

THE CHARTER OF THE RAINBOW ALLIANCE

We believe that at this historical moment there is sufficient common ground amongst thinking and caring Australians to permit a new political movement unlike anything previously attempted in this country. The aim of this movement is the far-reaching transformation of Australian society.

We aim for the abolition of all forms of domination and exploitation which arise from inequalities based on race, class, gender or nation. We call for an end to the coercion of all by inhumane and environmentally destructive technologies. We aim for an ecologically sustainable society.

We recognise that our future is in jeopardy. The anxiety and uncertainty which confronts us at this moment are not confined to Australia. They are part of a deep-rooted cultural, economic and political disorder characteristic of Western capitalist and other bureaucratic-technocratic societies. The crisis has assumed global proportions. It now threatens to destroy not only the quality of human existence, but the very ecological balance on which all life depends.

The evidence is all around us: the widening gap between rich and poor, and between the power of the few and the powerlessness of the many, the erosion of moral discourse and of the public sphere, the continuing onslaught on the environment and the loss of biological diversity; the wanton disregard of civil liberties, policies that generate violence and risk nuclear war. In the Australian community there is widespread anger, disillusionment and cynicism. The resulting political vacuum poses unprecedented dangers but also a unique opportunity.

This is not a matter of tinkering or piecemeal reform. We are aiming at a fundamental reshaping of power in Australia. This means the radical renewal and regeneration of contemporary culture. While working for a new transnational consciousness we shall cultivate a new economic, cultural political self-reliance which can help us break loose from international corporate and strategic systems based on exploitation of people and nature.

We propose to create a new stream in Australian political and social culture, a participatory movement of people and ideas capable of welding together the entire range of political, economic and social issues, and of speaking a new language that inspires trust and hope in the future.

Politics for us means the empowerment of ordinary people in all aspects of their daily lives. Real democracy begins in the movement, and reaches all aspects of Australian life. Politics is more than three year elections, party promises, and media hype. For us politics is a positive embracing of the democratic transformation of all facets of life. It is the building of new living cultural

and political space from which it will be possible to erode and eventually undermine structures of domination and inequality.

Vision alone is not enough. The future starts now. We aim to begin the creation of the world we want now – in our programmes, campaigns and our processes. We support moves for co-operation, genuine empowerment in the community and the workplace. The goal of meeting the needs of all is not only a matter of choosing between butter and guns, but of how such decisions are made.

Aims of the Movement

The specific aims of the movement may be expressed in shorthand as follows (the order is not significant since they are closely related).

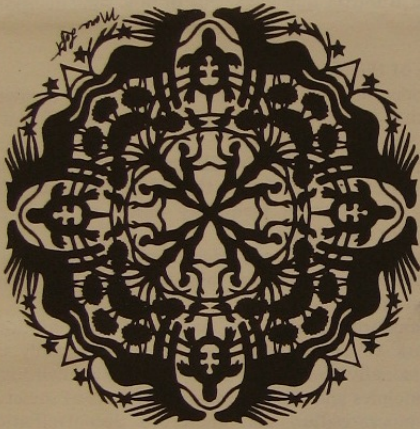
- Equality of access by all groups and individuals to resources and services – this means the elimination of all structures of inequality based on wealth, race, gender and nation.
- Encouragement and development of living and working relationships based on co-operation and mutual aid.
- Transformation of the nature of consumption and work to ensure that they are safe, socially useful, personally fulfilling, consistent with environmental principles and available to all members of society.
- Democratisation and therefore decentralisation of economic decision-making coupled, however, with public ownership and control of resources, financial institutions and productive enterprises to the extent necessary to ensure equality, environmental balance and national autonomy.
- An ecologically sustainable economy that preserves the balance of the earth's ecological systems and ensures that full biological diversity is maintained and passed on unimpaired to future generations.
- Implementation of Aboriginal land rights and Aboriginal self-determination, and also recognition of the unique value of Aboriginal culture.
- Institutional changes (including constitutional reform) to ensure: (a) public participation at every level of decision-making; (b) rigorous protection of civil liberties; (c) recognition of the rights of women trade unionists, consumers, ethnic communities and other disadvantaged sections of the community; (d) establishment of free access to, and democratic control of, the mass media.
- An independent, internationalist, non-aligned foreign policy and a non-nuclear, defensive, self-reliant defence policy.
- A clear commitment to seeking non-violent approaches to the resolution of conflict.

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Tasks of the Movement

These are closely inter-related and stem directly from the movement's aims and objectives.

Education: to develop and disseminate a coherent understanding of current local, national and international relationships and a compelling vision of the future, at all times highlighting the connection between different issues; this is an on-going process of study, action and reflection that depends on mass participation — ideally a group in every town and every suburb of every city.



Policy Development: to formulate policies and strategies that are in line with the movement's aims, comprehensive and mutually compatible; while all areas of policy will be considered, particular attention will be given to domestic and international economic arrangements because these affect the concerns of every major social movement and every other aspect of policy.

Building Community: to support, and where appropriate initiate, local actions, co-operative ventures and mass campaigns that instil hope and foster communal ties at the local, regional and national levels; particular attention will be given to the use of environmentally benign, non-destructive technology, local production for local consumption, ethical investment projects, consumer boycotts, and democratic decision-making in the workplace.

Co-operation with Social Movements: to encourage the pooling of resources and skills, to develop the networking of groups and individuals; to foster greater awareness of the inter-connectedness of issues; to act as a catalyst in the mapping out of mutually reinforcing strategies and campaigns.

Resistance: to support and initiate imaginative non-violent direct action, civil disobedience and other ethical forms of free expression which weaken the existing political order in decisive ways, erode its stability and legitimacy and point to alternative solutions.

Celebration of Life: to express the beauty and dignity of life; to develop a critique of destructive institutions and technologies that stems from a profound reverence for the natural world — this to be done through co-operative relationships, creative forms of leisure, literature, music, theatre, dance and other forms of artistic activity; developing a new culture will be an integral part of the movement's agenda.

Political Intervention: to use the political arena (eg. parliaments, courts, inquiries) as a way of: (1) exposing the seriousness of the situation and the realities of power; (2) promoting public debate around the movement's policies; (3) providing a rallying point for the thousands of Australians who feel alienated by the existing political process; (4) giving the new movement access to a wide range of skills and resources which will assist in the development and implementation of its other tasks.

Participation in local, state and federal elections will be part of our programme, but only after extensive preparation and only as part of an integrated programme which gives due weight to all the above tasks. Electoral intervention is an instrument which must not determine the movement's priorities or undermine its internal democratic processes.

Politics is more than elections and political parties. We need new forms of political mobilisation which make possible grass roots empowerment of the community. Existing institutions, including parliaments, will be used insofar as they encourage democratic initiatives and new ways of mobilising people. Electoral intervention, however skilful, cannot of itself bring about the fundamental reshaping of power in Australia. On the other hand, as part of a coordinated strategy it can strengthen our campaigns and give added sharpness to our strategies.

International Solidarity: To take advantage of every opportunity and allocate sufficient resources to ensure effective international networking with like-minded groups and movements not only in the Western world, but also in the East and in the Third World, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Hope is the key to change. Our vision of the future is possible. We have the will. We aim to find the means.
