

We Kept the Bastards Honest

or did we?

This is a memoir, but a very special one, being a memoir of 17½ years at the heart of one of Australia's most remarkable political phenomena: the Australian Democrats.

It is not in any sense a history of the Party, but it provides a commentary and a number of fascinating footnotes to that history in a way that only a personal memoir can. Some of them could be of historical importance.

Better still, it is immensely readable.

We Kept the
Bastards Honest
or did we?

SAM HUDSON
*National Secretary of
the Australian Democrats,
1984-2001*

HUDSON
NEWSTEAD



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Dedication

For Emily

Foreword

“You should write a book.”

Many people have made this comment to me over many years. But it was events that happened last New Year’s Eve when I was having dinner with my daughter Emily and some friends in Newstead that led me to write this book.

During dinner I received a phone call from Cheryl Kernot wishing me a happy New Year. They were great fans of Cheryl’s and so I put the phone on speaker and they called out greetings to her, and she to them. Later that evening while we were playing a game that involved divulging information we’d never told anyone, I recounted a story about something that had happened when I was in the Democrats.

And there it was again, “You should write a book!”

What I have written is a memoir. It is my personal memories of some of the people I met and some of the things that happened during my years in the Australian Democrats. I did not do any research or talk with former colleagues about their memories; the memories and the stories are mine.

It was while writing that I realised it was 40 years this year, on 14 December 1977, that Janine Haines was appointed by South Australian Premier Don Dunstan to fill Steele Hall’s casual Senate vacancy, making her the first Australian Democrat parliamentarian. And it is also 40 years, on 10 December 1977, when the Australian Democrats contested their first Federal Election. And, it will be 20 years, on 15 October 1997, that Cheryl Kernot defected to the ALP.

So this year was a good time to finally write this book.

Sam Hudson
Bowral 2017