

## **SA-BEST - for real change you can trust**

South Australia's March 2018 election will be vitally important for our state.

South Australia is at a cross road.

After years, indeed decades of decline, we can continue down our current path - That's a path of industrial retrenchment, higher unemployment and population decline, and so many with talent, particularly young South Australians, being forced to seek opportunities elsewhere.

We've been going down that dismal path for a long time due to the failure of our state's political leaders, parties and institutions.

The Tweedledum and Tweedledee of Labor and Liberal have long been more interested in fighting about which side gets their snouts in the trough, rather than what is best for our state.

We've had almost sixteen years of Labor in power. Their Government is tired, lacking in vision, more interested in who is in and out amongst its own factions than the good of the state.

We've seen a very serious decline in government accountability and transparency.

There's been a failure in the delivery of the most basic services that must be reliable and affordable.

Yet the Liberal alternative doesn't promise anything better - If anything the Liberals are driven more by a sense of entitlement that they are overdue for their turn in office, rather than by any vision for making South Australia better.

And what's more, they can't even agree amongst themselves.

Labor has been taking us in the wrong direction. The Liberals want to take us to a dead end.

For too long, voters have had an awful choice between a government that deserves to lose and an opposition that doesn't deserve to win.

The worst outcome on March 17, 2018 would be that we get more of the same, regardless of who occupies the Premier's office.

We have to do better than that.

After having served a decade in the state parliament, I took the view 9 years ago that I should fight the good fight for South Australia in Canberra where our state's interests are all too often overlooked by national politicians. I served first as an independent Senator and now as the leader of the Nick Xenophon Team.

Over the past nine years I've sought to make a difference for South Australia - whether in relation to the Murray Darling Basin, South Australian ship and submarine building or the future of our steelworks at Whyalla, to name but a few.

Without the influence of myself and my NXT colleagues sharing the balance of power in the Senate, South Australia would be a lot worse off.

Even as South Australia's economic and political position has eroded, including the prospective loss of another federal electorate thanks to relative population decline, NXT has been punching well above its weight.

However, over the past year - especially since the state electricity blackout and with record power prices - I've increasingly concluded that you can't fix South

Australia's problems in Canberra without first fixing our political system at home.

South Australian politics is broken and politically bankrupt.

We have a hyped up partisan fight between Labor and the Liberals, but little real policy debate, let alone solutions for our state's many troubles.

To quote Shakespeare, it seems our state parliament has become nothing more than a stage for a troupe of players, led by the Premier and the Opposition leader.

Each

*"struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing."*

I don't want this coming election to signify nothing.

I don't want it to result in more of the same, either Labor or Liberal in government but nothing really changing.

I know South Australians don't want that.

So my team, SA-BEST will offer a strong, credible alternative to the petty partisan politics of Labor and Liberal.

We will contest seats in both the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council.

What we will be aiming for is to at least win the balance of power in the parliament so that we can hold whoever does form government to the highest standards of accountability, transparency and good governance for all South Australians.

Just as NXT has used its position in the Senate to achieve better outcomes for South Australia, SA-BEST will use a position of influence in our state parliament to secure reforms that will lead to better administration, more transparency and accountability, and better, reliable, more affordable services for all South Australians.

To that I intend, as the leader of my party, to run as the SA-BEST candidate in the seat of Hartley in the House of Assembly – a place where I have lived for decades.

We want better politics, not politics as usual.

As you will be aware the High Court will be sitting next week to hear the so-called citizenship case involving seven federal parliamentarians, including myself, and I expect a decision will be forthcoming soon after that.

While I and my legal representatives believe I have a very good case in that matter, it is my intention, irrespective of the outcome to leave the federal parliament and drive a campaign for real change in SA which gets our state growing again. Real change that you can trust.

Depending on the court's decision, my Senate seat will be filled either through a count-back, or else as a casual Senate vacancy.

Running for the Assembly seat of Hartley will be a big gamble for me, even though, as you know, I'm not a gambler.

I'm sure that both Labor and the Liberals will pull out all the stops to try to prevent me and my team from breaking through into state parliament.

They don't want their cosy little duopoly broken up.

I'm sure that they will throw everything at us.

So I expect plenty of dirty tricks. Plenty of mud will be thrown, probably the kitchen sink as well.

For my part, it will be a do, or die, effort.

It has to be that, because whatever way you look at it, our state desperately needs a complete political overhaul.

SA-BEST is going to make the next government, be it Labor or Liberal, truly accountable, and shake up our state parliament to be the true workhorse for our State's growth and prosperity.

We need deep reform to put an end to the shallow political games our leaders like to play, and get South Australia back on the right path.

We need to do this if we not only want to keep our best and brightest here, but also to attract those with fresh ideas and energy from the rest of Australia - and around the world.

Only then will we be able to be confident about our future prosperity.

So today is the beginning of another challenging campaign for me. I expect it will be the most challenging campaign ever.

But I'm up for that challenge because I love our state, our people and I believe that if you are in political life, you should make a difference.

In the days and weeks to come I will be announcing SA-BEST's other candidates and the broad issues and policies we will be focussing on between now and March 17, and in the new Parliament after that.

Finally, my plea to you is this: if you want change, only you can make that change happen.

And with your support SA-BEST can deliver real change you can trust.