

VICTORIAN LABOR, PROGRESS AND INTEGRITY

A discussion
paper for reform

August 2020

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Victorian
Labor

The process for making a submission

We encourage members of Victorian Labor to help us strengthen our Party.

We invite members to respond to **some or all** of the questions posed in this discussion paper.

Our preferred process is for you to use the webform provided here
<https://www.viclabor.com.au/change>

Alternatively, you can send a response via email to jennyandsteve@vic.alp.org.au

Or you can post your comments to:

Party Administrators (In confidence - Discussion Paper submission)
Australian Labor Party, Victorian Branch
Locked Bag 3240
Melbourne VIC 3001

All submissions will be confidential.

The deadline for submissions is 14 October 2020.

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Introduction from Jenny Macklin and Steve Bracks

The revelation of large scale branch stacking that led to our appointment as Administrators of the Victorian Branch in June this year marked a low point for the Victorian Branch of the Labor Party.

Neither of us aspired to this role. Nor did Victorian Labor members want our Branch placed into administration and the right to preselect MPs suspended.

We now bear a collective responsibility to reform Victorian Labor in a constructive and principled manner.

This discussion paper seeks your views on the changes required to ensure Victorian Labor operates with integrity and that members are genuine, consenting, and self-funding.

We seek your views on how we can create a governance framework fit for the challenges of 2020 and beyond. Those Victorians who need Labor governments, deserve nothing less.

The paper is focussed on Labor's enduring values, and reflects the core importance of the membership.

Through this reform process we aim to bring our values to life in the way Victorian Labor operates.

To paraphrase our National Platform:

We build a Party of progress, not protest. We seek change through the power of parliamentary democracy and the timeless truth of solidarity. We work alongside the mighty trade union movement of Australia ...

(It) speaks with the voice of Labor's greatest strength: our members, the people who keep the faith, even in difficult times.

The discussion paper is based on ten topics, each coupled with a small number of questions for your response. You may respond to all or some.

The process for submitting your views is set out on the previous page.

Thank you for helping us renew and revitalise the Labor Party in Victoria.

Hon Jenny Macklin

Administrator
Australian Labor Party, Victorian Branch

Hon Steve Bracks AC

Administrator

Important background

Reform – a long and winding road

The road to administrative reform in the Australian Labor Party is littered with the best of intentions and great ideas.

Since the 1990s, there have been multiple inquiries into the scourge of branch stacking and attempts at reform. But stacking has continued, and continued to undermine the integrity and public standing of the Australian Labor Party.

Recent revelations aired in the media about brazen branch stacking in the Victorian branch shocked members and the public. The behaviour reported showed contempt for Victorian Labor's rules and values.

The installation of Administrators for the first time in fifty years was exceptional, but the circumstances demanded exceptional action.

The Victorian Labor Leader and Premier, Daniel Andrews wrote to the National Secretary of the ALP in June 2020, requesting the suspension of voting rights and the installation of Administrators to validate the membership of the Branch and ensure integrity and probity in Party affairs.

The National Executive subsequently appointed the Administrators to act in place of the Administrative Committee, suspended all Committees of State Conference, and requested a final report to make recommendations on how the Victorian Branch should be restructured and reconstituted so that the Branch membership comprises genuine, consenting, and self-funding Party members.

The work to date

At the end of June, the Administrators wrote to all Party members requesting their initial views on reform. Over 450 members and groups took the opportunity to provide feedback.

From this initial consultation we learned that members believed the problems within the Victorian Branch are significant and they want lasting change.

Most people who responded were broadly supportive of the decision to appoint the Administrators, and the decision to scrutinise memberships (both past and present).

There were, understandably, some who were aggrieved by the loss of voting rights. These voices were outweighed by those who were angry about branch stacking and wanted to ensure that it will not happen again.

While the responses were diverse, a number of key themes emerged that are referenced in this Discussion Paper.

Deloitte have been appointed to undertake an audit of the Victorian Branch membership to identify non-bona fide members and patterns of branch stacking.

They will also provide advice on membership and assurance systems so we can ensure membership arrangements are effective in the future.

Topic 1 – What it means to be a Party member

On 31 July 2020, we submitted a Scoping Report to the National Executive of the ALP as required in the resolution appointing us in mid-June.

We proposed two specific amendments to the existing Victorian Branch rules that the National Executive has resolved to support.

The first was an amendment to prohibit cash and cash-like payments for memberships and renewals going forward. We believe this is a critical first step in reforming Victorian Labor’s membership arrangements. It will be the first of many.

The second change was to create a mechanism in the rules for the short-term, to ensure branch membership comprises genuine, consenting, and self-funding members, and that members act consistently with the values of the Party.

Key principles for reform

After consideration of the initial Party member feedback, the previous reviews of Party rules, and wider benchmarks for good governance, the Administrators have identified four key principles to ensure lasting change for the Victorian Branch. These principles will underpin the package of rule changes and reforms we will put to the National Executive in November.

Accountability

Rule and structure changes must encourage accountability within the Victorian Branch.

There needs to be wide acknowledgement that branch stacking and exploitation of rules and process is not acceptable. Accountability and responsibility must be to the members, not a select few.

Integrity

Consistent with the Premier’s request and the National Executive resolution, the reforms must ensure integrity and probity in Party affairs. They must be accompanied by a cultural change in the governance of the Victorian Branch.

We need to build the scaffolding to support long-term change. This includes creating a package of changes to create a circle of assurance, review and renewal in our rules and processes.

Transparency

Transparency of process and outcomes is a critical element in maintaining high standards, but it also provides ongoing assurance through the scrutiny of Party members.

On important decisions, Party members must have the opportunity for input, and to be informed about what was decided and why.

Democracy

We want to encourage new members so our Party can grow. Current rules for joining the Victorian Branch are complicated and can act as a deterrent to new members.

Reforms to ensure integrity should allow genuine applicants to join the Victorian Branch with expediency and simplicity. Reform is also needed to encourage participation in the Party by current and new genuine members.

People join the Labor Party for a variety of reasons. Some applicants want to make contributions to their local community, some to the nation and some to the world.

Others want to campaign for a change of government. Many want to have a role developing the Party’s policies or to promote a particular policy agenda.

All share a commitment to the values of the Victorian Labor Party which are embedded in the Victorian Branch rules:

*Victorian Labor values achieving social justice, fairness and equality
The Party is a collective cause and larger than any individual.
We are proud of our deep roots and history in the labour movement.
We support workers organising in union to achieve justice for all.
Our members, volunteers and supporters are our greatest assets.
Prejudice and discrimination - including sexism, racism and homophobia - have no place in our Party.
We celebrate the diversity of our Party.
We support one another because we are stronger together.
This is Labor.*

The Victorian Labor Party Branch rules provide form and substance to Labor Party membership. Our rules and processes need to give all members a meaningful opportunity to play a role, regardless of their motivation for joining the Party.

Question 1.1 – *How do we respect the various motivations people have to join the ALP?*

The values articulated in our National Platform appropriately acknowledge the core importance of rank and file members. Our rules set out voting rights and the roles of local branches.

Those same rules set out the core requirements to be a member: to join knowingly and willingly; to pay the appropriate fee for membership; to respect the platform; to make a commitment to unionism; to attend a branch meeting; and not to run against endorsed Labor candidates.

While the rules set out the obligations of branch members, there is not an accompanying set of rules concerning the Party’s obligations to members. For example, there are no rules requiring the Victorian Branch to welcome new members, create opportunities for members to contribute to internal debates, be involved in policy development, have voting rights, or the opportunity to participate in public activities and campaigns.

Topic 2 – The fundamentals of joining

Question 1.2 – *Should there be other, or new, requirements on people who want to join Victorian Labor? Should there be a specific requirement for being able to vote in internal elections, such as regular Party activity or branch attendance? Should the existing requirements be amended?*

Question 1.3 – *How adequately does the Party fulfill the expectations of members? What is required to close the gap between expectations and delivery?*

Question 1.4 – *What are the preconditions to attract and retain members of the Party?*

The rules, processes and logistics of joining the Party are critical elements in bringing motivated individuals into the Party.

If a person meets the eligibility requirements, an applicant for membership can apply to become a central branch member or apply to become a member through a local branch. For the latter, a person must join a branch within the Federal electorate which they live, and have attended at least one branch meeting in the last six months. Their application form must comply with a suite of requirements, including that it is signed by two nominators from the branch.

The complexity and demands of joining mean many bona fide applicants either decline to join or, are sometimes rejected as applicants because of counter-productive internal process.

It is difficult to reconcile the Party's commitment to an inclusive society with the challenging and confronting processes that exist to join the Party.

Perversely, the same processes that can impede genuine members joining the Party, are exploited by branch stackers to enlist members who are not genuine, consenting, or self-funding.

This is achieved by unscrupulous individuals using a range of dishonest practices, such as:

- claiming a residential address that is not legitimate or not where they are enrolled to vote
- claiming a concession or a low income tier for membership and renewal payments that is not reflective of their circumstances
- making payments in cash or non-traceable means because another person is paying their membership, or
- enrolling and renewing members who are unaware they are joining the ALP.

The recent consultation with Party members found:

Problems with the membership application process was a clear theme. To this end, members called for the abolition of cash payments for memberships, for memberships to be paid by traceable means, and for a comprehensive review of the membership processes, as well as past memberships, in respect of members' bona-fides, concessional and bulk payments, the role of branches, and the administrative role of Head Office in processing memberships.

Topic 3 - Key structures of membership

The Administrators have already moved to stop non-traceable payments being made for membership applications and renewals, and have also introduced interim assurance arrangements.

But it is only a start to stopping these dishonest activities, and requiring traceable payments is only one element of the necessary response.

Question 2.1 – *How do we best ensure high standards of integrity when new members join the ALP?*

Question 2.2 – *How do we ensure high standards of integrity when members and prospective members are not on the AEC roll, such as those aged under 18 years or permanent residents of Australia?*

The key organisational building block for the Party membership is the local ALP Branch.

The structure of the local branch, and the functions it performs, are detailed in the rules. The Administrative Committee has the power to create a local branch in any Federal electorate where ten people who comply with the membership requirements wish to establish one. Local branches have a range of objectives, including developing connections within local communities and recruiting new members. The rules envisage a series of roles that can be played by local branches, including, for example, passing resolutions and corresponding with MPs, the State Office, and Party Committees. In terms of branch governance, local branch members elect five members who comprise the branch executive.

Branches have their origin in the late 1800s when home and work life was based on local villages and districts. The communication and transport options of the 19th century are incomparable to our world today.

The recent consultation with Party members found:

The current branch structure was the subject of criticism and many questioned whether it remains fit-for-purpose. Most were of the view that local branches should operate, but noted the need for greater interaction and support from Head Office, as well as more robust and transparent practices to improve probity. That said, some considered that local branches ought to be abolished in favour of central membership.

There is debate about whether the current branch structure should be changed. Some are in favour of a State electorate based structure, and others advocate for branches that are based on policy interests.

The Administrators acknowledge the tension between promoting centralised processes that ensure integrity, and promoting the independence and vibrancy of local branches as a means of attracting and retaining members.

They also acknowledge that branch-based failures may also relate to an absence of systems, support and training. There is a perceived lack of training and operational support for branch executives, and there is a lack of support to promote branch activity and vibrancy.

Question 3.1 – *Is the current branch structure fit for purpose in 2020 and beyond? Are there viable alternatives?*

Question 3.2 – *Are there elements of social movements, unions and other large membership based organisations that can be adapted to enliven branches and local activity?*

Topic 4 - Ensuring ongoing membership integrity

The recent consultation with Victorian Labor members found respondents were extremely concerned by the branch stacking events aired in the national media in June:

There was resounding anger among members in respect of the revelations of branch-stacking and the damage this has caused to Labor's public standing. To this end, a significant volume of members called for punitive action against those involved, such as expulsion from the Party, as well as remedial steps to ensure that branch-stacking, and other improper conduct, cannot reoccur. Suggestions to prevent this conduct included, inter alia, establishing rolling audits and an independent 'Party ombudsman'.

Most respondents also believed the installation of Administrators was warranted:

As a consequence of anger expressed by members, there was broad support for the decision to appoint the Administrators to review and administer the Branch, and to make recommendations. This is not to say that some were not dismayed by the suspension of voting rights, but that members believed that the decision to appoint the Administrators was a necessary step in future-proofing the Party. Some were, however, sceptical that the review would lead to real change.

Branch stacking is not a new problem, nor is it confined to the Labor Party, and both memberships and membership renewals have been a feature of stacking operations.

We need appropriate checks and balances for initial membership applications.

High standards of probity for applications need to extend to renewals.

Rule changes need to reflect the specific characteristics of renewals, and particularly the branch stacking related activities that occur around renewal time each year.

The current single renewal date potentially supports branch stacking practices through "industrialising" processes based on the annual date, while other current rules enable group renewals to be presented at Party Office for processing.

“ Question 4.1 – Should we abolish the 31 May deadline by changing renewals and create a new process? For instance, members renew on the anniversary of the date they originally joined, or all prospective (or existing) members pay their membership via an ongoing direct debit arrangement, charged monthly.

Question 4.2 – Do we need a disincentive to prohibit renewals being done by others? E.g. stopping branch-based renewals, and/or payments for family members?

Topic 5 - Oversight, governance, standards

Reform is needed to Party rules and processes to ensure best practice governance of the Victorian Branch.

The rules create a hierarchical structure of Party governance. The State Conference is the supreme policy-making and governance body. Its remit includes the power to determine all matters affecting the party, including the election of representatives of committees and Party Officers, and the power to amend the Party rules.

Delegates of State Conference elect members of the Administrative Committee, the body that carries out the decisions of State Conference and acts on critical issues that arise between State Conferences, such as allegations of branch stacking.

The Administrative Committee comprises thirty members, as well as the Party Officers, who can attend meetings themselves or appoint proxies.

In addition to these bodies, the State Office also plays an important role in Party matters, such as preparing membership reports to the Administrative Committee and corresponding with local branches.

The Administrative Committee's practice of allowing proxies who have little or no understanding of their responsibilities or obligations to attend and vote on key matters confronting the Party, was identified by Party members as an example of poor governance.

As we have seen in recent scandals involving large financial services companies and other large organisations, good governance is critical to protect against corruption and poor performance.

Best practice governance will provide the scaffolding to support long-term change.

“ Question 5.1 – Should we introduce a renewed Administrative Committee that provides the governance oversight? Should the Committee and related Sub-committees be reduced in size to reflect contemporary governance practice?

Topic 6 – System design to prevent branch stacking

We also need measures to stop behaviours that sit directly behind the stacking operations, such as inducements to vote a particular way and material assistance to vote.

One option is to create more effective and onerous penalties for providing assistance; another is to target particular forms of inducement and support for branch stacking. A further option may be to implement an enforced code of conduct to create a benchmark for acceptable conduct for all Party members.

Question 5.2 – *What are the critical governance changes that would directly address the activity of branch stacking?*

There are direct responses to branch stacking that could stop specific practices and severely undermine the “business model”. But there is also a wider, more general motivation to pursue branch stacking that needs to be addressed.

As an example, the recent consultation with Party members found:

There was an unambiguous call for greater ‘democratisation’ of the Party. While noting Party rules and structures, there was a belief of some that some groups carried disproportionate weight in respect of decision-making. Many regarded the pre-selection process as being undemocratic, noting the weight of factions and other groups. To this end, some cited problems with the Public Office Selection Committee and others expressed concerns about the pre-selection of members who are ‘parachuted’ into electorates. A number of members advocated for a better system to enforce the secret ballots.

Branch stacking needs to be considered in the wider preselection and power structures of the Labor Party and the labour movement.

Some Party members also have concerns about the power and influence that groups wield, or at least, are perceived to wield. The recent consultation with Party members specifically found:

The role of factions featured prominently in the responses and branch-stacking was broadly linked by many to factionalism. Many members believed that factionalism did more harm than good and expressed concern in respect of both the secrecy that surrounds factional groups and the power that these groups wield. Members were aware of the stabilising role factions played historically, however, most believed that the current state of factionalism represented a significant problem that needed to be addressed.

We need to consider incentives and disincentives in the wider context of the Party that could be adopted to reduce the accumulation and use of internal influence as a driver for branch stacking.

Question 6.1 – *There are potentially system-based disincentives that would undermine branch stacking beyond membership and process settings. Is there a change to rules or structures that you believe is compelling, and why?*

Question 6.2 – *Could changes be made to local votes for preselection, to create a broader disincentive?*

Topic 7 – Effective dispute and oversight mechanisms

Where branch stacking has been asserted or a Party member has been charged consistent with the Party rules, the process that followed often failed to limit the practice.

Previous reviews, and the recent revelations of mass branch stacking, indicate that to ensure integrity in the Party's administration we need to urgently reform the rules intended to prohibit branch stacking and those that govern the operation of the Disputes Tribunal. The problem is not the integrity or character of the current members of the Disputes Tribunal, but that the current rules do not work the way they were intended.

The current Disputes Tribunal arrangements have their origin in the proposal made in the *Dreyfus Report* of 1998. The author, current Shadow Attorney General, Mark Dreyfus observed at the time that there was a lack of confidence in the (then) arrangements:

Many submissions criticised the present Disputes Tribunal rule. This provides for fifteen members of the Disputes Tribunal, which is an obviously unwieldy number. The main criticism was that the Disputes Tribunal was perceived to be subject to factional influence, not least because its members are elected by the proportional representation voting system by State Conference. The criticism is in effect that Party members need to be able to take disputes to a Tribunal which is seen to be beyond reproach, and that the existence of such a Tribunal would in itself act as a deterrent to breaches of Party rules or other unacceptable conduct.

These issues are clearly not new.

Question 7.1 – *Are the current disputes arrangements adequate? How can they be improved? Are new arrangements required for appointment to the Dispute Tribunal, such as a 75% Conference vote?*

Following previous reviews into branch stacking, some rules were changed but the behaviour and practices returned.

Much like the use of independent assurance in risk management as the “third line of defence”, one suggestion to potentially mitigate this is to appoint an Ombudsman to provide ongoing assurance and oversight, to consider complaints by members, and to refer behaviour to the Disputes Tribunal.

Question 7.2 – *To mitigate the return of stacking, would an “independent” set of eyes be impactful, such as a Party Ombudsman or an annual review or audit of the membership? What appointment mechanisms should be put in place for such an Ombudsman role, such as a Conference threshold to appoint or replace?*

Topic 8 – A growing Party

We want a growing Party that will create electoral impact and long-term political viability for the Party and for Labor governments.

The 2010 Review undertaken by Bob Carr, John Faulkner and Steve Bracks prioritised Party growth as a key pillar of reform. Nine separate recommendations were made supporting Party building work and adopting an organising approach to growing the Party membership. The review also found that providing training, branch support and resourcing were all critical elements to grow Victorian Labor.

More generally, the recent consultation with Party members found:

The need to improve Party culture through better engagement with grassroots and younger members was also apparent. A large number of members believed that, in order to mitigate against branch-stacking, there was a need to grow Party membership. Many rank and file members felt as though they carried no weight within the Party and called for greater interaction between individual members and the Party, MPs, and Head Office. In addition, there was a clear desire to restore the Party's image by enhancing integrity, democracy, and transparency.

The Victorian State Office is required to do many things – it operates a small organisation that undertakes work required under the rules, meets obligations to regulators, trains campaigners, and most significantly, it runs election campaigns. Member acquisition and retention may be overlooked in the context of these many competing priorities. This is a challenge for the Labor Party across the country.

This is in stark contrast to social movements with values broadly aligned to those of the ALP.

A recent celebrated example is ‘GetUp!’, which claimed more than one million members a few years after its establishment. It should be noted that it is unclear what rights, if any, those members have.

Notably, a GetUp! co-founder stated that “the single most important factor behind the early success of GetUp! was how easy it was for people to participate”. (page 67, Heimans and Timms *New Power* 2018).

We do not aspire to become a “no commitment, sign a petition” based social movement. But we can learn from the success of such groups in recruiting, engaging and motivating new members.

Some organisations make a financial commitment to growth through a short-term investment in a recruitment and retention function. This pays dividends through higher membership levels and the accompanying membership fees.

Topic 9 - Party capability

Question 8.1 – What are the key elements of successful recruitment of genuine members? What are the opportunities (eg policy or campaigns) that should be created or promoted to recruit these members?

Question 8.2 – What are the key organisational or rule changes required to ensure the arrangements to recruit these genuine members are in place? Should the ALP set an objective for membership growth?

The proposals for change outlined in this Discussion Paper will potentially impact the Victorian Branch’s financial base that is already under stress, even with the introduction of a new public funding regime in Victoria.

Over the past twenty years, the percentage of members paying the lowest level of fees has increased from 43% to 59%. At the same time, the overall number of members has increased by just over 10% whereas the population of Victoria has increased by 41% in the same period.

Fewer Victorians are choosing to become members and they are paying less on average.

More generally, the membership fee for the two lowest income tiers of membership has fallen by more than 20% and 13% in real terms over the past twenty years.

As a result, branch stacking has never been more affordable, while the Party’s financial base has never been under so much stress. We all acknowledge the accessibility argument for low membership fees, but the low levels clearly help to facilitate branch stacking.

Similarly, the cost of membership for the highest income earners has fallen by 36 per cent in real terms. By contrast, for a full-time worker earning close to *Average Weekly Earnings*, the cost of membership has increased by more than 80%.¹

Table – comparison of 1999 membership fees compared to 2019, corrected for inflation

1999 Fees		1999 in real (2019) terms <i>Corrected for inflation</i>		2019 Fees	
Income tier	Fee	Income tier	Fee	Income tier	Fee
>\$63,000	\$210	>\$105,997	\$353		
\$48-63,000	\$105	\$80,760-105,997	\$176		
\$37-48,000	\$74	\$65,253-80,759	\$124	>\$70,000	\$225
\$26-37,000	\$48	\$43,745-65,252	\$80	\$40-70,000	\$95
\$16-26,000	\$35	\$26,919-43,744,	\$58	<\$40,000	\$50
<\$16,000	\$23	<\$26,919	\$38	Concession	\$30

Sources: ALP Victoria website 1999 - <https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/19990923130000/http://www.vic.alp.org.au-orig/action/membership.html>
ALP Victoria website <https://www.viclabor.com.au/membership/join/> CPI converter - <https://rba.gov.au/calculator/annualDecimal.html>

¹ Background - Source of AWE - ABS 6302/A85002155K; For full time workers who earned \$41,000 per annum in 1999 (approximately AWE for a full time worker), they paid \$74 (or \$124 when corrected for inflation). For a similar worker in 2019, they earned \$89,000 (based on AWE) and paid \$225 for their membership.

Topic 10 - Party impact and change

Question 9.1 – *When making choices between activities, what should be prioritised between Party operations, compliance, elections, member acquisition and member retention? What other areas should be prioritised? What should be deprioritised?*

Question 9.2 – *Should the Party increase membership fees; or create an extra levy to invest in specific activities? Could membership tiers be merged or threshold levels changed?*

As we consider changes to rules and structures, the wider role of the Australian Labor Party and its Victorian Branch should also be discussed. Given the profound issues confronting Australian society, the Party's work has never been more important.

We have a proud history of achieving progressive change, and the current important work of the Andrews Labor Government is testament to that.

The coming membership and rule changes cannot take place in a bubble; rather, changes need to consider the wider operating environment and the priorities for the Party in 2020 and the next twenty years.

This includes preparing for the next Victorian Election in 2022 and supporting the election of an Albanese Labor Government in the same year (or earlier).

Question 10.1 - *What are the wider organisational priorities we need to be consider as we renew our Party?*

More generally, the initial engagement with Party members showed that there were many good ideas out there and a variety of views.

There are likely to be views and issues relating to Party integrity, membership and rules that members wish to raise that do not relate specifically to any of the themes and questions in the Discussion Paper.

Question 10.2 – *Are there any other matters relating to Party integrity, membership and rules to be brought to the attention of the Administrators?*

Discussion Paper Questions

Question 1.1 – How do we respect the various motivations people have to join the ALP?

Question 1.2 – Should there be other, or new, requirements on people who want to join Victorian Labor? Should there be a specific requirement for being able to vote in internal elections, such as regular Party activity or branch attendance? Should the existing requirements be amended?

Question 1.3 – How adequately does the Party fulfill the expectations of members? What is required to close the gap between expectations and delivery?

Question 1.4 – What are the preconditions to attract and retain members of the Party?

Question 2.1 – How do we best ensure high standards of integrity when new members join the ALP?

Question 2.2 – How do we ensure high standards of integrity when members and prospective members are not on the AEC roll, such as those aged under 18 years or permanent residents of Australia?

Question 3.1 – Is the current branch structure fit for purpose in 2020 and beyond? Are there viable alternatives?

Question 3.2 – Are there elements of social movements, unions and other large membership based organisations that can be adapted to enliven branches and local activity?

Question 4.1 – Should we abolish the 31 May deadline by changing renewals and create a new process? For instance, members renew on the anniversary of the date they originally joined, or all prospective (or existing) members pay their membership via an ongoing direct debit arrangement, charged monthly.

Question 4.2 – Do we need a disincentive to prohibit renewals being done by others? E.g. stopping branch-based renewals, and/or payments for family members?

Question 5.1 – Should we introduce a renewed Administrative Committee that provides the governance oversight? Should the Committee and related Sub-committees be reduced in size to reflect contemporary governance practice?

Question 5.2 – What are the critical governance changes that would directly address the activity of branch stacking?

Question 6.1 – There are potentially system-based disincentives that would undermine branch stacking beyond membership and process settings. Is there a change to rules or structures that you believe is compelling, and why?

Question 6.2 – Could changes be made to local votes for preselection, to create a broader disincentive?

Question 7.1 – Are the current disputes arrangements adequate? How can they be improved? Are new arrangements required for appointment to the Dispute Tribunal, such as a 75% Conference vote?

Question 7.2 – To mitigate the return of stacking, would an “independent” set of eyes be impactful, such as a Party Ombudsman or an annual review or audit of the membership? What appointment mechanisms should be put in place for such an Ombudsman role, such as a Conference threshold to appoint or replace?

Question 8.1 – What are the key elements of successful recruitment of genuine members? What are the opportunities (eg policy or campaigns) that should be created or promoted to recruit these members?

Question 8.2 – What are the key organisational or rule changes required to ensure the arrangements to recruit these genuine members are in place? Should the ALP set an objective for membership growth?

Question 9.1 – When making choices between activities, what should be prioritised between Party operations, compliance, elections, member acquisition and member retention? What other areas should be prioritised? What should be deprioritised?

Question 9.2 – Should the Party increase membership fees; or create an extra levy to invest in specific activities? Could membership tiers be merged or threshold levels changed?

Question 10.1 – What are the wider organisational priorities we need to be consider as we renew our Party?

Question 10.2 – Are there any other matters relating to Party integrity, membership and rules to be brought to the attention of the Administrators?

Process overview

June 2020	16 June	Administrators appointed to the Victorian Branch of the ALP
	29 June	Members invited to provide their initial views – due 20th July
July 2020	15 July	Deloitte announced to undertake audit of Branch membership
	31 July	Scoping Report submitted to National Executive by Administrators
August 2020	26 August	Discussion Paper released
September 2020	Late September	Deloitte finalises audit and provides advice
October 2020	14 October	Response to Discussion Paper deadline
November 2020	1 November	Final Report of the Administrators provided to the National Executive

Victorian
Labor