

# **“STATE GOVERNMENT KILLS DEMOCRACY”**

## **Electoral changes targeting independent candidates remain hidden**

The State Government’s “electoral reform” legislation, **still not made public after six months**, has weighted the already uneven democratic playing field even more heavily in favour of political parties, at the explicit expense of independent candidates.

### ***Ballot paper changes erase Independent identity***

For decades, independent candidates have been permitted to include **three descriptive words** beside their name in the box at the top of the Legislative Council ballot paper - a crucial aid for voters seeking to understand what a candidate represents.

Under the new legislation, **that option has been abolished.**

“In the new ballot papers, independent candidates will be reduced to a single word above the line - ‘Independent’,” says Craig Pickering, Independent candidate for the Legislative Council. “Voters will have to search below the line to find a candidate’s name, and there will be nothing to tell them about what that candidate stands for. For example, Nick Xenophon would have been reduced to "Independent". If voters looked below the line, they might find his name, but nothing about what he stood for - "no pokies" would have disappeared.”

“If fairness was the government's real motivation, political parties would be reduced to 'Party' above the line, and people would have to look below to find their candidate’s names, with no information about which party they belonged to. This has all the appearance of a cynical move to make it harder for people to vote for independent candidates.”

### ***Legislation passed - but not released***

Despite being passed more than six months ago (July 2025), the full legislation has **still not been made publicly available**, leaving independent candidates in the dark.

“We are expected to comply with rules that we haven’t been allowed to see,” Mr Pickering said. “That is not how democracy is meant to function.”

### ***Why Craig Pickering is standing***

Independent community advocate **Craig Pickering** has formally announced his candidacy for the South Australian Legislative Council. “I never expected to take this step...but I truly believe communities across South Australia need - and deserve - a stronger voice.”

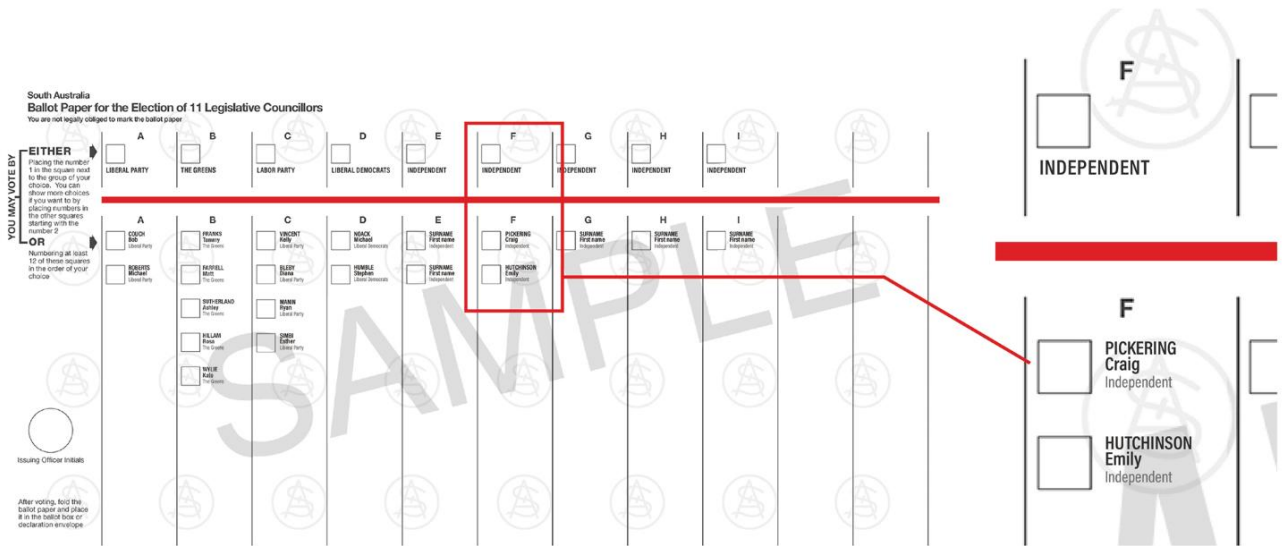
“People across South Australia feel ignored, dismissed and shut out of decisions that affect their lives,” he said. “Democracy only works when people have real choices, clear information and a fair chance to be heard. Community voices deserve to be heard.”

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**How voters find me:**



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