election. The early pre-selection process can provide a massive

headstart for candidates from the major parties. To address this advantage, independent candidates should ideally aim to declare their candidacy at least a year out from the election. This provides ample opportunity to raise the candidate's profile, source funds and build a team of volunteers. Candidates who declare late in the race, run the risk of losing precious campaign time. Although, there are examples of candidates who choose to run a quick, 'pop-up' campaign over a few weeks and have still been elected.

Some candidates prefer to leave their official announcement to the last minute, once nominations of other candidates become public at the draw of the ballot. This has disadvantages as the timing of official nominations is always a few weeks before an election. Unless a candidate is very well known and organised, announcing you are running at the last minute leaves little time to run an effective race. The sooner you can officially declare 'I'm running', the longer the lead you have. Candidates may lose valuable time by waiting until 'everything is 100 percent ready'. Don't waste time. If you are well-prepared, having read this guide, you will be 'campaign fit' and ready to announce.

Remember, a good plan is better than a perfect plan. Don't hesitate and lose precious time. If you are confident in your preparations, the sooner you can declare, the sooner you can hit the ground running and race towards the election day.

Now is the time to officially declare you are running for office. It's like signing up for a fun run: once you let everyone know, you become fully committed to your training. Once you have declared, you need to consider organising the campaign launch and your planning for preferencing.

Campaign launch checklist

The campaign launch usually marks the first official event of the campaign. It is when the candidate leaps out of the starting box in the race towards the election. The launch event often sets the tone for the rest of the campaign. Work with your campaign team to build an energetic event that engages your current (and potential) supporters and kick starts the positive momentum that will help you run the race of your life to get elected.

Tips for a great launch:

- Allow plenty of notice for the media to attend the event and coordinate timing to suit their needs to file the footage/audio for the news (e.g. mornings work well for TV stations aiming for the nightly news. Sundays can be a slow news day which good for coverage).
- Invite a well-known local person to MC the event. This is also an endorsement of your candidacy.
- Consider how you can commence the launch with an acknowledgment of the Traditional Owners and show respect to the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country. Work with local representatives to make this respectful and meaningful.[1]
- Invite a number of inspiring community and business members to talk about you as an endorsement of your run for public office.
- Include a diverse range of speakers who endorse you. Invite young people, seniors and others from your community who represent various backgrounds (such as cultural, disability and economic).
- Prepare and practise your script for the main speech as the candidate. Include a clear 'call to action' and make it easy for people to sign on as volunteers at a table in the foyer following the launch. Have the 'about the candidate' information flyers on hand. This includes the policy fact sheet and a summary of the issues about which the candidate is passionate.
- Make the press kit available for the media in a hard copy, on a USB stick and on your website.
- Consider your 'merch' (t-shirts, hats, bumper stickers, etc.) that people may purchase to help fund and show their support for the candidate.
- Decorate the event in the candidate's colour theme.
- Plan engagement with the candidate's digital platforms e.g. live stream via Facebook, a SnapChat story, Instagram interviews, promote the campaign #hashtags for the audience to share.
- Start the social media advertising campaign using the momentum of the launch.
- Consider provision of food and entertainment following the launch.
- Develop a short video or PowerPoint to use as a backdrop on stage. Vision should include the candidate out and about in their local community. Use quality, real photos.

Plan your preferences

Love it or hate it, you need to get a handle on preferencing if you want to get elected.

Preferencing can be a complex topic but stick with this section to build your understanding of how preferential voting works as it can help you to get elected.

Preferencing deals are an important campaign tactic which can make or break your chance of getting elected. Ultimately, if you have a high number of first preference votes, backed by a 'preference flow' in your favour of second or third votes you can get over the line and get elected.

The electoral law of most levels of Australian government tends to apply a preferential voting system for counting votes at the three levels of government. Under the preferential voting system, citizens are required to number the candidates on the ballot paper in the order of the individual voter's preference. Preferential voting enables a citizen's vote to still be counted, even if their No. 1 choice of candidate is eliminated because they failed to gain enough votes. A voter's second, third and even fourth choice can make a difference as to who gets elected.

It is particularly important for candidates to understand the preferential voting system that applies at a municipal, state or federal level. This system of counting votes comes into play when no candidate wins outright because no one has received the quota of votes required to get elected in their own right. This is often the case for most elections across Australia, and it is likely to be the case in your own election contest.

In local council elections, other vote counting systems may be used depending on your state legislation. For instance, single councillor wards may use the preferential representational voting system where the most preferred candidate wins. When votes are counted in an un-subdivided or multi-Member Ward, a quota of the votes is required, and the proportional distribution voting system is used. The 'first-past-the-post' vote counting system is used in Western Australia local council elections and for many community organisations (e.g. electing the president of the local service club) where the person with the most votes wins.

Preferencing basics

Preferencing works like this:

- All the No. 1 votes are counted for each candidate. These are known as the primary or first preference votes.
- If a candidate receives the quota of first preference votes, that candidate will be declared as provisionally elected. The quota is 50 percent +1 vote for a State or Federal seat but can vary for a Senate or Local Council vacancy depending on how many Councillors are elected per Ward. For example:
    - For a single-member electorate the quota is one-half of the vote, plus 1.
    - For a two-member electorate, it will be one-third of the vote, plus 1.
    - Where there is a multi-member council ward with three vacancies, a candidate only needs to get one-quarter of the vote, plus 1.
    - For a half-Senate election (as was the case in 2019, 6 Senators to be elected in each State/Territory) it will be one-seventh of the vote, plus 1.
- If no candidate has achieved the quota, the candidate with the fewest votes is excluded. Effectively, they are dropped off the count. Lower scoring candidates are progressively eliminated.
- The votes from the first candidate 'drop-off' are then transferred to the other candidates according to the second preferences that voters have marked on the ballot papers for the excluded candidate. If you are the candidate who happens to get the majority of No. 2 votes, this 'preference flow' can assist you to reach the quota.
- Following the redistribution of these preferences, if none of the remaining candidates have reached the quota, the candidate who now has the fewest votes is excluded. Once again, their votes are transferred according to the next preference shown on the ballot papers for that 'next-one-to-drop-off' candidate.
- In preferential representation voting systems, the full value of the vote is transferred according to the next preference. When proportional distribution is used, the proportion of the vote transferred is determined by calculating the 'transfer value'.

- This process continues until one candidate has reached a quota. For State and Federal lower house elections, it will be when more than half the total number of formal votes go to one candidate and then she or he is elected.
- The result of the full distribution of preferences is then used to calculate the two party preferred (TPP) statistics for electorates who have the traditional rivalry between the Australian Labor Party and Coalition representatives as the final two candidates. If either of these major party candidates are up against an independent or a candidate from a micro party, it is known as a two candidate preferred (TCP) statistic.

Note: preference distribution doesn't always happen on election night. The full distribution of preferences often occurs over the weeks following an election. On election night, the state or federal Electoral Commission tries to 'guess-timate' who the leading Two Candidate Preferred (TCP) will be. Officials conduct a 'Notional Distribution of Preferences': the Notional TCP. Usually they assume the race is between the two major players, ALP and the Coalition, but sometimes it can be between a Green or an Independent candidate.

Develop your preference strategy

If you are affiliated with a party, you can breathe a sigh of relief and skip this bit as there will be experienced people on your team who can assist and manage the preferencing part of your campaign with the aim of maximising votes for all their candidates.

If you are an Independent candidate, now is the time to discuss your preferencing strategy with your Campaign Manager, Political Mentor and Kitchen Cabinet. Plan your How to Vote card (H2V) and where you will advise voters to direct their preferences (after putting you number 1 of course). Whether to preference or not is a big decision to make at this stage; therefore, it helps to have a 'think tank' of politically savvy advisers to negotiate this part of your campaign race.

As a candidate, your primary aim is to get as many first preferences (or No. 1 votes) as possible. That's why you are getting out there and working hard on the campaign trail, communicating with voters and raising your profile. Your second aim is to get as many second preferences (or No. 2 votes) as you can, where

people mark you second on the ballot paper, following their first preference. After that, your aim is to gather as many No. 3 votes, No. 4 votes and so on.

To support your aim of encouraging voters to direct their preferences to you, and in order to bolster your primary votes, you need to convince other candidates to put you as their No. 2 or No. 3 on their H2V cards. That means that if they drop off the count and are eliminated, you will potentially harvest their second preferences and the flow may give you enough votes to get elected. (Note: This strategy assumes that voters will follow the advice on your competitors' H2V cards and number the ballot box in the order they suggest. As a rule of thumb, this occurs about 70 percent of the time, but sometimes voters don't follow the cards and preferences can be all over the place.

As soon as you have an idea of who else is going to nominate, it is time to start thinking about who you will preference as No. 1 or No. 2 on your H2V. Ask yourself 'If I were unsuccessful and didn't get elected, whom would I like to see in as my local representative?' Given that the major parties hold their pre-selection process well before nominations close, a candidate should have a good idea of whom she will be competing against early on. However, until the official declaration of nominations is made by the electoral authority, a candidate will not know for certain how many competitors she is up against including those from micro parties and other independents.

As other candidates declare, meet them for coffee and a chat. Avoid making assumptions about who candidates may support (or not) and look for opportunities to build alliances and friendships. If an agreement has been made, seek confirmation in writing. Surprising as it may seem, politicians don't always keep their promises. Be cautious of promising any deals on swapping preferences until you have met other candidates and heard them out. However, don't leave it too late and find that the deals have all been 'stitched up' and you are at the bottom of everyone's H2V cards. Eventually, you need to decide to whom you will allocate your preferences including who you put last. Then it's time have the H2V cards printed (with the approved authorisation).

Depending on the rules governing your election, some candidates may decide not to distribute or swap preferences; they count on voters being smart enough to make their own decisions about how to number their own preferences on the ballot. If you take the approach not to preference, it is useful to have a response ready to the inevitable question of 'who are you preferencing?' Take time to respond and explain your decision and remind people that they still need to number every box on the ballot with their preferences (after putting you No. 1 of course).

As an Independent candidate, you may choose not to provide voters with your preferencing order; instead, you may issue an 'open' H2V with a No. 1 against your name and provide no directions to voters on how to order other candidates. If you take this option, remember to prompt voters to number the rest of the squares in order to make the vote valid. (Do not add to the pain your scrutineers will feel on election night when they see a No. 1 against your name but the remaining boxes are unfilled, resulting in an invalid vote for you.)

Other strategies used by Independent candidates are to:

- Publish a two-sided H2V card with 'red flow' (ALP) on one side and 'blue flow' (Coalition) on the other. Each recommending your suggested preferences.
- Say 'Vote 1 for me and as voters are smart, put your own preferences in for the other candidates but don't forget to number your preferences as you prefer, filling in every box'.

TIPS Those who are eliminated from the count first can assist you to get a quota and win, if their vote preferences flow to you. Think of it like 'standing on the shoulders of others'. If a competitor is eliminated early in the count, before you, their 'lost vote' may flow to you. This enables you to 'leapfrog' above other candidates and cross the line first and so get elected. To be strategic, consider who among your competitors is likely to 'drop off' first. Go and meet with them to try to gain their second (and even third) preference from their H2V card.

If you want to know more, there are many resources on the various state and territory Electoral Commission websites that explain Australia's voting systems. Hopefully your political adviser has experience in preferencing and can help you decide to whom you should allocate preferences (or even if you will do this).

Planning for the early voting ('pre-poll')

It is never too early to start thinking about developing your early voting plan and identifying volunteers who can step up and help reach the early voters in the weeks before election day.

Early voting for attendance elections is gaining in popularity in Australia. It is also known as 'pre-poll'. Citizens who meet the eligibility requirements are

relishing the opportunity to cast their vote early, often two to three weeks before election day. In addition to voters who cast their ballot at early voting centres, this group also includes postal voters. These are citizens who register to vote with the Electoral Commission; they receive and return their ballots in the mail to the Commission. In 2018, the Victorian Electoral Commission estimated that up to half of voters in the State elections were early voters. This trend is set to continue. As a consequence, the early voting centre is likely to be the largest booth in most electorates and, therefore, a candidate and her team must develop a strategy to reach early voters.

Your early voting strategy needs to consider:

- Sufficient resources are allocated in order to staff the early voting centres from 8 am to 6 pm, five days a week (or sometimes longer) for two to three weeks before the election.
- Volunteers have election day training that covers:
    - How to set up the booth and the best location for material.
    - Looking after each other 'on the line'.
    - How to hand out the H2V cards, engage in friendly discussion, and avoid confrontation.
    - Understanding how to deliver the 'pitch' and explain the policies and preferences.
    - Reaching people entering the booth and smiling as they leave (they may have voted, but they can still tell their friends about you). If the candidate is there at that time, also refer voters to her as voters like to meet and chat with the person they are voting for.
    - Complying with the rules (e.g. you are required to cover up your candidate t-shirt if you enter the booth to vote yourself or make a query).
    - Who to complain to if the other side isn't playing fairly.
- Booth rosters are established to provide coverage by volunteers for every shift and backups who can assist on the line every day leading up to election day. This is a crucial roster to manage as the days are long and demanding and early voting centres are open during work hours, which can make it difficult for volunteers in paid employment to attend.

- The Campaign Manager allocates resources to the early voting centre(s) in your electorate including allocating the task of setting up and pulling down election paraphernalia every day.
- Election material such as A-Frames and H2V cards (and bunting if allowed) are designed and printed by the time the early voting booth opens its doors.

Stage 2: Running the race

In politics, there is no prize for second place; it's all about winning. It's time to put on your candidate t-shirt and start running the race of your life.

Just like an athlete out on a running track, when the candidate is on the campaign trail, she will draw on her motivation to win (Part One of this guide), her training and preparation (Part Two), and her inner strength to keep going. Along the way, she will be encouraged by her supporters on the sidelines who bolster her energy and provide encouragement. She will need to keep an eye on the weather (local issues), forecasts (polls) and the pace of her competitors (her intel).

You've launched your campaign. You've jumped out of the starting block with a spectacular start. The preferencing plan is sorted so now it's time to stride out and really hit the campaign trail. Remember, your campaign is going to be more like a marathon than a sprint. You want to win the race, not merely participate or peak too early and drop out. Endurance and pace are the main qualities of this part of the campaign. A candidate will need to steadily persist for the months and weeks she is on 'the trail' and give it everything she can so that by the time the election arrives, there is nothing left to give.

As a candidate, you must be truly hungry to win—like those Olympic runners who fall across the finish line after a marathon effort. Although they may be writhing in agony because of the endurance required within the race, they are also ecstatic for having won and maybe even created a world record.

For those in politics, an election night victory is probably better than winning a marathon. In the immortal words of Australia's 24th Prime Minister, Paul Keating, who upon winning the 'un-winnable' election in 1993, commenced his famous *True Believers* speech with the words . . . 'Well, this is the sweetest victory of all—this is the sweetest'.

Meet-the-candidate-forums, don't miss them.

'I can't overstate how valuable it was for me, as a candidate, to attend community election forums—particularly in the smaller towns. So much of the feedback I received since being elected (to State Parliament as an Independent) was "I voted for you because I saw you at that forum. I voted for you because my husband saw you at that forum and he said, you've got to vote for this girl". It's such a good way to show people what you're made of and it helps build word of mouth in small communities.

When you're an Independent candidate in a small community, this is the way to reach people. You can reach a lot of people in a very short amount of time if you show up to those candidates forums and you show them what you got.' —Ali Cupper, Independent MP Victorian Parliament

Hit the tarmac, eat up the miles

You've launched product **you**. Now it's time to do the roadshow and sell yourself.

This stage of the race involves a focus on 'campaigning by the numbers'. The candidate's actions are focused on achieving the three overarching intentions of the campaign: to encourage more people to vote for you, seek more funds and gather more supporters for your campaign team. The candidate goes where there is a large number of voters who can be persuaded to support her, as mapped out in the campaign plan.

Out on the campaign trail, the actions of the candidate are informed by the three campaign reference documents: the strategic goals, the 100-day countdown plan and the schedule. Every day is filled with meeting people, talking one-on-one or to many. The candidate is always listening to voters' concerns and inspiring people to vote for her. This is through attending organised events like community forums, door knocking and reaching out to potential voters through traditional and social media.

In designing a winning campaign, a consistently successful tactic is to encourage supporters to hold as many events as possible, with the support of the campaign team. This tactic helps to build the momentum towards

the election by enabling the candidate to continue to raise her profile and attracting funds and volunteers. Events can be garden parties, film nights, parma-at-the-pub nights or whatever supporters can creatively plan that will attract funds.

CASE STUDY

Cathy McGowan, AO Independent MP, Federal Seat of Indi 2013–2019

The reality of the campaign trail

Cathy McGowan describes some of the activities during a typical week on the 2013 Indi campaign trail:

- Door knocking with team members in urban Wodonga, the largest town in Indi.
- Meet and greet farmers and agents at the regional livestock saleyards and attend TV interviews at the yards.
- Attend a media interview session with TV crews at the sale yards.
- Upload social media posts of the saleyard visit on Facebook and Twitter #IndiVotes.
- Attend an evening candidates' forum in the south of the electorate. My driver would escort me, giving me time to catch up on dozens of phone calls to potential donors and other supporters.
- Drop in to the three campaign hubs in Wangaratta, Benalla and Wodonga and share a cuppa with volunteers.
- Deliver yard signs/corflutes to rural supporters to put up at their farm gate.
- Take campaign posters on a meet-the-business-owner walk in the main street of smaller towns such as Tallangatta and Mansfield.
- Collect the campaign vehicle with the new Cathy McGowan Independent decal (known as the Indi van, it is my moving billboard).
- Attend a fundraiser film night for 'Indi expats' in Melbourne and talk to supporters.
- Write an email blast to supporters encouraging them to write positive letters to the editor, go on talkback radio, etc.

- Handout H2V card on the line at the early voting centre, talk to voters and thank volunteers.
- Attend a Friday evening weekly wrap-up pizza night to rally the troops.
- Attend a weekend garden party fundraiser and thank supporters.
- Attend the ballot draw and hope for the top position on the ballot paper in order to win the Donkey Vote.[2]
- Meet my Campaign Manager to discuss a postal voting strategy.
- Sign thank you letters and cards to donors.
- Set up a stall at local farmers' market and talk to local shoppers about their issues.
- Visit residents at a local nursing home and give a lunchtime talk.
- Write a weekly blog and post to my website about the campaign trail.
- Attend part of the weekly campaign team meeting to plan the election night party, confirm the venue and discuss how to manage the live tally.

Door knocking

Be the most visible candidate on the block by door knocking all the blocks in your seat.

Door knocking, also called canvassing, is a sure-fire way to raise a candidate's profile. It provides voters with the opportunity to see you as a 'real person', face to face, giving them the opportunity to chat. It is also a valuable way to seek feedback on the hot issues in voters' minds. Campaign messages can be 'tweaked' if there is strong community feeling about certain issues that a candidate needs to address.

It may seem scary to walk up to a complete stranger's house, knock, introduce yourself, and give a short spiel on who you are and why you are running for public office. However, door knocking is a campaign tactic that definitely delivers. In the experience of many successful candidates, door knocking is the 'killer tactic' that helped get them elected. For smaller scale campaigns (like local council elections) where the number of voters is in the hundreds or

several thousand, a candidate can door knock with minimal support as it is possible to meet virtually every potential voter. The first step is to download a map of the municipal or ward boundaries and plan the door-knocking routes and dates. For rural areas, it can be helpful to have a driver when covering longer distances (and they can help open farm gates).

For larger campaigns, when there are tens of thousands of potential voters to reach, volunteers can be trained to help the candidate with door knocking. For instance, in Federal Electorates, there are on average 100,000 potential voters per electorate. In these large-scale campaigns, volunteers can door knock with or without the candidate. An army of volunteers fronting up to the doors of thousands of residents will reach so many more potential voters than the candidate attempting to reach thousands of people alone.

At this stage of the campaign, the candidate will draw on the skills and support of the Volunteer Manager. The Volunteer Manager will work with the Campaign Manager and candidate to plan the areas to be door knocked, focusing on priority areas that have been identified as having greater potential to 'swing'. The Volunteer Manager will also need to develop and deliver training for volunteers in how to door knock, including script training, what to take and how to avoid dangers (such as dog bites). This is discussed previously in *Table 3: Basic Campaign Processes* in Part Two.

What you need when door knocking:

- Training in how to door knock and familiarity with the script.
- Carry a backpack with pamphlets and campaign material you need and refill each day.
- It is advised that volunteers door knock in pairs for safety and to manage any potential OH&S issues.
- Print two different door knocking post cards: one to hand to the person when they are home, and a 'sorry, I missed you' card for when they are out.
- Wear your name tag (either as the candidate or as a 'Volunteer for Candidate [NAME]').
- Carry a clipboard or notebook and pen to note down resident concerns.
- Posters for windows if a resident wants to put them up (or corflutes if you have some handy in a nearby car).

- Candidate's business cards and other merchandise such as magnets, buttons, stickers etc.
- Statements on candidate's policies.
- Wear comfy shoes, the campaign t-shirt, rain jacket and jeans (a good barrier against dogs).
- Take water, hat, sunscreen, lip balm, small change and identification.
- Check in with the Volunteer Manager when you sign off for the day. Report any issues raised that need to be fed back into the campaign.

Door knocking can be scary initially. After all, you have to promote yourself as a candidate to complete strangers. But after you have visited a few houses it becomes quite fun. So, just do it!

Example of a door-knocking script for a candidate

Introduce yourself	'Hi, my name is ...
	I'm running for the upcoming [local council/ state/ federal] elections in MONTH
	How are you today?'
Explain the context, state your purpose	'I'm talking to people in the area today about matters important to them in this [council/state/ federal] election.'
Ask your question, then pause	What are the particular issues which are important to you this election?'
Give people time to respond, prompt if needed	Actively listen, validate, paraphrase, agree, follow-up questions. Note these down on your clip board.
	If they don't have any issues to discuss, move on to the key issue.
Key issue and story	'One of the key issues I'm campaigning on is ...' or
	'The reason I'm running for election is ...'
	Remind them of the election timing (or if this applies, when the postal votes go out) 'You will receive postal votes from [DATE]. Don't forget to fill them in straight away or you could risk a fine.'

Wrap up	If you have time, explain where the early voting centre is located and under what circumstances voters have the option to vote early. If they are interested in becoming involved in your campaign, encourage them to visit your website to sign up and let them know that someone will be in touch with them.
Thank you and ask for their vote.	'Thank you for your time. Please take this brochure/flyer and I seek your support when you vote'.

Speak up

Many people detest the idea of public speaking, but as a candidate on the campaign trail, you need to speak up and be heard.

On the campaign trail, it is likely that a candidate will need to address an audience somewhere, someplace, several times a week. On larger campaigns, it will probably be a daily occurrence. Speaking up means talking at 'meet the candidates' forums, attending town hall meetings and interviews on local radio or podcasts where thousands will be listening to your 'pitch' on the other side of the microphone.

Speaking is an essential tactic to deliver your message and elevate your campaign above other competitors. If it scares you, you need to get over it and become used to speaking up. There are many great resources on public speaking (all which provide much better advice than imagining your audience naked). If you are not a confident public speaker, consider getting some training or one-on-one coaching. Poor speakers are at a disadvantage in conveying their message effectively to voters.

TIPS Tips for candidates when public speaking:

Understand the purpose of the forum or event and the time you have been allocated to speak. Stick to it.

- Design your speech:
  - Write out your speech, shorten it to speaking cards, then practice, and learn it by heart so you can speak without notes.
  - Speak from the heart about your values and the change you wish to see. Be authentic.

    - Try to incorporate personal stories to make a point.
    - Consider the likely questions people will have and incorporate the answers in your talk.
    - Don't forget to ask people to support you at the election.
- Look professional and stylish (even memorable).
- Arrive early and talk to people. Introduce yourself and shake hands.
- Take a friend to smile at in the audience.
- Wear a name tag as not everyone knows who you are.
- Avoid making personal attacks on elected politicians. That is unbecoming of a community leader (and you may need to work with them to get things done in the future).
- Project confidence: don't apologise when you stand to speak and don't say 'Sorry, I'm nervous'.
- Consider taking a prop if it will help to emphasise your point.
- When an audience member talks, make sure you listen. Take notes if that helps your reply.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say you'll get back to them and get their details to do so.
- Thank the organisers when closing.
- Hand out your flyers including an opportunity for people to sign up as volunteers or to donate.
- Ask someone on your team to record your presentation and seek feedback from your team on what could be improved.

Media management on the trail

By this stage of your campaign, you will have the following in place:

- A Communications Manager on your team who can assist you with managing the media for your campaign.
- Various social media platforms up and running.
- Blogs and video content of the campaign on your website, attracting hits and drawing supporters and funds.
- Relationships with local media and an understanding of their deadlines for print, TV and radio.

- Your main messages worked out (from the *4-by-3 formula* process) and they will have been validated with different audiences.

Now it's time to get out there and spread your message through earned and unearned media. Be concise and be prepared to say the same thing over and over—and often.

> *There's a simple rule. You say it again, and you say it again, and you say it again, and you say it again, and you say it again, and then again and again and again and again, and about the time that you're absolutely sick of saying it is about the time that your target audience has heard it for the first time.*
>
> —Frank Luntz, American Republican consultant

Stay social on the trail

Research into the use of social media shows that 8 out of 10 Australians are active online. To reach voters through online communications a candidate should set themselves goals for posting content either as posts, pictures or videos. This could be several times a day or three times a week, depending on the scale of the campaign.

The posts should focus on a range of topics including a mix of:

- You, the candidate, out and about in your community showing what you are doing on your campaign.
- Positive posts about local businesses, service and community groups and individuals.
- The issues on which you are campaigning.
- Re-tweets, likes and shares of posts relevant to your campaign and reinforcing your messages.

Are you broadcast ready? *10 tips to make the media work for you* by Penny Terry

Penny Terry spent 10 years as a radio presenter with the ABC, broadcasting more than 20,000 stories from diverse perspectives and here she shares her top tips to make the media work for aspiring political candidates.

Here's a little known secret: the media needs you. As a radio presenter, I would need to find eight to ten interviewees every day who my audience would find interesting and relevant to the state of their world on that particular day. Elections are a big deal. But they've also been covered a thousand times with local, state and federal elections happening all around our country, all the time. As such, journalists, editors and producers are scrambling to find new ways to keep their audience interested while upholding their responsibility to inform them about who is running for office and what they stand for. So, how can you help them give their audience what they need? Here's a few tips to consider.

Just call them: You could spend hours writing a media release, sending it out to all the different media organisations only for it to sit in their inboxes until they're ready. Or, you could just call them. Be personable, solve their problems and you'll be memorable. It's the first step to creating a relationship.

Keep the relationship going: Once you get that first meeting, make sure you give out your number (but be cool about it, don't be too eager). Mention other topics that you'd be happy to comment on or offer to give background information on certain topics when they need it. Keep the lines of communication open. After each interview, you should say either 'I'll call you, 'Call me' or 'Call my friend'.

Be clear about what you will say and why their audience will care: One word: **deadline**. Journalists don't have a lot of time. Create three quick dot points to succinctly explain why an interview with you is of value to them and their audience. Touch on why it's relevant to the broader community discussion, why they need you now and what you can offer that goes beyond what's been said before.

People like your opinion, even if they don't 'like' your opinion: Don't be a fence-sitter. It's frustrating. This is an opportunity to find a way to connect your ideas with something the audience already cares about and understands. Use stories, metaphors, real examples from people you've met or community scenarios. This will take you from being 'opinionated' to having an 'interesting perspective'. Giving your opinion does not mean ranting; yelling only makes you louder, not easier to hear.

Be comfortable and authentic: Most people feel awkward in interviews and tend to put on a 'radio voice'. Don't be afraid to ask questions so you'll know what to expect and feel more comfortable. Where do I stand? Where do I look? How long will it be? Is this voice level ok? Remember they want you to perform at your best. Then, take a deep breath and pretend you are talking to an interested friend over coffee. Don't use words you wouldn't use; don't try and sound like what you think an 'election candidate' should sound like; don't pretend to know more than you really do. Just be you.

Don't dodge: There's nothing worse than listening to someone avoid a question. Never underestimate your audience; it will see what you are up to. If there is an important reason you can't answer a specific question, say that. If you don't have an answer, say that and tell them you'll think about it and post an answer on social media later. Otherwise answer it. If it makes you feel vulnerable answering a question, say that too. Always remember this interview is not about you, it's about the people listening to it.

It's not always an interview: Things have changed. The media is hardly ever just about a one-off interview anymore; it's about creating ongoing engagement with an audience about an issue. What else could you provide to keep the audience interested? For example, could you give the journalist an exclusive? Could you give them access to a special filming location? Do you have research from which they could quote? Is there a community member who could tell the story better? Could you give them important background? Make it easy for them to expand the story.

Don't let the media shake your confidence. You are the expert on you and know much more about your topic than the journalist. The more honest and open you are, the less likely they'll be able to 'rattle'

you. Talk about what sets you apart from others, what others find most interesting about your ideas and past experience, and what you can say that offers a new angle to the current discussions. Go in with the mindset that you are not using your ideas for campaigning, but as a catalyst for change.

Be available: When you put out a media release, make sure you are available to comment the minute it hits an inbox. With the 24-hour news cycle, the media may want to interview you the same day you contact them, especially if it's about a current topic. Be prepared to be 'bumped' to another timeslot without much warning. News is happening all the time and sometimes your story will be pushed down the list if a timelier topic comes up.

Different mediums require a different style:

- **Radio interviews:** Conversational, one-on-one, use descriptive language and emotion in your voice. Longer radio interviews are a great way to use real stories to engage the audience. This allows the audience to understand what informs your perspective.
- **Radio news:** Expect a 3–5 minute phone interview. They are looking for three paragraphs and a 20-second (approx.) sound bite per news story and may do two or three versions. Be clear with your messages and use expression in your voice.
- **TV news:** Concise, visual, consider body language and facial expressions, don't look at the camera or use journalist's names. Consider what questions may be asked beforehand so you can prepare three specific messages. Try and use a slight pause between each important 'sound bite' to help in the editing stage.
- **Press:** Feels more informal, but you may feel more anxious about what the journalists chooses to print. Make it as easy as possible for them and say your main points first, give clear strong quotes that could set up a headline, and suggest possible photos or other 'talent' that would complement the story.

Penny Terry is now Creative Director with Healthy Tasmania Pty Ltd

Managing risks on the campaign

In Part Two, we explored the risks to be managed when planning a campaign. Now it's time to re-consider the barriers and hazards that could trip you up while out on the trail, leading up to election day.

If you are an independent candidate, you will be aware that you will be competing against the big parties who have been playing this game a long time. Your challengers may be hardened warriors, veterans of many political campaigns. In this situation, it is important to know the rules of the game and understand some of the battle tactics that may be employed to attack you. You will also need to be prepared to call out bad behaviour and defend your position.

If you are up against an experienced political operative, it can be useful to research his/her past 'form' to develop your 'just in case' plan. It is said that 'the past predicts the future'. How did this candidate treat the competition in previous campaigns? What is their party notorious for doing in campaigns? What sort of attack ads have they run in the past? From this analysis, you may be able to build a picture of the sort of attacks they could try and you may be able to pre-empt their attack.

By identifying and being alert to potential problems, a candidate and her team can respond and recover from any crisis that could hinder success on the way to the election. Experienced campaigners know the importance of putting measures in place to track progress against campaign goals and systems to monitor the opposition. Analysing the metrics (i.e. the data) enables the candidate and her team to identify trouble early on and pre-empt problems. Campaign plans and actions can then be re-calibrated where necessary.

Track your progress

When training for a marathon or running a race, successful athletes use fitness trackers, or apps, to 'monitor the metrics' of pace, heart rate and distance covered. Similarly, candidates in an election race need to monitor their own data to track progress towards their finish line of election day.

- Timeliness: Is the campaign team on time with the scheduled tasks such as publication and printing dates of campaign-ready election material?
- How is the budget tracking? Can you quickly access figures on the incoming donations and outgoing expenditure?

- Has the candidate complied with all legal obligations?
- What is the data from various social media platforms showing? For example, number of likes, followers, shares, tweets etc.
- What are the analytics showing from your web page? For example, number of hits and length of stay.
- What is your media monitoring or personal Goggle alert showing in terms of your success gaining unearned (incidental) media appearances?
- What are the 'polls' saying about your chances of winning, or State and Federal trends? Check out the various political polls in the major newspapers like *Galaxy Poll, News Poll, Morgan* and *ReachTell* to name a few. There may even be news of a 'leaked poll' from a major party.
- What are your betting odds? Many seats in State and Federal elections are monitored by online betting agencies that will allow you to bet on seat outcomes. While not always accurate, they are often close regarding predicted outcomes.
- Have you conducted any surveys of the electorate by engaging a professional polling company or through an online poll, SMS poll, Survey Monkey or other means? To what are the trends alerting you?
- Gather the feedback from door knocking and analyse for trends and reactions. Is there a theme to which the campaign team needs to respond?
- Are you tracking results against the campaign goals? For example, how many residences have been door-knocked? How many people have been reached through the phone bank?
- How far and wide is the candidate's reach? Is the candidate getting in front of the target number of voters per week?
- Gather data on your chief challenger(s). Where are they going and what events are they holding? Check if their election material is compliant. If not, you have the option of making a formal complaint to the electoral commission.

TIPS Seeking a free way to gather intel on your competition? Set up a Google alert in their name and monitor what they are saying through their own channels and in the media. Also, set up a news alert on yourself as a free media monitoring service.

What could go wrong?

There are a number of hot spots during a race where things could go wrong and potentially derail the campaign. Previous action to develop a 'risk register' with your team will have identified potential risks for your campaign and resulted in a treatment plan for higher priority ones: those with a greater likelihood of occurring and having a significant impact.

Now that the campaign is off and running, it is a good time to pull out the risk register and update the actions to cover any new risks. Some common areas where things could go wrong on the campaign trail include:

1. Your side

    - Candidate's actions
        - The candidate could make a crucial mistake (e.g. poor diary management means they turn up embarrassingly late to an important event).
        - Candidate mishaps (she could lose her voice, get sick, or says the wrong thing).
        - The candidate responds to the wrong feedback (overreacts and wastes time, effort and resources).
        - Backlash to candidate (she says or does something that really annoys voters).
        - Bad news (something surfaces from the candidate's past that is unfavourable).
        - An 'off the record' comment is reported (the candidate mistakes a journalist for a 'friend').
    - Campaign team actions
        - A team member could leak sensitive material (intentionally or by mistake).
        - Volunteers make inappropriate comments on behalf of the candidate. (This could be to 'big-note' themselves or mis-represent the candidate's views.)
        - Media attacks (they want a story so they seek to create conflict).
        - Poor planning and processes lead to problems (for example, failing to put the correct authorisation on a pamphlet, which then needs to be reprinted or stamped over to comply with legislation).

2. Their side

    - Competitor's action
        - Attack ads (vicious, personal, lies).
        - Dirty tricks galore.
        - Destroying candidate's printed material (pulling down posters etc.).
        - Preference stacking against the candidate.
        - Their supporters attack your supporters on social media (or physically or verbally at booths).
        - At the early voting centre, they can attempt to take the candidate's attention away from genuine voters in order to reduce her effectiveness on the line.
        - They enrol a significant number of 'dummy candidates' to influence the preference flow away from you.

3. Other

    - Significant impact from other issues playing out at a local, state and federal level cloud your message and focus.
    - Unexpected events (the 'unknown, unknowns' as Donald Rumsfeld, past US Secretary of Defence called them).

Dealing with dirty tricks

> *In my experience, the major parties will pull out all stops to attack an independent candidate who they see as a genuine threat.*
>
> —Andrew Wilkie MP, Independent for Denison, Tasmania.

It is an unfortunate fact of campaigning that, at some stage, many candidates will have to respond to 'dirty tricks' from competitors. This is especially the case when a major party is under threat of losing a seat that they see as 'rightfully theirs' and will do anything to keep their winning edge. Unfortunately, all too

often, the bigger parties have the power, experience and funds to pull out all stops to ensure an independent challenger is smeared and attacked in order to keep what they see as 'their' seat.

There are many examples of underhand tactics in Australian politics. Be mindful, as an independent candidate, that some competitors—and their party—will use everything they can to discredit you and bring you down.

Here are some examples of dirty political tricks from competitors:

- Lies are spread about the candidate including taking comments out of context to smear the candidate, or erroneously asserting that a candidate is funded by other organisations (such as Get-Up).
- If a candidate is recontesting a seat, a competitor can misrepresent the candidate's past voting record.
- Vandalism of candidate's posters, corflutes, outdoor advertisements.
- Attempt to create scandal around the candidate's family or their past history.
- Cybersquatting: the practice of a party registering a competitor's domain name (or other social media 'real estate') so the candidate can't use their name on social media.
- Putting up 'dummy candidates' against the candidate to funnel votes. Sometimes this can include 'fake independents' to split the independent votes to go the way of the major party.
- Placing 'plants' in the campaign team to spy on the candidate.
- Handing out fake H2V cards that encourage supporters of micro parties or independents to give their second preferences to one of the major parties.
- Party affiliated candidates pretending to be independent by removing party logos and other identification from their campaign material and masquerading as 'independent'.
- 'Dear Neighbour letters' are fake letters designed by political parties to look like genuine endorsements for their candidate from 'ordinary' community members. They are also known as 'shit sheets' when they are used to 'dump' on a challenger with spurious, slanderous claims.
- Major parties encouraging their members to constantly 'sledge' the independent candidate through social media, talkback radio and letters to the editor.

- Fake news and videos are increasingly common in international politics where visual footage is digitally altered to put words in the mouths of politicians or other public figures involved with elections. These 'deep fakes' can be scarily convincing.
- … and many more—keep an eye out for other examples at your nearest election.

CASE STUDY

Andrew Wilkie MP, Independent Member for Denison, Tasmania

Dirty Tricks in Denison

Background

Andrew Wilkie MP was first elected as an Independent in the seat of Denison in Hobart, Tasmania. It had previously been a safe Labor seat so the first time he campaigned for the seat as an independent candidate in 2010, he was not seen as a real threat by the major parties and was basically ignored. However, that changed when, to the surprise of many, he was successfully elected in 2010.

Andrew ran for Denison again in 2013, as the incumbent. This time things got fierce but he was re-elected. He was elected again in 2016. Andrew is a veteran of dirty tricks campaigns. Here's his response to the dirty trick of running a smear campaign on an opponent.

The Big Fat Billboard

'To the unsuspecting public, it was my ad. My colours, my photograph, my branding, up there on a billboard next to one of Hobart's busiest highways. Except it wasn't. We were just months out from the 2013 Federal Election and Labor was playing dirty, very dirty. The gloves were off.

Vote Wilkie = Get Abbott, the billboard screamed under a larger-than-life photograph of me shaking hands with the Liberal leader Tony Abbott, who was wildly unpopular in my left-leaning electorate. Adding to its air of credibility, it was right next to my actual ad on the neighbouring billboard. This was a disaster and a sign of how low Labor was prepared to go in its attempts to regain the seat of Denison.

I'd promised no deals this time around but that didn't stop Labor's bold-faced lie. This billboard had the potential to cost me the election, and I needed to act fast to stop the misinformation.

A benefit of independence is agility. The parties are big, lumbering beasts with wide turning circles while an independent can turn on a sixpence. Back in the office, I met my small team to brainstorm. The resulting solution was genius and would turn the tables on Labor. I got on the phone to my screenwriter. Within 24 hours, he was on a cherry picker turning my billboard around. On the now blank canvas he wrote A BIG FAT... LABOR LIE! with an arrow pointing to the offending ad. Throwing salt in Labor's eye, the media reported the spectacular own goal.



Yes, the parties have resources, foot soldiers and experience but independents also have an edge. They are agile and creative and the only ones who can truly represent their electorates, free from the binds of the parties.'

Andrew's Tips

'Understand that sometimes things can get nasty out there. But in terms of responding to it, you've got to use your judgement. Sometimes things may be best left unremarked upon so you don't fuel it. Other times you have to defend your character and address the lies and untruths. There is a point at which you have to get on the front foot and correct the record'.

What can you do?

Political campaigning can get dirty, that much we know to be true. What can you do to address these underhand tactics?

In most instances, these underhand tactics are barely legal. For example, in November 2017, on the day Kristina Keneally announced her candidature in the Bennelong by-election against Liberal John Alexander, the Liberal party bought a web domain in her name and used it to detail what they didn't like about her.[3] Although cybersquatting has been banned in Australia since 2002, the domain site was technically being used to discredit the Labor opposition. Legal attempts to shut down sites like this take time and effort, and they use up campaign resources. The lesson is to purchase your cyber real estate before you announce.

It would be wonderful if this type of behaviour wasn't part of campaigning; however, the reality is that an independent candidate needs to expect some dodgy behaviour from their competitors, especially in a tough competition. It's better to have a plan to respond to these tactics than to be ambushed.

There are several options a candidate can pursue to address dirty tactics:

- Call it out when you see it. Sometimes the media are interested in these 'sledge' tactics and it can help to reinforce the 'David vs Goliath' theme of your campaign if you are competing against a major party that is acting dirty. Your response could be 'I play fair compared to this ...'
- Officially complain. There are rules about what candidates can and can't do. If you feel these have been broken by your competitor, you can make an official complaint to your relevant electoral authority such as the Australian Electoral Commission.
- If you feel you have been defamed, you can threaten legal action and 'lawyer up'.
- If you feel that an advertisement is telling lies about you, you can lodge a complaint with the Advertising Standards Board or relevant authority.[4]
- You can complain to the Australian Press Council about material published by an Australian newspaper, magazine or website. It's online and free.[5]
- Encourage your allies and supporters to protest as well.

- Sometimes you may choose to ignore the attack; at other times you may need to respond and correct the record. Be clear, confident and credible—don't stoop to their level of attack.

Sign the pledge

One approach to try to avoid underhand tactics is to encourage all competitors to sign a 'pledge' of positive campaigning that commits them to ethical and decent behaviour.

The Ethics Centre[6] has a good example of a pledge called the *Politicians' Pledge* and it encourages all local, state and federal candidates to sign up to in order to deliver better politics in Australia. It is a solid foundation for any campaign.[7]

The *Politicians' Pledge*

As originally conceived, the practice of politics is intended to be a noble calling. Yet, without voluntary, ethical restraint, the pursuit and exercise of power risks becoming personal, brutal and self-serving; coarsening the polity, bringing public institutions into disrepute and damaging the common good.

So, consistent with the highest ideals of our profession, I promise that:

In the pursuit of power, I will:

- *Act in good conscience;*
- *Enable informed decision-making by my fellow citizens;*
- *Respect the intrinsic dignity of all;*
- *Refrain from exploiting my rivals' private failings for political gain; and*
- *Act so as to merit the trust and respect of the community.*

In the exercise of power, I will:

- *Give effect to the ideals of democratic government and represent the interests of my electorate as a whole;*
- *Abide by the letter and spirit of the Constitution and uphold the rule of law;*

- *Advance the public interest before any personal, sectional or partisan interest;*
- *Hold myself accountable for conduct for which I am responsible; and*
- *Exercise the privileges and discharge the duties of public office with dignity, care and honour.*

Build The Big Mo

Political momentum is that feeling of a surge towards victory. But it doesn't just happen; you need to plan for it.

Let's assume that by now the election is only a few weeks away. You have reached the final leg of your campaign, so 'the big mo' should be building. (No, we're not talking about a huge moustache! It is a political term to describe campaign momentum coined by George H W Bush in his 1980 presidential campaign.) Momentum is about building a wave of support that will help propel the candidate towards the finishing post. Now is the time for you and your team to be designing opportunities to build campaign momentum whenever you can. Think about how you can deliberately craft actions to give the campaign a big push forward in the final weeks.

By now the campaign communications and advertising strategy will be rolling out. In these last few weeks of the campaign, you need to be saying things in a way that gets (even) more people listening to you. That's because momentum is built on word of mouth: the more people who are talking about how great you are to their friends, neighbours and work colleagues, the better. It's about 'building the buzz' and creating excitement and energy around you as a candidate that will help you get elected.

In his book *The Big Mo,* American Republican political campaigner, Joe Garecht, suggests that candidates need to have a message worth talking about and one that can spread quickly with a 'hook' that encourages people to pass the message on. He also suggests that the message needs to build an emotional connection with the target audience and focus on people who are more likely to spread your message.[8]

How could your communications plan use these tips in the last few weeks of your campaign? Brainstorm some ideas with your campaign team to

implement deliberate tactics to get people talking positively about you as the potential candidate. If you feel things are flagging at this stage of the campaign, a creative team session could ramp-up the vibe.

One idea is to consider tactics to disrupt the debate; this is also known as 'throwing a rock'. What can you do to make your candidate stand out compared to everyone else? How can your digital communication make your message 'go viral'? What else can you do place yourself in the front of voters' minds?

Stay agile

> *Independents can leverage their agility. For example, I can produce a leaflet on an office photocopier and volunteers can hand deliver it the next day or call a press conference in an hour. Agility is a powerful asset and I use it all the time and would say it's one of the reasons for my success.*
>
> —Andrew Wilkie MP, Independent Member for Denison, Tasmania

Candidates standing as independents have the benefit of being able to run flexible campaigns that can quickly respond to opportunities. For example, they can rapidly respond to the issue of the day without having to move through the many approval steps required of a large campaign for a major party candidate. This agility requires clear lines of communication and delegated authority, emanating from the candidate who has the ultimate responsibility. How is your campaign team taking advantage of your ability to stay agile? Keep alert to the issues in your community and watch for how the wind is blowing. Is there anything else you could be doing that would 'out-compete' your competitors like a well-executed stunt?

Nick Xenophon, a previous independent and micro party candidate in the South Australian and Federal Parliaments, was famous for his publicity stunts on the campaign trail that won him front page exposure and got him noticed by the voting public. In a summary of his political career, an article in The Guardian noted that "In his 11 or so years in the SA Legislative Council, he

paraded a goat to show he was not 'kidding around' while a cow was used as a surrogate for State Governments' love of the gambling tax 'cash cow'. He also rode a model train to demonstrate the 'gravy train' of politicians' perks."[9]

Keep persisting

Keep attending more events and follow the golden rule to 'show up and be nice'. This is like that stage of a marathon where the runner 'eats up the miles', keeping a fast pace but being careful to avoid exhaustion and drawing on the support of the campaign team working smoothly behind the scenes to support her. In order to get through this final stage, a candidate has to simply push on, and draw on internal stores of endurance to make it to the finish.

TIPS **Tips to help persist in the final months and weeks of the campaign:**

- Wherever you go, purchase raffle tickets from whatever organisation is trying to raise funds. It is a great way to connect with local service clubs, charities and community groups. You get bonus points for sausage sizzles as you get to eat and connect at the same time.
- Take a friendly dog wearing your campaign bandana out with you.
- Attend every 'meet the candidates' forum and look professional.
- On more casual occasions, wear your campaign t-shirts and encourage your supporters to also don these 'walking billboards'.
- Wear comfy shoes.
- Be responsive to useful feedback but stay on track and don't get distracted.
- Take a minder with you to events so they can politely move you on from people who are rude or blocking you from talking with others. They also keep you running on time.
- Consider handing out your flyers to voters at the 'commuter run' by turning up during morning rush hour at the local bus or ferry terminal or train station.
- Spend a few minutes at the end of each day preparing for the next day so you are aware of tomorrow's deadlines in your daily schedule.

- Post daily on all your social media platforms. Grab the opportunity to like or comment on posts from other people, community groups and organisations that reinforce your campaign messages.
- Every time you meet someone, leave them something to remember you by. This could be a leaflet, sticker, poster or 'merch' such as a t-shirt or yard sign.
- Don't feed the trolls.
- Take a spare phone battery and charger with you. You never want your phone battery to run out of power.
- Pack fruit in your bag or have a bag of nuts and pumpkin seeds ready for when you need a vitamin hit.
- Stay in touch with your core campaign team (the inner circle) and manage issues as they arise over the course of the day.
- Make time for the media. If you don't talk when they are ready to feed the 24-hour news cycle, they will move on.
- Keep an eye on the budget and avoid overspending even if you are confident of winning.
- Remember to have fun. Develop a musical play list for your campaign on Spotify: a soundtrack to campaign by and share with your supporters.
- Factor in self-care.
- Celebrate! Regularly and with gratitude. Optimism is infectious.
- Keep your sense of humour and smile. You're fighting to save the world remember?!

Don't forget to have fun

> *If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution.*
>
> —Emma Goldman (1869-1940), early feminist activist

Politics can feel like a matter of life and death; sometimes even more serious than that. However, it is important to have fun for the sake of the candidate, her team, the volunteers and idealism. Especially in the last few weeks as the campaign get towards the pointy end of all the effort and planning. A campaign

team that is having fun attracts more volunteers and supporters. Creating an environment that supports a campaign team to be creative and innovative can also assist in building campaign momentum. A playful campaign can attract the attention of voters as something different and fun.

After all, if you can't dance at your revolution, is it even worth fighting for?

CASE STUDY

Cathy McGowan, AO Independent MP, Federal Seat of Indi 2013–2019

Using fun to drive momentum

As an independent candidate in a tough political battle, making sure we had fun and remembered to enjoy ourselves became our mantra. During my two successful campaigns, we deliberately nurtured a culture of fun, innovation and creativity with the team on the campaign trail. Volunteers were encouraged to put forward ideas to keep the fun and humour going. We had a strong team with a great sense of humour, and some fantastic ideas became a reality. The creativity helped raise my profile and brought attention to my campaign and messages. It also got people talking. One highlight was the flash mob, flower-power buyout of a local florist taking the shop's total flower supply to the local aged care facility.

Fun on the Indi campaign trail

Keep the Seat Orange: Orange was the trademark colour of the Indi campaigns and clearly differentiated Cathy McGowan from other candidates of the blue (Liberal), red (ALP) and green (Nationals and Greens) persuasion. In the 2016 election campaign, Cathy was aiming to get re-elected with the meme of 'keep the seat orange'. As part of this campaign, a plan was developed by volunteers to take this slogan literally and create a sea of orange seats throughout Indi. As a result, hundreds of volunteers painted various items that symbolised a seat (old chairs, wooden boxes, stools, benches) and strategically placed them outside their house, driveway or farm gate for all to see. Using the same paint colour (it was Pantone 166C; CMYK C0, M67 Y96 K0 semi-gloss), there were many humorous and fun chairs placed throughout the electorate. Supporters also posted their pictures to social media. This fun strategy continued to build Cathy's profile and message within the community and assisted to generate a buzz.

The Indi Makers: Cathy was supported by an amazingly creative group of women skilled in arts and craft, and blokes handy with a saw, hammer and nails. This crafty bunch would gather each week in the Wodonga campaign hub to chat and create. The Indi Makers group engaged other volunteers who may not have wanted to door-knock but who could contribute through their creativity. They made everything from banners to brooches and booth flags; they even made bandanas for canine supporters and orange t-shirts for sheep. Others made A-frames and campaign infrastructure. When Cathy was re-elected, the group continued to meet and regularly delivered handmade gifts for Cathy to share with visitors to her office in Parliament House or to the electorate office.

Cats for Cathy

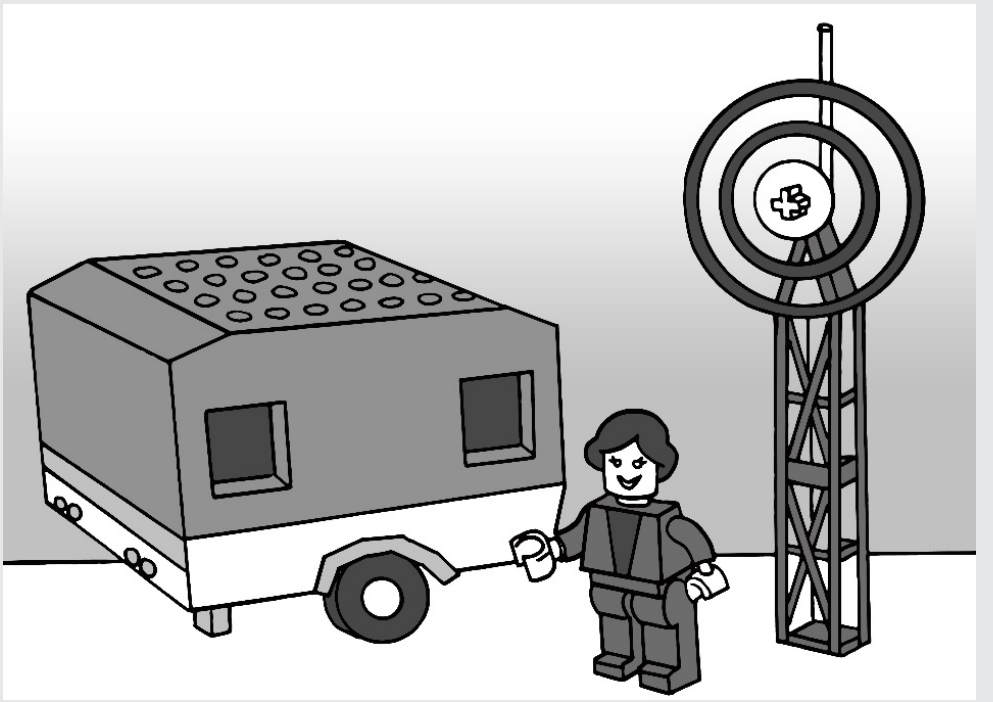
This was a humorous social media project developed for the 2013 campaign by a young supporter who used Tumbler to develop various memes in support of Cathy McGowan.[10]

Florist Cash Mob

In the weeks leading up to the 2013 election, Victoria's main rural newspaper, *The Weekly Times*, ran a story on how the locals of Rutherglen, in the heart of Indi, felt about the election. It included a comment from a local florist owner who expressed her concerns that some local businesses were nervous about spending because of the election. In response, more than a dozen savvy, orange-clad, young volunteers from Cathy's team used their social media skills to organise a 'cash mob' visit to the florist and bought over $400 worth of flowers. (A 'cash-mob' is similar to a flash-mob but instead of breaking into a pre-organised impromptu dance, people plan a synchronized visit to a business to spend money.) The group then donated the flowers to a local aged-care facility. The entire event was captured on social media and generated positive coverage in the local media and a buzz around town.[11]

One enterprising young supporter developed a small LEGO® lookalike figurine of Cathy, based on a photograph. These pieces were used to create memes for social media and generated a great response on Twitter and Facebook. An example was the miniature figurines of Cathy out and about advocating for more phone towers in remote rural

areas, with her orange campaign van promising to fix mobile phone 'blackspots'.



Dealing with feedback

A quick word about dealing with feedback. Sometimes it will be asked for, often not. Be careful about what you take on board. Not all feedback is helpful because even when provided with the best of intentions, it can sap the confidence of a candidate. It can derail, confuse, overwhelm and even be dangerous if it puts the candidate in a risky situation. For example, trolls can be merciless on social media with 'free feedback'.

Useful advice, provided in a helpful way by someone who knows their stuff, can be great. But not all feedback is useful. Motivational speaker Matt Church advises that a useful filter to apply is *did I ask for it?* and *is this person qualified to have an opinion?* If the person is unqualified to have an opinion and you didn't ask for it, feel free to ignore it.[12]

The real gold comes when you can ask an expert for feedback and they are willing to provide you with some informed advice that's worth acting on. For

candidates in political campaigns, this is when your team of trusted advisers (your Kitchen Cabinet) can provide useful feedback.

TIPS If you're tired of getting unsolicited 'feedback' throughout your campaign, from unqualified people with plenty of opinions, here are a few polite replies you could try:

- 'Thank you for your opinion.'
- 'Thank you, you may be right.'
- 'Thank you; however, I need to focus right now but next time I want your advice I'll be sure to ask for it.'
- Simply smile, nod and move on.

Ultimately, feedback and advice can be great, especially for showing blind spots of which you may not be aware. However, feedback should lead to an improvement in your campaign, not stymie action or knock your confidence. Next time you get some feedback, consider if a) the person was qualified and experienced to pass it on, and b) if you specifically asked for feedback? If not, consider it as 'white noise' and move on to continue doing what you do well—running a campaign to get elected.

Keeping up appearances

> *Your appearance strongly influences other people's perception of your financial success, authority, trustworthiness, intelligence, and suitability for hire or promotion.*
>
> —Business Insider

Earlier in the guide, we discussed the importance of appearance in communicating the candidate's message. The point was that appearances must be a priority in order to send the right message to voters. While men may be mocked for their sartorial choices, the research demonstrates that it's still mainly women who attract greater scrutiny for their appearance. A woman in politics is still unusual. As a result, the press and voters will notice a female candidate's clothes, shoes, hair and makeup.

Australian political discourse has some notorious examples of fascination about the appearance of women politicians. Readers may recall discussion on Senator Michaela Cash's 'power coif' hairdo; Senator Natasha Stott Despoja's Doc Marten shoes; Victorian Premier Joan Kirner's 'spotty dress'; the cut of Prime Minister Julia Gillard's jacket; and Foreign Minister Julie Bishop's red shoes.

Male candidates may get away with turning up to a 'meet the candidates' forum in shorts and a t-shirt and people say, 'isn't he great, he's one of us' while many women candidates say that they are held to a higher standard of grooming and can be labelled 'frumpy' or 'sloppy' if they don't put effort into their grooming. On the other hand, there's no doubt that people expect a woman running for office, or when she is an elected politician, to look good. For women, this can result in considerable time and effort working on her appearance. When Hillary Clinton was speaking in Australia in 2018, she said she had calculated that she spent about 600 hours during the campaign trail on grooming—the equivalent of 26 days.

What to wear and what not to wear

While running this race, thank goodness you don't have to wear lycra. Wear outfits that project professionalism and capability and allow you to still be comfortable at the end of a long, tiring day of campaigning.

For a female candidate, this often equates to wearing 'power-suits' such as those favoured by female politicians on the world stage—think Angela Merkel's blazer, Theresa May's skirtsuit and Hillary Clinton's pantsuit. These women leaders project that they can 'play the game' in the male-dominated world of politics. Many women want to be seen as attractive to voters without being judged as too 'sexy' 'fussy' or 'soft'. That's why the 'professional businesswoman' style usually works. If you have a different style that reflects the authentic 'you', then go for it.

> **TIPS** Ultimately you need to feel authentic in how you present. That might mean wearing sneakers or runners when door knocking and canvassing voters for support. Don't fake it and stay away from the 'Bourke Street bushie' image. For example, if you're out on the campaign trail in the 'bush' and decide to wear an Akubra hat, a checked shirt, moleskins and RM Williams boots for the first time in your life, don't do it. Most voters have astute BS antennae and can tell when someone is pretending to be something they're not.

Care for the candidate

As the campaign moves into the final stages, the support team needs to keep the candidate safe and well and manage any risks to her wellbeing. There comes a time in nearly every candidate's race where it seems like the campaign has been going for ever. Enthusiasm may flag and exhaustion can creep in after yet another day of door knocking, speaking and running on adrenalin. In a marathon race, this is known as 'hitting the wall'. Similar to a super fit marathon runner, there are steps candidates can take to prevent and beat campaign stress.

Sometimes the candidate can literally fall mid race; this is often due to stress and exhaustion. It is a physically demanding task running for office. For example, standing on the line at an early voting centre for 10 hours a day to hand out cards to hundreds of people can be exhausting. Regular rests need to be factored in. Occupational health and safely also means addressing any risks to the candidate from potentially aggressive people on the campaign trail—both in real life and on social media.

Ultimately, there's no race without the candidate. A candidate needs to look after herself on the trail— mentally and physically. This can range from learning how to manage criticism without getting defensive, dealing with cyber-trolls, getting good quality sleep, avoiding colds, eating well, and exercising.

The candidate and her campaign team need to put plans in place to protect the physical and mental wellbeing of the candidate and factor in regular breaks for food and water as often candidates can forget to eat. The 'campaign weight loss diet' is a well-known side effect of many long, hard-fought campaigns. It is not uncommon for a candidate to lose several kilograms in weight from the strenuous effort of running for public office. All the more reason to enjoy those scones and cakes at the endless morning teas you will need to attend.



Practical tips for candidate self-care on the trail:

- Pack a hand sanitiser in your handbag to use between events (and the endless handshaking). This helps minimise the spread of germs.
- Ask a friend to be your driver between events so you can grab a rest and sleep.
- Keep the 'wet ones' handy in the car console to mop sweat or dust from your face and hands.
- Pack a small first-aid kit with Band-Aids and headache tablets.

- Practise a few minutes of mediation in your down time. If you have trouble slowing down, try a guided mediation and mindfulness app.
- Don't forget good grooming. Pack a mirror, comb, toothbrush and toothpaste for between events and shoe polish to keep those shoes shiny.
- Have a travel pillow, ear plugs and an eye mask on hand to help you get a little shut-eye between events.
- Schedule rest time in the diary and if it is too hectic, adjust the schedule with your Diary Manager.
- Maintain your physical stamina through rest and good nutrition.
- Take snacks and water wherever you go.
- Don't forget good hygiene. Pack deodorant and breath mints for the daily trips.
- If canvassing across a larger electorate, pack a spare bag in case you need to unexpectedly stay overnight in a hotel (roads blocked by storms, etc.).
- Regularly check in with someone with whom you can confidentially talk with about the campaign or vent. This may be your Political Mentor, coach, or an understanding friend.
- Schedule in some relaxation downtime with those nearest and dearest to you.
- Plan something to look forward to post-election like a holiday with someone special.

CASE STUDY

Cathy McGowan, AO Independent MP, Federal Seat of Indi 2013–2019

A unique way to provide care: The Campaign Survival Kit

On the Indi Orange campaign Cathy McGowan relied on the support and assistance of her large family, many of whom also lived and worked in the electorate of Indi. One sister, Veronica, lived several hours away and provided support in a unique way by putting together a 'campaign survival kit' in a recycled shoe box. This kit is now on display in the national museum of democracy in Canberra.

Some of the contents included in the kit are listed here:

- A gold heart: to remind you that your heart is good and drives all that you do.
- Chocolate: because chocolate fixes almost everything.
- Stars: to shoot for and remember you are one.
- Gloves: to keep you clean if things get dirty.
- Band-Aid dressing: to give to the person you hurt without meaning to.
- Rubber bands: to remind you to be flexible, to stretch and to bounce back.
- Dinosaurs: to reflect upon when dealing with an ancient attitude or person(s).
- Toothpicks: to help you pick out the good in everything and remove any unnecessary detritus.
- Buttons: in case you need help to remember to button your lip sometimes.
- Wool: to help you weave your magic.
- Foot treatment: often it all comes down to the footwork.
- Dummy: in case anyone needs a dummy spit or needs soothing.
- Sewing kit: for sewing it all together.
- Headache tablets: because some days will just be a pain.
- String: to help you tie up any loose ends.
- Scissors: to help you cut through.

Stage 3: Finish this race

You're on the home stretch; keep running and it's time to speed up.

Election day is now only a few weeks away and depending on what election you are contesting, the postal votes are about to go out or the early voting centres are about to open. In the last stage of a campaign, most of the planning is nearly over but the hard work is not over. The main announcements have been made by the government and opposition. Candidates have been promoting their messages and raising their profile in an effort to convince voters to support them at the ballot box. Hopefully your campaign has been building a momentum that will propel you forward in a wave of support to the finish.

Whether you are contesting an election by postal ballot (as is the case with many Local Council elections) or by attendance voting (most State and Federal elections), this is where a candidate must push through and maximise every opportunity she has to seek the support of voters. No candidate wants to get to the Sunday after election day feeling that she could have done more—give it all you've got.

This is not a time to slow down, rather it's time to speed up with a final burst of energy to go make it to the end.

Rally the troops

There may be a sniff of victory in the wind. Or, perhaps there is nervousness about possible defeat, but now is the time for the candidate to pull her main team together for one more motivational message. Thank everyone for their efforts so far and celebrate what has been achieved. Reinforce with everyone the need to accomplish the last few goals in order to win; there is no room for complacency or mistakes at this stage. Remind everyone of the importance of following the guidelines in the *Candidate Handbook*. Stress, that from now until election day, every single vote counts.

Mail out

If you are contesting a local council election conducted by postal ballot, it's time to deploy your bulk mail out plan. This will ensure your flyer lands in voters' mailboxes at the same time as the postal ballot pack, maximising your exposure. Or, if you have the funds, perhaps you have decided to use voter contact details (available from the electoral roll) to mail a personally addressed letter to every enrolled citizen in your electorate or ward.

Dial-up the direct voter contact

If your campaign team has developed and implemented a phone bank strategy, now is the time to literally dial it up and use your volunteers to call voters throughout the electorate, encouraging a vote for the candidate. Phone banking works because it is personal and involves real people talking to real people. It has much less of a potential for backlash than other strategies such as SMS messaging or robo-calling; however, if you want to try them, and can fund them, go for it.

Persuade the early voters

Analysis of voting patterns from recent Australian elections demonstrates a trend for many voters to prefer early voting—up to 50 percent in some elections. The importance of this trend can't be over-estimated. It has the potential to influence significantly resource allocation and communications timing in your campaign. Your campaign team needs to implement the 'early vote' strategy to capture voters who are either unable to attend the booths on election day or are so excited by democracy that they just can't wait to exercise their right to (compulsory) vote. Persuade the people who 'just want to get it over with', that you are worth voting for.

Maximise candidate exposure

This is the time to speed up the race and maximise the exposure of the candidate to voters through all the media channels available to the campaign team. If you have the funds, increase the level of paid advertising on TV, radio, and social media platforms. It is also the time to ramp up the unearned, complimentary media exposure through events that garner local press attention. The communications plan should be in overdrive at this stage, not wasting any opportunity to put the candidate's face and message in front of voters. Be mindful of any restrictions arising from the 'caretaker period' or 'election advertising blackout periods' that may come into effect prior to an election.

Finalise your election day plan

Finalise your plan for election day so there are volunteers staffing every booth. This is when you need a logistics mastermind team member who is willing to set up their spreadsheets and coordinate all your volunteers to attend the booths from before 8 am (to set up) to after 6 pm (to pack up). It's time to implement the processes developed in your planning stage for staffing the booths and ensuring that every booth has the resources needed to convince voters to put the candidate as their No. 1 on the ballot. Also, make sure you have enough scrutineers who have been trained as independent observers of the vote count. Don't forget that all scrutineers need to be inside the polling center ready to go just before the booth shuts exactly at 6 pm. Once the doors close, that's it.

Plan the party

Your team has worked hard and none more so than the candidate. It's time to plan the party. Book a venue, call in the caterer, your musician mates, the supporters, and all your loyal volunteers. For State and Federal Elections,

consider the opportunity to have a live tally going as the results from individual booths flow in. This involves your scrutineers phoning in the booth numbers, someone to coordinate the results into a live feed and projecting the data onto a screen for everyone to see. When it is a State or Federal Election, you may also need a large TV screen to view the coverage of what's going on in other seats. For smaller council elections, book a local pub or your lounge room and invite everyone who has helped you out. You have planned your speeches: one for if you win and another in case you are unsuccessful.

Spare a thought for what's next

Jump ahead and consider what you might do in the case of either outcome. If you can pre-empt what it will be like to be confirmed as the elected representative come Monday (or the next week), you may not be so shocked when it actually happens. On the other hand, if there is a possibility you may not be elected, think of what you will do, the following week, when you 'get your life back' from the campaign. Spare some time to reflect on what you might do next and develop a plan for either outcome.

Step up the scrutineers

Scrutineers are the trained volunteers who have the important role of independently observing the vote counting process conducted by the relevant electoral authority at the close of the polls on election day. Their roles are similar to UN peacekeeping soldiers in a war zone: they can look but can't touch or use force. Their role is to observe, keep the peace and report back to campaign HQ.

In closely contested seats, a competent scrutineer can be the difference between a candidate successfully getting elected or just missing out. Volunteers who are good with numbers and are not afraid to be assertive are excellent in this role. In fact, many people find it is a fascinating insight into the democratic process and view it as an opportunity to build their understanding of how the electoral system functions.

If you haven't already done so, in the weeks before the election period it's time to identify and train your scrutineers for the count on the evening of election day. Volunteers in this role need to be familiar with what they can and can't do and understand how to comply with the *Scrutineer Handbook*. For example, they must be careful to never touch a vote but they can engage in a robust argument to claim a vote for 'their' candidate over the competition.

Scrutineers work with the official counters to oversee the allocation and sorting of votes. Sometimes a trend will emerge and the preference flow can be clear. With a bit of luck, it is towards your candidate. When scrutineers have a clear idea of how the numbers are going, they then call them in to the tally room at the election night venue. One by one, the booth results can be collated until a clear picture emerges of which candidate looks like winning the ward or the seat.

Election day is finally here

Election day is the ultimate finish line for candidates who have joined the race for public office. Every action, every plan and every dollar spent through the campaign has led the candidate and her team to this day. With the finish post in sight, everything you do on election day is designed to gather as many votes as possible for the candidate. As of 6 pm on the evening of election day, the push to get more votes will be finished. All that's left to do is celebrate the effort, wait for the results to be announced, and the poll declared.

What happens on election day?

You've arrived at last. You have run a great race, got your message out, mobilised your volunteers, called in supporters, door knocked, raised funds, and handed out your information. You've probably smiled so much your cheeks hurt, and you've talked to more people than ever before in your life. So many in fact that you can't remember what it was like to be shy.

Rally your troops for one final effort, attend the polling booths, cast your ballot, chat to more people, smile some more and convince those last few voters to put you No. 1. Then sit back and wait for the results to come in.

Election day timeline

The night before

- The candidate sends out an email blast to all her supporters motivating them for one final burst of energy to focus on winning and to thank them for all their efforts so far.
- The candidate should get a good night's sleep. Those smile muscles are going to get a strenuous workout the next day. Pack your water,

hat, snacks, sunscreen and 'treats' for your volunteer supporters on the booths.

- If it is allowed, you may wish to set up the night before at the booth. The major parties are very experienced at this; they often set up the evening before election day so they can claim the best location for their banners and other advertising paraphernalia. In high profile booths, your volunteers may camp out on the site to protect your assets from graffiti or damage.

Election day

It will be an early start. Get your battle gear on (campaign t-shirt), pop on the comfy shoes, slug back the coffee. It's time to go into battle.

Your volunteers may elect to set up early on the morning of election day. Allow plenty of time to set up, from 6 or 7 am, so that you are settled in well before the doors officially open at 8 am and in time for the briefing from the electoral commission official responsible for the booth.

- First, head to your nearby booths to have a breakfast 'democracy sausage', the first of many today.
- Vote early. Make sure there are photos of you walking into the booth to vote. Have your partner, family member or friends vote with you. Ask a volunteer to take photos and a video for your social media.
- Throughout the day, post your photos/video/stories across all your social media platforms, with the appropriate hashtags like #DemocracySausage. This encourages people to come along to vote (and support the local charity with the inevitable cake stall or BBQ sausage).
- During the day, attend the priority booths in your electorate (with the highest number of your target voters) and devote some time to handing out your card or speaking with voters waiting in the queue.
- Don't forget to eat, drink lots of water and be prepared for all weather conditions.
- Consider a text to all your supporters on the booths, reminding them to smile, be kind and to attend the election day party.
- In the afternoon, keep up the social media posting and try to grab some 'shut eye' between booths. It's going to be a long night.

- Keep going. It's not over until it's over—which is 6 pm (for this stage).

Election night

- The scrutineers now need to do their work (for smaller booths this may take a couple of hours and for the larger booths it can take days).
- Have your two speeches ready.
- Get ready to celebrate all you have achieved and head to the party.
- Even if you won't know the results for a while, win or not, the election night party is a chance to relax and thank your supporters (but stay sober).
- Consider your initial campaign goals and take this opportunity to celebrate a job well done and the enormous achievements you have made in running for your cause.
- If the results coming through are not what you had hoped for, it is important to gather with your supporters, family and friends and be together as you commiserate.
- Finally, it is time for some much needed sleep. You have done a fantastic job.
- The day following the election is time to consider 'what next?'—the final part of this guide.

Part Three: Your run checklist

This is the checklist for Part Three. It covers the three stages of the campaign race: the beginning, on the trail and the finish. Are you ready to run?

Stage 1: Announcing and launch

- ❍ You have read the *Candidate Handbook*.
- ❍ You have your timeline planned and milestones booked in.
- ❍ You have your message sorted and can extend the key points into a 30-second grab, 5-minute interview or longer speech (without notes).
- ❍ You have your social media platforms ready to launch.
- ❍ You are building your profile.
- ❍ You have a campaign team in place and heaps of people lined up to help.
- ❍ You have practised public speaking.
- ❍ You have a CRM in place to manage incoming and outgoing correspondence, and contact details of supporters, donors and volunteers.
- ❍ You know your magic vote number: the amount of first preference votes you need to win and get elected.
- ❍ You have a process to manage your finances, including a budget, and you can meet the donation reporting requirements.
- ❍ You understand the obligations of the role. As a Local Government candidate, you have been to a Council meeting; similarly, as a State or Federal candidate, you have sat in the public gallery of Parliament and observed politicians at work.
- ❍ You have a communications plan ready to roll out.
- ❍ You have your campaign material ready to go. It has been proofread and is compliant with electoral legislation.

- You are already for your campaign launch (and ticked off the tasks on the launch checklist).

Stage 2: Day-to-day on the campaign trail

- You plan to run an outstanding campaign with style and you have the wardrobe to match.
- You have a plan for preferencing other candidates on your H2V.
- Your schedule includes events, events and more events, all designed to win you votes, raise funds or gather supporters.
- Your articles are being printed in community newsletters.
- The diary schedule is working well with minimal stuff ups.
- You are building followers on your social media platforms.
- People are keen to endorse you and you are starting to generate a buzz around your candidacy.
- You are raising funds so that you can meet your campaign goals.
- Your campaign clothing is being worn by lots of supporters, and you have some merchandise.
- You are rolling out the door-knocking plan, treading the footpaths, wearing out the leather soles of your shoes.
- Election material is being letter-box dropped or bulk mailed according to your plan.
- Your followers on social media are increasing all the time and sharing and re-posting your posts.

Stage 3: The final weeks and election day

- You are being well supported by family and friends in the last few weeks.

- ❍ You can feel a momentum building and the team is working hard to build the wave.
- ❍ Your media and advertising exposure is reaching a climax to coincide with early voting trends.
- ❍ In these final weeks, you are aiming to repeat, reiterate and reinforce your message at early voting centres and on election day.
- ❍ You have appointed your scrutineer(s).
- ❍ The election night venue and party have been organised and RSVPs are rolling in.
- ❍ You have prepared two election night speeches.
- ❍ You have planned a thank you event for the closest people on your team (a few weeks after the election).
- ❍ You are ready to submit your legal returns and comply with all the post-election reporting obligations.
- ❍ You are mentally prepared for whatever happens next ...

... So, let's do just that and turn to the final section of this guide, which covers what is Next.

PART FOUR

NEXT



What to consider following election day

Right after election day

You've just run the race of your life. Having crossed the finished line and completed the final reckoning, you either walked away as a winner or you've been defeated. Or perhaps the results may not yet be clear. It can take some time for the postal votes that were mailed before polling day to arrive at the electoral commission and be counted. If it is a marginal seat and the result is close, the poll may not be declared until two weeks have passed.

It's tough to get elected. The nature of the political game means more people are unsuccessful in their race for public office than the number of candidates who get elected. For example, in the 2019 federal election, more than 87 percent of candidates were unsuccessful in their bid for office. For the House of Representatives, 1,056 candidates contested a total of 151 electorates. Only 14.3 percent were elected. In the Senate, 458 candidates contested 40 vacancies and 8.73 percent were elected. Overall, 12.6 percent of all candidates in the 2019 federal election were successfully elected. Many of those candidates were re-elected to the position they previously held, indicating the benefit of incumbency.

It can be just as challenging to get elected at a state level. For example, at the November 2018 Victorian state elections, there was an average of nearly six candidates contesting each seat, leaving on average five people completing their campaign disappointed. While the odds are often better for local council elections, it is inevitable that many candidates will also be unsuccessful when running for local government.

Depending on where a candidate has stood, and the winning margin, unsuccessful candidates and parties can dispute the results and ask for a recount. When it is very close, this may occur automatically. For example, in a House of Representatives election if, following the distribution of preferences, the margin of votes between the first and second ranked candidates is less than 100 votes, then a full recount of all ballot papers (formal and informal) is conducted.

Ultimately, every election a candidate contests will provide them with skills and experiences that will be useful next time she decides to run. Ali Cupper,

Victorian Independent in State Parliament, contested two state elections before successfully getting elected on her third attempt. Ali says she kept at it because 'Even though I was defeated, those issues still mattered to my community. I didn't care about them any less because I lost an election. I just felt that I still had something to offer. This is what it is to fight for a cause that you believe in. Success doesn't always come easily, and victory doesn't come easily, but it depends on how you set the bar. For me, the goal wasn't necessarily for me to win an election. I've won now but the winning the election is still the means to an end. The end for me is for our community to be treated with the dignity it deserves and to not be a second class citizen of the state. That's something that for me remained regardless of whether I was winning or not. Even if that meant I was putting more pressure on the National Party because I was a thorn in their side, they knew that in order to start to shut me up, they would need to pick up their game. That was still me winning.'

What to do next?

Successful or not, in the days and weeks after your campaign, the following principles apply:

Reflect

Whether or not you were elected, the days immediately after the election are an important time to reflect on everything you have achieved by running for public office.

Consider asking yourself these five questions:

1. What did you learn about yourself?
2. What did you learn about your community?
3. What wins did you achieve for the issues you campaigned on?
4. What did you do well?
5. What would you do differently next time?

If you are thinking of standing again, either as a successfully elected candidate (now as the incumbent) or as someone wanting to try again, your answers will be useful for your future campaigns. Your reflections may also help when you are mentoring or supporting other candidates.

Clean-up

The week after the election is the time for a clean-up. All the pamphlets, posters, flyers and election paraphernalia need to be put in the bin or recycled. Take down the corflutes and yard signs within the first few days. It's annoying for residents driving around your locality in the weeks and months after an election and still being forced to view 'vote for [NAME]' signs throughout the electorate.

Tidy up the office and take stock of other campaign material you have lying around. Some may be stored (for next time) while others can be recycled.

Meet your legal obligations

Following every campaign, there are legal obligations that **all** candidates (elected or not) must meet. The requirements differ for each State and Territory and for local, state and federal government elections. Hopefully the legal adviser on your campaign team is able to assist with the probity around meeting your obligations. The requirements of candidates post-election are outlined in the *Candidate Handbook*. Read it carefully. Failure to comply is an offence under the relevant electoral act.

Thank people

In the weeks following the election campaign, plan an informal gathering with all your supporters to thank them. Win or lose, everyone on your team will appreciate the opportunity to gather and either celebrate or commiserate. Pick a local park with a BBQ area and invite people to bring food and a chair, or you can book out a local pub or community hall. Organise a coming together to share stories, triumphs and woes and to informally close off the campaign.

A personal phone call to your major donors will also be appreciated. Update your social media feeds and website to reflect your position and don't forget to remove the authorisations from any continuing social media platforms.

Wrap-up the finances

In addition to meeting all your financial and legal obligations, like sending in your electoral returns to the relevant authority, you will need to square off your campaign budget. Pay off all outstanding debts, invoices and bills. Hopefully you have managed to stick to your budget and your finances are now in the black.

If you were a candidate in a state or federal election and received a certain proportion of first preference votes, you may be eligible to seek public funding for your campaign. Under the various State and Federal Electoral Acts, eligible parties and candidates in State and Federal elections can apply to be paid funding for each first preference vote they received in the election. This is the case for independent candidates and those candidates endorsed by registered political parties who receive a certain percentage of first preference votes if they are elected or not (usually 4 percent). The actual percentage of first preferences required and the dollar rate you receive varies for each State, Territory and election. Check the *Election Funding Guide* for your electoral authority to see under what conditions you are eligible to receive public funding. This injection of funds can significantly bolster your budget bottom line.

You got elected

Congratulations! You've won. Being elected to represent your constituents is a great privilege. Now the hard work begins ...

You're no longer the candidate. By the magic of democracy, you have now transformed into a local representative. You are someone who has earned the right to talk about 'my constituents' and advocate on their behalf to government. You are now a politician.

An immediate consideration will involve conducting media interviews with reporters from your local radio, TV and press. It will be easier if you have already prepared a media release. This is the time to lay out your vision as the new representative. You may like to talk about your goals for your first 100 days or first year in office. Also, thank your supporters, family and friends—anyone who helped you get elected. If you are feeling gracious, you can even thank your competitors for the 'good fight'.

As a newly-elected local councillor or member of parliament, you will need to comply with the appropriate legislation as outlined by the relevant Electoral Commission in your State or Territory. Federal politicians must comply with Commonwealth legislation as explained by the Australian Electoral Commission. You will need to seek legal advice if you are unsure of what to declare in order to manage existing or perceived conflicts of interest so that you comply with all the rules. You will also need to meet all your post-election governance requirements and file the required returns for your campaign funding and expenditure.

Perhaps you are proficient at running meetings. However, understanding the by-laws, protocols and procedures that apply in the chambers of councils and parliaments is another level of complexity. Luckily there will be council officers, clerks and public servants who are able to provide assistance in understanding the specialised meeting procedures and the order of business that will apply in your chamber. These staff will be your first point of call to offer advice and training. They will point you in the right direction for information on how to ensure you comply with the legislation.

Staff will also set you up with the 'tools of the trade' to do your job. For Councillors, this usually includes a laptop, phone and, in some circumstances, a vehicle. State and Federal Members will have access to an Electoral Office which will be arranged by the relevant department of government. Employment of staff to assist the Member in their role will need to be organised within the first few weeks so that you can have assistance in answering constituent enquiries (which may start on Monday).

Consider how you will introduce yourself to other Members who were elected at the election. For Local Councils, you may already know some of the other Councillors and, with a small group, it will be simpler to form positive working relationships. For candidates elected to State and Federal Parliaments, you will need to think about your engagement strategy to connect with other Members of Parliament—be they on the cross-bench or party members in Government or Opposition. Collaboration, cooperation and compromise are needed if you are an Independent or if you represent a micro party and find yourself sitting on the cross bench.

At this stage, it can be useful to call in your political mentor who will be savvy about advising you on where your values and principles may align with various factions and alliances in the chamber or the parliament. Be wary of naively promising voting support on issues before conducting your own thorough research.

Some of the things you will need to get your head around:

- You will meet lots of interesting people from all walks of life.
- You will learn more about what is going on in your community, much of which you may never have been aware.
- You will work on many diverse issues that will expand your skills and knowledge.
- Your workload will increase.
- You will need to 'skill up' in policy and procedures.

CASE STUDY

Ali Cupper, Independent MP Victorian Parliament

What happens when you get elected?

Ali Cupper is a self-declared 'politics nerd' and a veteran of five campaigns: two for Local Council and three for State Parliament. In November 2018, she was successfully elected as an Independent Member to the Legislative Assembly of the Victorian State Parliament, representing the seat of Mildura.

Ali says she was always fascinated about politics. As a young adult, she joined the ALP and stood unsuccessfully as the party's Mildura candidate in the 2010 state election. In the years that followed, Ali left the ALP as she wanted to be free to advocate on behalf of her community rather than be constrained by a party. 'It certainly suits my personality being an independent and it's definitely the right fit for me because you can decide exactly how you're going to approach your job. You don't have a party hierarchy to tell you what to do.'

Ali ran for her local Mildura Council as an Independent in the state's north-west in 2012 and again four years later, in 2016, and was successfully elected both times as an independent Councillor. During her time as a Councillor, she campaigned twice as an independent candidate for State Parliament. It took a third try before she was successfully elected in November 2018 when she won the seat of Mildura to become the

first female politician to be elected at either a state or federal level in this region of north-west Victoria.

Once elected, Ali talks about what happens next.

“It can be a little bit bewildering at the beginning when you first get elected because you just don’t know what to do until you get that first email from Parliamentary Services and they say, ‘here’s some forms to fill out and we’ll be in touch’.

At the time I was thinking *Well, here I am. I’m getting paid. I don’t have an office yet. I don’t have a car. I don’t have a phone. I don’t have business cards. I don’t have letterhead. I don’t have anything official. Here’s what we’ll do. We’ll just jump in the car*. That’s what I did and travelled around the seat until we got our office set up, before I had any formal resources. I just started doing the rounds of the little towns in the southern Mallee. Many of the voters in those town had been rusted on to the National Party and decided to give me a go. I was really determined to reward their faith early and to show them that I was very serious in working with them and helping to enhance their quality of life through improved government services and infrastructure.

Once elected, it is important to connect with your constituents personally. The best thing we could’ve done immediately after the election was just to get in the car and go and connect with people, say ‘thanks for your support, what are we going to work on together? What do we need to fix? What do we need to address? What’s working well? What do we need to do to make sure that good services here in this community don’t get cut back or changed or shifted?’ That’s important.”

In terms of initially employing staff, Ali says she was able to employ people she knew from her campaign team and networks.

“One of the benefits of working towards my goal for eight years is that you develop a great team. There were key people who I had been working with from the very beginning, who are now in my team. It’s worth noting, however, that just because someone was a great campaign volunteer doesn’t necessarily mean they’re going to suit the routine administration and office management tasks required in an electorate office. Some advice I was told was to ‘put everyone on a three-month contract at the beginning, just to make sure you’ve got a good fit.’”

Now what?

Once elected, by definition every candidate is now a politician and there are fundamental tasks in the role that are the same across all three levels of government. Whether you are a local councillor, or state or federal member of parliament, you will need to do the following in your role as a politician:

- Adhere to good governance; understand the rules and follow them.
- Be across your agenda: read the brief, the reports, and the proposals.
- Participate in debate in the chamber.
- Build stakeholder relations with your constituency, media and fellow politicians.
- Improve your public speaking and performance—now that you are in the public eye.
- Consult and engage with your community so that you can fairly represent people, not just the 'squeaky wheel'.
- Work with the staff, officers and public servants who are employed to support you in your role.
- Pace yourself and manage a life balance with the demands of the role.
- Put processes in place to identify, assess and manage risks.
- Get a good system in place to manage your documents.

CASE STUDY

Tim Fischer AC and former Federal MP, NSW MLA, Leader of the National Party, and Deputy Prime Minister of Australia

Tim's tips for new MPs and Senators

1. On entering Parliament, write down ten names of close non-political friends you still want to have at the end of your career. If you have not had contact with them by Melbourne Cup Day each year, you initiate contact to keep the friendship alive.
2. Never be rude to any Federal/State MP in your area; they cover a lot of ground as well and many functions, so it is better for them to be neutral, than fired up, about you. In fact, when speaking at a function

with Federal/State MPs present, always recognise them by name—even if you personally cannot stand them.

3. Never attack a nearby town or suburb just outside your electorate; you never know when a redistribution might transfer into your electorate.
4. Travel to your capital city or Canberra (whatever the case) the night before each Parliamentary sitting week. This allows you to hit the ground running the next day. While this is not always possible, it is a strongly recommended approach for your scheduling.
5. Allocate one half or full day a month for a work related activity on which you decide in advance. For example, I travelled to Adelaide for a direct briefing at ARTC HQ on relevant rail corridors. Otherwise you are always in response mode with a diary driven out of control by invites and your key policy agendas slip by.
6. Select one country, preferably from within Asia, for detailed contact, study, and broad interface. It will add to your standing, help Australasia linkages by degrees, and it is an enjoyable pursuit, especially for the years in opposition.
7. Select one policy area, or a subset of a portfolio/policy area, for detailed study and knowledge build up. It is a good discipline, will add to your standing, and it avoids the trap of being an instant half expert on everything and a real expert on nothing at all. As part of this, keep a filing cabinet drawer for a chronology file and related reports in respect of each big issue: for example some issues may be a key rail corridor or a dam project or addressing mobile phone black spot areas.
8. Have staff (but better still, you) study every once-weekly or twice-weekly newspapers in your electorate for names of people to contact. These should be individuals who have scored a mention for a good deed or a related item of public interest, who deserve a letter of commendation personally signed by their local MP.
9. Pace yourself, but yes, you must follow the 24/7 news cycles. You must listen to the 7 am ABC Radio News each morning and phone in if you have an angle—better still, the 6 am news or 6:30 am Regional News.

Enjoy it all.

Vale Tim Fischer (1946–2019)

Hints for New Councillors

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has gathered advice from experienced Councillors to provide to newly elected Councillors. The following is a summary of the tips from the MAV publication *Stand for Council*:

- Stop freaking out.
- Don't give up.
- Ask for help.
- Pick your issues.
- Don't get personal.
- Explain, don't blame.
- Encourage Councillors interaction.
- Be assertive.
- Canvass opinion widely.
- Work as a team.
- Pace yourself.
- Don't promise what you can't deliver.
- Don't burn your bridges.
- Earn the respect of the community.
- Be informed.
- Learn the art of strategic compromise.
- Seek support.

You were not elected (this time)

> *Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.*
>
> —Winston Churchill

So, you didn't get elected. It feels like you've just lost the race of your life. Losing sucks, that's for sure.

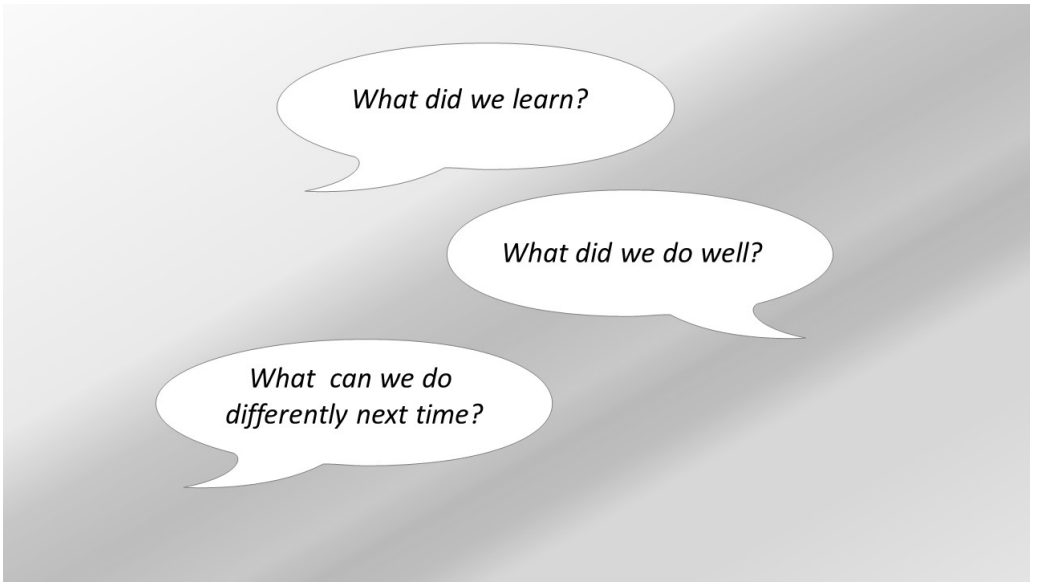
However, it's time to recover, reassess and decide what to do next.

If the result was extremely close, you could ask for a recount or take your dispute to the Court of Disputed Returns. (See the *Candidate Handbook* for further details if you wish to pursue the latter approach. You may also need to seek legal advice.) Be mindful of not being a sore loser. It's best to be gracious in defeat and congratulate the candidate who got elected. Avoid blame and move on.

If it's clear you have lost, it's time to lick your wounds and let the grief process kick in. Get some rest and recuperate.

The weeks after an unsuccessful vote can feel like an anticlimax after the excitement of the campaign. This is a good time to focus on what matters other than politics: health, family and friends. If you find yourself struggling to cope with the disappointment, consider seeking professional help in dealing with the loss and grief.

When you are ready, take time to reflect and analyse your campaign. Invite your closest team members for a post-mortem and analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign, being careful to avoid blame. It can help to ask these three questions: 'What did we learn? What did we do well? What can we do differently next time?' On a personal level, consider what you have learnt. What did you learn about how to effectively campaign? If you were to start again, what advice would you give yourself?



When things have settled down somewhat, consider what you might do next. You could retire from campaigning and use your skills, networks and community profile to keep agitating for change. You may also apply what you have learnt to help other progressive candidates in your community to change things for the better. You now have a profile that can be used for good. Or you could get back in training for next season. At least next time you will be better prepared.

CASE STUDY

Winning when you lose

So, you were not elected. That doesn't necessarily mean you were not successful. Judy Ryan was a candidate in the Yarra council election in 2016, the state electorate of Richmond in 2018, and federal electorate of Melbourne in 2019. As the Secretary for Residents for Victoria Street Drug Solutions, her aim was to advocate for a change in government policy. She reflects on the benefit of losing an election.

'A drug-injecting catastrophe was ravaging my inner-city Melbourne community. There had been 34 fatalities in our streets and laneways in 2016 alone, and the sounds of ambulance sirens was a constant reminder of this human tragedy.

A medically supervised injecting centre (MSIC), like the facility established in Sydney in 2001, seemed like a possible option for managing a decades-old problem in my community. A politically controversial centre, the MSIC had saved lives and provided rehabilitation options for thousands of people with drug addiction in Sydney.

How could we get a trial MSIC in Richmond when politicians didn't want to discuss it?

Politicians like to remind us that there's only one poll that counts. Testing this truism—and in a desperate attempt to focus on our public health crisis—I ran as an independent candidate in my local council election in October 2016 on a single issue: demanding the trial of a MSIC. I wanted to know if other residents felt as strongly as I did about the issue.

I nearly didn't run as I wanted to focus on growing my newly-established business. I considered deferring my campaign until the next election in 2020, but the human cost of leaving this urgent matter on the political back-burner for another four years was unimaginable. I just had to go for it. Spending $700 on DL flyers, my campaign team of three people letter-boxed residents in the impacted area three weeks out from the election. My basic campaign hit a raw nerve: I received a healthy primary vote and preferences. Whilst I just missed out on becoming a councillor, I had received a mandate to continue actively campaigning for a trial. I kept going.

Momentum grew post my election result. I gathered a large residents' team and we organised community education forums. A *March to Save Lives* rally was organised to coincide with International Overdose Awareness Day in August 2017. Nine weeks later, in October 2017, and after strident opposition to the idea, Premier Daniel Andrews announced that a trial MSIC would commence in July 2018 in North Richmond.

In hindsight, I am glad that I didn't win a council spot in 2016. Losing meant that I could concentrate 100 percent on garnering support from residents, health and legal professionals, some politicians and media—all of which eventually made the impossible a reality.

The MSIC trial, now in its second year, is delivering on its key objectives. It's saving lives, reducing ambulance callouts and providing rehabilitation and allied health options for a marginalised, stigmatised group in our community.'

Sometimes you win even when you lose … so just do it!

Part Four: Your final checklist

Whether you were successful in getting elected or not, the days immediately after the election are an important time for every candidate to:

- Reflect on everything you have achieved by running for public office. Take time to document your thoughts.
- Clean-up by recycling pamphlets, posters and flyers and take down all corflutes, posters and yard signs.
- Meet your legal obligations as per the *Candidate Handbook*.
- Thank people through an informal gathering.
- Wrap-up the finances and pay all outstanding debts. If eligible, seek public funding for your campaign.

If you didn't get elected:

- Congratulate yourself on giving it a go.
- Take time off to recover.
- Reflect on what you have learnt and what you would do differently if you could start over.
- List the skills you now have.
- Consider you are now better placed to stand again or to support another candidate.
- Maybe join some community groups.
- Continue advocating for the issues you care about (there may be a by-election or a countback).
- Keep in touch with your main team members. You never know when you may need to rely on them again.

If you got elected:

Congratulations. Your life will never be the same again.

- Understand your governance environment.
- Seek the training you need in meeting procedures, public speaking, advocacy, etc.
- Consider hiring a coach or mentor.
- Set time aside to be across your agenda.
- Step in and debate the issues.
- Build a stakeholder relations' strategy and develop a constituency engagement plan.
- Work with your support staff, officers and public servants.
- Pace yourself and build a work/life balance in your schedule.
- Put processes in place to identify, assess and manage risks.
- Get a good system in place to manage your documents and employ staff to assist you.

A final word

> *I always wondered why somebody doesn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.*
>
> —Lily Tomlin

To finish up, I wish to congratulate you, dear reader, for considering politics as a vehicle to make a difference in your local municipality, seat, state and nation.

One of the wonderful things about Australia is our system of representative democracy whereby we, the people, get a chance to elect a representative to carry out the business of government on our behalf. Underpinning this is the principle that every Australian citizen has the right to vote for their political representative and the right to stand as a representative.

It's a pretty cool system when you think about it—nothing about us without us. While democracy and our various parliamentary systems and political parties form a far from a perfect system so far things are working out OK for the three levels of Australian government. Think about this:

- Councils continue to deliver more for our communities than roads, rates and rubbish. They are improving early childhood health, community literacy and addressing local environmental issues and delivering strategic planning and economic growth.
- State and Territory Governments keep our schools and hospitals functioning, our justice systems and prisons working as a safety net, and our transport flowing (mostly on time).
- The national economy remains robust and we are considered a safe democracy with trade, defence and taxation all humming along relatively smoothly.

Despite this, many Australians feel that our systems need fixing up and they are becoming fed-up with the political response to problems. Trust in politicians has been falling year after year and plummeted over the past decade. In 2018, the percent of Australian citizens who reported they were satisfied with the

way democracy works in Australia was half of what it was a decade before (41 percent compared to 86 percent in 2007).[1] Women and young people are even more disappointed and disgruntled then men. Who can blame them when gender equality in political representation is still a long way off and the typical Australian politician is a man in his fifties.

It is an unusual time in Australian history when most people don't trust our politicians and there are many feeling increasingly disconnected from the democratic decision-making processes. Many complain but fewer do anything about it. In this atmosphere, it takes a courageous person to put their hand up to run for public office. Someone who commits to campaigning rather than complaining. A candidate who puts their hand up to strive to be part of the solution rather than perpetuating a problem of apathy and anger.

Ultimately, our councils and parliaments work because of the democratic process to elect candidates like you—ordinary citizens who care about their communities and are willing to run for something. After reading this guide, my hope is that you are now equipped to put your hand up and give politics a go, either by running yourself or supporting someone else to run. You hold the tool in your hands, the plan in your head and the motivation in your heart.

Who knows what will happen next? You might just change Australian politics for the better as an independently minded candidate with an effective voice for your constituents. For that, I thank you in advance. So, go out there, stand in the arena, get elected and make the world a better place.

Ruth McGowan, OAM

Part One: Further information

Every aspiring candidate needs to understand the implications of standing for office, especially the requirements of the relevant legislation. Begin here.

Standing for Federal Parliament

Australian Electoral Commission	www.aec.gov.au	
Australian Parliament	www.aph.gov.au	Search for the next election date (Parliamentary Election Timetable) and view the regularly updated qualifications checklist relating to Section 44 of the Constitution.

Standing for State and Territories Government and/or Local Government

New South Wales

New South Wales Electoral Commission	www.elections.nsw.gov.au	
Parliament of New South Wales	www.parliament.nsw.gov.au	
NSW Office of Local Government	www.olg.nsw.gov.au	Search for Guide for Candidates.

Victoria

Victorian Electoral Commission	www.vec.vic.gov.au	
Parliament of Victoria	www.parliament.vic.gov.au	
The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)	www.mav.asn.au	Search the multiple resources for candidates.
Victoria Council	http://www.viccouncils.asn.au/stand-for-council	
Victoria Council Facebook page	www.facebook.com/viccouncils	

Queensland

Electoral Commission of Queensland	www.ecq.qld.gov.au	
Queensland Parliament	www.parliament.qld.gov.au	
Queensland Government	www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au	Search So you want to be a Councillor? An informative guide for prospective candidates in Queensland local government elections.

Western Australia

Western Australia Electoral Commission	www.elections.wa.gov.au	General information for candidates.
Parliament of Western Australia	www.parliament.wa.gov.au	

South Australia

Electoral Commission of South Australia	www.ecsa.sa.gov.au	
Parliament of South Australia	www.parliament.sa.gov.au	
Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWSA)	www.lga.sa.gov.au	Search Taking up the Challenge. An information kit for women interested in standing as a candidate in SA council elections.

Tasmania

Tasmanian Electoral Commission	www.tec.tas.gov.au	
Parliament of Tasmania	www.parliament.tas.gov.au	
Local Government Association of Tasmania	www.lgat.tas.gov.au	Search Becoming a Councillor and Women in Local Government.

Australian Capital Territory

Elections ACT	www.elections.act.gov.au	General information relating to elections.
ACT Legislative Assembly	www.parliament.act.gov.au	

Northern Territory

Northern Territory Electoral Commission	www.ntec.nt.gov.au	General information relating to elections.
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory	www.parliament.nt.gov.au	

Standing for Council

Various local government departments, organisations and electoral commissions have guides that are applicable for candidates in the respective states. Several are listed in the table above. They are updated for each election and are a useful resource.

Women considering politics

Federal Parliamentary Library	www.aph.gov.au	Search A Composition of Australian Parliaments by Party and Gender for regular updates on female representation across the country.
Women for Election	www.wfea.org.au	Follow for updates on events across Australia.
Australian Local Government Women's Association	www.algwa.net.au	Resources and support for women interested in local government.
Victorian Local Governance Association	www.vlga.org.au	Search within Advocacy and Women's Policy for Local Women Leading Change: Your Campaign Toolkit.
National Council of Women of Australia (NCWA) National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC)	www.ncwa.org.au www.nrwc.com.au	These organisations hold forums, run workshops and webinars and publish resources to support women to actively participate in government and all aspects of community life, including as candidates for office.

Other inspiration

She Should Run	www.sheshouldrun.org	
50:50 Parliament	www.5050parliament.co.uk	
Cosmopolitan (online)	www.cosmopolitan.com	Search the following link https://www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/a12252769/run-for-office-tips-advice/

Further reading on making the decision to run

Vote Compass	www.votecompass.com	If you are curious about how your views align with the major parties.
Australian Labor Party Liberal Party of Australia The National Party of Australia The Australian Greens	www.alp.org.au www.liberal.org.au www.nationals.org.au www.greens.org.au	The time is ripe for more independent candidates. However, if you seek to run with a major party, you can sign up and go through the pre-selection.
Crikey INQ (Independent Inquiry Journalism)	www.crickey.com.au	Search the following link for insights on the pre-selection process for a federal seat with the Liberal Party https://www.crikey.com.au/2009/10/01/how-to-become-a-federal-mp-part-2-the-libs/

Part Two: Further information

The following technology programs are useful for campaigns (no endorsements, but may be useful to look at)

Customer relationship management programs

NationBuilder	www.nationbuilder.com
HubSpot	www.hubspot.com
Pipedrive	www.pipedrive.com
Salesforce	www.salesforce.com
Mailchimp	www.mailchimp.com

Team communication and collaboration

Slack	www.slack.com
WhatsApp	www.whatsapp.com

Design

If your budget is minimal, consider designing your flyers or accessing an online designer.

Canva Design	www.canva.com
Fivver	www.fivver.com
Freelancer	www.freelancer.com
Upwork	www.upwork.com

Campaigning US style

Although content on the following websites is written for an American audience, you will benefit from the resources provided.

The Campaign Workshop	www.thecampaignworkshop.com/ebooks
Mothership Strategies	www.mothershipstrategies.com
Wellstone	www.wellstone.org

Indivisible	www.indivisible.org/guide
Run for Something	www.runforsomething.net
Campaigns & Elections	www.campaignsandelections.com

Direct mail deadlines for Australia Post

Australia Post	www.auspost.com.au	Search within Direct Mail Marketing and Bulk Mail for your options to letterbox voters through addressed and unaddressed mail.

Campaign donations

For rules and regulations on reporting, disclosure and managing donations, visit the Electoral Commission website, for each state, as outlined in Part One: Further Information. Here are a few popular sites for accepting donations.

MyCause	ww.mycause.com.au
PayPal	www.paypal.com
Stripe	www.stripe.com

Part Three: Further information

Twitter	www.twitter.com	Keep up-to-date on what's going on in Australian politics, I encourage you to consider who is posting about your electorate on Twitter (especially #Auspol) and follow them.
12min Blog website	www.12minblog.com	**Viral marketing** For more on the power of endorsements and friend referrals, download a free copy of Seth Godin's *Unleashing the Ideavirus* at https://blog.12min.com/unleashing-the-ideavirus-summary/
Books by motivational speaker Matt Church	www.mattchurch.com/books	T**ips on speakership, feedback and thinking about what to do next.**
The Conversation website	www.theconversation.com	**Preparing for possible dirty tricks on the campaign trail** Jennifer Rayner studied campaign dirty tricks as part of her doctoral thesis at Australian National University. Read what she discovered. https://theconversation.com/dirty-tricks-on-the-campaign-trail-1662
The Ethics Centre	www.ethics.org.au	Keep updated on the Ethics Pledge.

The Poll Bludger	www.pollbludger.net	Information on poll tracking
NewsPoll	www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/newspoll	These and various online betting agencies will also have betting markets on most seats being contested in state and federal elections.
ReachTEL	www.reachtel.com.au	
Ipsos	www.ipsos.com/en-au/news-and-polls/overview	

Google analytics	www.analytics.google.com	For search engine support, Google analytics can measure useful things about your website.
	www.google.com.au/alerts	Set up a Google alert on your competitor(s) to monitor what they are doing and saying. Also set one up on yourself.

Other interesting sites from the US

Campaign & Elections	www.campaignsandelections.com	Subscribe to the free online newsletter for insights into the US campaign scene, which often foreshadows trends that may impact upcoming Australian elections.
Website of US Republican Campaigner Joe Garecht	www.localvoctory.com/category/organization	Read The Big Mo.
Lindsey Graham	www.grahamgrassroots.tripod.com	Search for Flying Upside-down, a classic Republican guide to running a campaign (in pre-Trump times) and outlines the differences for challenging candidates as compared to the campaign for an incumbent.

Part Four: Further information

Visit the appropriate electoral commission sites as per Part One: Further Information for details on your reporting and disclosure obligations post-election.

What if you are not elected?

Here are two websites where you can read articles on what to do next, if you are not elected.

The Campaign Workshop	www.thecampaignworkshop.com
Campaigns & Elections	www.campaignsandelections.com

What is expected of an elected representative?

Councillor role	www.viccouncils.asn.au	See Now you are a Councillor (MAV and VIC councils).
The role of a member of parliament	www.parliament.qld.gov.au	Queensland Parliament has a factsheet on *The Role of a Member of Parliament (Factsheet 3.17)*.
Parliament of Australia	www.aph.gov.au	The Parliament of Australia has factsheets on the work of a Member of Parliament.

Work with Ruth McGowan

Now that you have finished *Get Elected*, you have the resources to run for office and change the world, all in one handy guide.

If you seek more, there are three ways you can engage Ruth professionally:

Speaker: Ruth is a passionate speaker on the topic of why more people should consider running for public office. With stories, tips and real life case studies, Ruth engages her audience on the strategies and actions ordinary people can take to get started on changing the world through politics.

Trainer: As a professional trainer, Ruth can help design and deliver a training program to support groups of diverse citizens to run successful campaigns and to boost their political intelligence.

Get Elected Masterclass: Ruth has coached many successful candidates on planning and delivering a winning campaign. Having written *Get Elected*, the first national guide on how to run for office at local, state or federal levels, Ruth delivers workshops and 'Masterclasses' to groups of candidates wanting to be equipped to run a successful campaign.

Email: ruth@ruthmcgowan.com

Twitter: @hula_grl

LinkedIn: Ruth McGowan OAM

Web: www.ruthmcgowan.com

Endnotes

Introduction

1. Composition of Australian parliaments by party and gender: a quick guide https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1819/Quick_Guides/PartyGender
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Part One

1. Composition of Australian parliaments by party and gender: a quick guide https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1819/Quick_Guides/PartyGender
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A Final Word

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"IF YOU'VE EVER SAID, 'I WISH THERE WERE A MANUAL FOR THAT,' THEN THIS IS YOUR BOOK."

Ali Cupper, Independent MP Mildura, Victorian State Parliamentarian (and former Councillor, Mildura City Council)

"GET ELECTED DEMONSTRATES HOW TO RUN A WINNING CAMPAIGN WHILE AVOIDING THE SURPRISES THAT COULD RUIN EVERYTHING."

Rob Harris, Federal Politics Reporter with the Herald Sun

Australians are increasingly disillusioned by the state of politics across our nation. Over the past decade, voter satisfaction has plummeted by half … it's time for change.

Does your local councillor, or state, territory or federal politician effectively and passionately represent your electorate? If not, will you continue to just shrug your shoulders, complain and do nothing? Or will you stand up and change the situation, as a political candidate?

If you wish to be the change you want to see in the world, run for office.

When it comes to turning dissatisfaction into action, it has been said that politics is the art of making what appears to be impossible, possible. There are more than 7,400 opportunities across Australia to stand for office, so why not consider standing?

Get Elected: A step-by-step campaign guide to winning public office provides practical advice, timelines, checklists, campaign team job descriptions and fundraising ideas particularly focused on independent candidates. It also offers strategies for communication and social media posting, alerts to dirty tricks campaigns, technology updates and the importance of early voting in modern campaigns. In fact, it provides everything you need to get you into office, or to support someone else to do so.

Get Elected also features anecdotes and case studies from independent political candidates, and the celebrated 'Keep the Seat Orange' campaigns from 2013 and 2016 that elected federal Independent MP for Indi, Cathy McGowan.

If you're thinking of standing for politics, this guide will help you start, run and win.



Ruth McGowan OAM has more than three decades' worth of experience in leadership roles with various community groups, national and industry organisations, and a term as mayor on her local council. Grassroots community activism is her passion. As a coach, trainer, and consultant, Ruth works with leaders in the government, agriculture and community sectors. She actively supports women and other candidates from diverse backgrounds to turn political dissatisfaction into action by running for office.

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ISBN 978-0-6482812-7-6
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