

MEDIA RELEASE



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Lifting the target: EMILY's List celebrates parliamentary equality campaign

After beginning the campaign for parliamentary equality in the early 1990s, EMILY's List is today celebrating the Labor Party's commitment to gender equality.

After hours of long negotiations by ALP "faceless femmes", the motion to change the party's affirmative action rule to ensure 50% by 2025 was announced to a standing ovation.

The new affirmative action rule which embeds a gender quota and a penalty for non-compliance will be phased in, with the current target of 40% lifted to 45% by 2022 and 50% by 2025.

National Co-Convenor Tanja Kovac said today that yesterday's events were the final stage of a campaign which began with EMILY's List founding women in the early 1990s.

"Women like the late Joan Kirner AC were integral to the ALP integrating affirmative action into its national platform in 1994. Many women in the broader labour movement have worked tirelessly ever since to monitor the party's AA performance and ensure that targets have been increased."

After the initial target of women being preselected in 35% of all winnable state and federal seats by 2002 was achieved, this target was later lifted to 40% by 2012. Now a new ambitious plan has been set to achieve gender equality.

"The ALP's AA targets have assisted in increasing the proportion of Labor women federally from 14.5% in 1994 to 38.2% in 2015. They also played a major role in women now making up 47% of the Victorian Caucus and 41% of Cabinet and 39% of the Queensland Caucus and 57% of Queensland Cabinet."

The target had not been lifted for over a decade.

"40% is not equal. This is why we fought such a long and challenging campaign to change the minds of men and women in the party to lift the target to 50%," she said.

"We thank federal Labor leader Bill Shorten's support of our campaign and his acknowledgement of the importance of gender equality to the Labor cause. We thank the many male champions of change who supported our campaign to lift the target to 50%."

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EMILY's List Australia is a financial and political support network for progressive Labor women candidates, providing financial support, training, mentoring and gender gap research.