

## **North Sydney Independents Candidate Search Launch - 6 June 2021**

Thank you all for coming this afternoon.

We have come here to ask for your support and help.

My name is Kristen Lock and I am here, not because I am a member of a political party or an aspiring candidate, but because I am an ordinary citizen - a mother, a nurse, a person who feels that the political parties in our Federal system have failed us.

I grew up in Lane Cove with my parents, my brother and my sister.

My parents were - and continue to be - conservative voters and strong supporters of the Liberal party. I followed their lead and became a Young Liberal.

I married and settled on the other side of the river in Hunters Hill.

We have two teenage daughters who go to Monte, the same school in North Sydney that I attended many years ago.

My daughters are the main reason that I stand before you.

We want to preserve this beautiful and multicultural country for them and their children.

We want them to have faith in their political representatives and to trust that government will work for them and in their interests.

Like many of you, I thought the Liberal Party would deliver this future.

But we have been disappointed.

We read with alarm the warnings of fire chiefs across Australia, calling for climate action to prevent the future devastation of our country. The Liberal government did not listen, indeed would not listen.

So we watched as our city was blanketed with thick layers of smoke in the summer of 2019 - for months and months.

And we watched as our country burned, destroying homes, livelihoods and untold numbers of our native plants and animals. This scientists tell us - was not a one off event.

If this was 2019 - imagine 2059.

Then we witnessed America drastically change its commitments to climate change under its new Presidential leadership.

We expected the most recent Federal budget to urgently act on climate change

...and also to place us, our children, and our grandchildren in the "front of the queue" to make the most of the new profits and new jobs that will come with the global, renewables, economic revolution

...to stop exporting climate change and start exporting climate solutions.

We remain sorely disappointed.

Like many of you, I watched as young women like Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins spoke up and stood up to bravely call out the sexual violence in our workplaces, schools and homes.

We watched our national politicians scramble to respond. And it was ...inadequate.

We watched Christine Holgate slandered and bullied out of her job from the floor of Parliament with Scott Morrison's hysterical and unwarranted theatricals.

We heard shocking lewd details about the gender-toxic culture in Canberra.

Joining marches is not a regular practice of mine but I was - so fed up - I did go to that womens' march.... I did not see our federal member there.

Like many of you, I expected more from our politicians.

Our local member, Trent Zimmerman, seems a pretty nice guy.

I have watched him on Q&A speak candidly about his sexual orientation and his progressive views on a range of issues including climate change.

The reason this movement has started is not because we don't like Trent, but because Trent is part of the problem: a party man, a party product, who follows the directions of the party, not what I suspect he knows is right nor more importantly..... what reflects his electorate.

Trent may talk like a moderate, but when he uses OUR North Sydney Vote in Parliament he has cast it exactly the same as Peter Dutton, Angus Taylor, and Scott Morrison. Every time. Never crossed the floor.

He used our North Sydney vote to support the \$600million gas power plant in Kurri Kurri.

Where is his voice now on climate change, a Federal ICAC, and gender fairness? And where has it been for the last 6 years?

Like many in his party, Trent Zimmerman is shackled by the chains of the Liberal Party.

He has to put the party first, not the people of North Sydney.

But the malignant cancer of Party politics doesn't stop there - The Liberal Party is no longer the party that welcomes diverse views and different perspectives as Menzies intended - the board church - it now operates like a gang - not with leaders - but with bosses.

MPs MUST vote as ordered by their bosses.

We are far from alone in North Sydney. Across Australia, independents like us across about 25 other federal electorates are gathering to ensure that the Australia of the future is unfettered by party politics.

Mackellar, Wentworth, Bradfield, and now Bennelong all hold similar simmering discontent with their party MPs.

They – like us – want true representation and politicians they can trust.

They – like us – want politicians to vote for their electorates on the issues that matter their electorates.

They – like us – want a strong economy that acknowledges and responds to the changing climate, that generates new technologies and new jobs, rather than holding on to the fossil fuels of the past.

A storm of democratic discontent is brewing across Australia. There is real momentum.

Various groups are now organically popping up, groups like VoNS and TUT - both here with us tonight and whom we very warmly welcome.

People are starting to demand that politics be done differently.

Many of us here were lucky enough to see how Ted Mack - first on the local council, then at State Parliament, and finally as a Federal member – put the people first.

Ted began his term as mayor by selling the mayoral Mercedes-Benz car to help buy community buses.

For the next eight years he used his 1951 Citroen as the mayoral car at no cost to ratepayers.

Ted introduced open government policies making all council meetings, committees and council files open to the public.

Public participation in decision making was created through the establishment of some 24 precinct committees, 3000 public meetings and 36 referenda over his 8 years.

Under Ted's leadership the council decided ALL DECISION MAKING is ultimately the right of THE PUBLIC - not the aldermen – irrespective of the merits of the public decision.

He is esp well known for purposefully resigning just days before qualifying for a lifetime political pension - Ted Mack was about serving the people not himself, not the political party machine, and not political donors.

We believe it's time to build on Ted Mack's legacy.

We have seen this happen in other electorates – Andrew Wilkie in Hobart, Cathy McGowan then Helen Haines in Indi, Rebecca Sharkie in Mayo, and of course our neighbour Zali Steggall in Warringah.

These men and women are providing real representation for their communities.

These weren't marginal seats.

These were safe seats that the major parties had taken for granted.

The interests of these electorates were underrepresented and overlooked in favour of national party politics and political donations.

Local residents campaigned for a community-focused candidate - and they won.

We have been told by independent analysts that North Sydney has been classified as one of seven especially winnable seats across Australia for an independent. Our seat is very similar to and in fact is considered more progressive than our neighbours in Warringah.

We already have the basic structure in place and have some financial support - we just need a candidate.

Here's the exciting vision - our parliament needs only 1-2 more independent seats and we will have a cross bench able to change the direction of our country. That's really why we're here for THIS election.

Changing Nth Syd's MP could actually change our country.

Today we announce our official search for an independent candidate for the seat of North Sydney.

We are looking for a person who isn't afraid to lead.

A person who wants a strong, climate-proofed economy and an independently funded federal ICAC.

A person who believes in a thriving and cosmopolitan democracy.

A person who is prepared to shift the balance of power in Parliament.

This isn't party politics.

This is about the community speaking up.

For the right person, this is the once in a lifetime opportunity – the chance to really make a difference.

They will have the support of a talented and tireless team of volunteers and, more importantly, of the community.

We will support them.

And we will also hold them to account.

You might ask if such a person exists in North Sydney.

We say they do.

We say we can find our own Cathy, Helen, Andrew, Rebecca, or Zali.

We are looking forward to meeting them.

And we are looking forward to voting for them.

Thank you for your time.