

Janet Rice

Speech to the Senate Preselection 'Meet the Candidates meetings

May 2009

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It's fantastic to see you all here. Thank you for coming and being part of our great Green democracy.

I acknowledge we're on the traditional lands of the xxx people, and pay my respects to them and thank them for their on-going custodianship of this land.

One of the best things about being an activist for so many years is all the wonderful people I have met, particularly people who have been striving for years working for their ideals, working for change, for a better world.!

I was in a meeting with one such person just yesterday. Louis Fouvy has been a sustainable transport advocate for over fifty years, since he started work with the tramways board in 1954. Louis has almost finished his grand plan – his vision of a massive expansion of Melbourne's public transport network.

Some people find Louis frustrating – including people at yesterdays meeting! because he is totally oblivious to the politics of what he's proposing.

In the view of the Labor and Liberal parties, Louis's plans are totally unrealistic.

It's us, the Greens, who *can* turn the visions, the dreams of people like Louis into political reality.

I was one of a small team who founded The Greens in 1992 to do just that. I've had just about every position possible in The Greens since then, including 10 years on state executive and six years as a Maribyrnong councillor.

I've got my vision of a Green and just world, and I marry that with being in Politics.

Fundamentally we Greens are pragmatic idealists. We are driven by our vision, and we translate that vision into action through our work in politics.

We have *hope* and optimism that our efforts *will* result in our children and grandchildren having a future, that the citizens of the world from Tuvalu to Tanzania will have a future, that the red gum forests of the Murray, the wetlands of the Coorong have a future.

We will achieve success in this federal election campaign by sharing our optimism and hope with the community, and outlining our practical Green way forward.

And boy, do we need success. The prospects for our planet look so bleak. We need emergency action. Our scientists tell it as it is.

Yet we've had the carryings-on Canberra in the last weeks. The Prime Minister caving in on climate change to the coal lobby, playing politics with our future promising \$9.5 billion in payouts to the biggest polluters in the climate polluters rewards scheme. International leadership in how to splash money around and not transition away from coal. If the rest of the world follows us – its very very scary... That's not the future I want.

The future *I want* involves The Greens having the real political power that we have been working towards for 17 years.

I want to be part of a Green team in our federal parliament that holds the balance of power in *both* the Senate and the House of Reps. So that we can then say to the old lumbering parties – you want our support to form government? Then there are conditions.

I want to legislate for the phasing out of coal fired power stations, for massive investment in green jobs to underpin our transformation to a zero carbon economy, to a post-consumer society.

I want to legislate for self determination for Aboriginal peoples,

For transforming the way we manage water so that the environment comes first, and our economic well being will also then be assured – there are no jobs on a dead planet.

For resources so that kids in public schools in the outer suburbs can achieve their full potential

Don't for a moment believe it's not possible.

Lots of people thought it wasn't possible for The Greens to succeed. Here we are.

People didn't think it was possible that I could become a Green Mayor in Labor dominated Maribyrnong, I did and what's more I convinced my fellow Councillors to go carbon neutral.

We have achieved great things. And we will do much more

I bring a huge range of experience to this senate campaign and to the senate.

I bring my six years experience in government – representing and advocating for people, forming and implementing policy, solving problems, translating people's visions and ideals into practical actions.

I have negotiated with the Premier, the Port of Melbourne, the Western Bulldogs! and achieved results. I was effective and influential as chair of MTF and Vice President of VLGA.

I bring experience and profile in winning campaigns, achieving national parks in East Gippsland twenty years ago, election campaigns, and shifting the agenda on transport over the last five years.

Through all of this work I bring vast networks which will be extraordinarily valuable in gaining votes – women's networks, multicultural networks, networks of people passionate about issues as diverse as East Timor to community development.

I bring unrivalled experience in working with Greens, as part of a team, achieving results.

And I bring perspective, humility, and love from my life as a woman, as a mother, and as a partner to Penny through more than twenty years of marriage.

We stand on the cusp of real political power.

I want to represent you, as your Senator, in this huge undertaking, to work with you, with the community to turn our dreams into reality.