



Green Institute Conference 2019

15–17 November, Canberra

Cultivating Democracy

Our dominant culture likes to believe that our democracy is comprehensive and secure. In reality, it has always been compromised, incomplete, and fragile, prioritising the interests of some over others, locking out First Nations people, ignoring the natural world.

And in recent years, faith in democracy, in Australia and elsewhere, has been crashing. This is neither a surprise nor an accident. Democratic systems have been being weakened for some time, and are currently being rapidly dismantled.

Our existing democracies are patently not capable of dealing with the crises we face in the early 21st century.

With climate breakdown looming, mass extinction underway, inequality spiralling, colonialism and patriarchy still not dismantled, polarisation and disenchantment being fed, and extreme right authoritarianism on the rise, we need democratic systems which are able to both act to reverse these trends and create hope-filled resilience in the face of difficult times to come.

Instead, the community is pushed away and corporations welcomed in, through privatisation, outsourcing and deregulation, underfunding of government services (locked in by tax cuts), restricting freedom of information, targeting whistleblowers and raiding the media, delegitimising and gagging public interest advocacy, and criminalising protest.



Personal power is relegated to individual action and consumer behaviour. Collective political action is dismissed and shut down. Consequently, trust in democratic systems is crashing.

Meanwhile, around the world, exciting and innovative democratic practices are being developed, recasting the relationship between citizens and government, drawing on ancient wisdom, involving deep engagement and participation.

The Green Institute's 2019 conference, "Cultivating Democracy", will challenge us to think deeply about our democracy, and how to act fast and with great determination to build systems that are more democratic.

With a day of challenging speakers followed by a series of deliberative discussions, together we will dig through the ideas, tease things out, apply them to Greens politics, and discuss plans for implementing them through ongoing public campaigning and parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action.





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Friday Program

Ainslie Arts Centre, 30 Elouera St, Braddon

8.30am: Registration

9.00am: Welcome to Country

9.20am: Tim Hollo – Welcome and Introduction

9.45am: Indigenous Democracy

- Dr Tjanara Goreng Goreng
- Dr Paul Collis
- Lidia Thorpe
- Krystal Hurst

11.15am: Morning tea

11.45am: Deepening Democracy

- A/Prof Simon Niemeyer
- Dr Amanda Cahill
- Dr Tim Dunlop
- Nicola Paris
- Senator Larissa Waters (Facilitator)

1.15pm: Lunch

2pm: Democratising the Economy

- Prof John Quiggin (via Zoom)
- Clare Ozich
- Dr Elise Klein
- Celeste Liddle
- Adam Bandt MHR (Facilitator)

3.30pm: Afternoon tea

4pm: Democracy and Ecology

- Dr Virginia Marshall
- Nicky Ison
- Dr Natalie Osborne
- Senator Sarah Hanson-Young (Facilitator)

5.15pm: Close and on to dinner

Saturday Program

Ainslie Primary School, 33 Donaldson, Braddon

9-10.30am: Opening sessions of Australian Greens conference, including addresses by Richard Di Natale and Shane Rattenbury

11-12.30pm: How to have hard conversations respectfully - Deliberation in practice with Paul Atkins

1.30-3pm: “Climate democracy” with Dr Amanda Cahill and Tim Hollo. What would an effective citizens’ assembly approach be?

3.30-5pm: Open space

Sunday Program

Ainslie Primary School, 33 Donaldson, Braddon

9-10.30am: Indigenous talking circle (both conferences)

11-12.30pm: What would a Greens “Voices for Indi” approach look like? With Beth Slatyer from Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy.

1.30-3pm: Democratising the Economy. Brainstorming campaigns and approaches around corporations, co-ops and collectives.

3.30-5pm: Report backs and next steps.



the green institute