



## THE SENATE TURNS A DEEPER SHADE OF GREEN

JUNE 2011

Next month, the political landscape in Australia will change dramatically. Come 1 July, the Greens will hold the balance of power in the Senate. While this will certainly diminish the Coalition's influence when it comes to legislation in the Parliament, the Greens new found power may yet prove to be a curse for them.

The Greens holding the balance of power in the Senate will certainly make it harder for the Coalition to stop bad Government legislation, as we have done in the current Parliament. Presently, the Government needs the support of all Greens Senators, plus one Independent to pass its legislation through the Senate. But once the new Parliament is sworn in, Labor and the Greens will have an outright majority in the Senate. As a result, the Government and the Greens will effectively be able to ram through whatever legislation they like without having to negotiate with the Independents or the Coalition.

As a result, the alliance between the Government and the Greens is likely to strengthen as Labor finds itself even more reliant on the support of the Greens. As we have seen with Labor's carbon tax, the Government is all too willing to have their agenda dictated by the Greens in return for legislative support. This could lead to the radicalisation of the Government's agenda, as the Greens drag Labor further and further to the left.

Yet there is some cause for optimism. Despite their growing influence, the Greens are a largely untested force in politics. They are yet to be held to the same level of intense public scrutiny as the major parties, but this will change when they begin to call the shots in the Senate. Increased scrutiny of the Greens will mean they can no longer announce

policies without having proper costings, and they will have to start taking responsibility for the legislation they pass. Once the spotlight is shone on the Greens, many Australians will no doubt realise that the Greens are not friendly tree-huggers but a party with extreme economic and social policies that would fundamentally alter our way of life and damage irrevocably our standard of living.

And finally, it will become increasingly clear to voters that the Government's agenda has been hijacked by the party that occupies the fringe of Australian politics. Labor will begin to look even weaker and more indecisive as a result, and their lack of a proper parliamentary mandate will begin to weigh them down even further.

The Coalition, on the other hand, is well placed to take advantage of these circumstances. We are united and decisive and we are listening to the Australian people, unlike Labor and the Greens. We will continue to hold both the Government and the Greens – in the words of Tony Abbott – ferociously to account for their failures.

Number of Senators	Before 30 June 2011	After 1 July 2011
<b>Coalition</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Labor</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Greens</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

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