

About the Values Party

Many New Zealanders contemplating the general elections three years ago felt their choices were no choice at all.

National and Labour alike seemed unable to comprehend, let alone tackle, the forces which threatened the fabric of communities and the very structure of society itself.

Indeed people's disillusionment and despair arose because rather than just ignoring New Zealand's problems the political monopoly seemed intent on perpetuating them.

A 25 year-old journalist and political science graduate studying in Wellington tackled the problem head on. In May, 1972, six months before the elections, Tony Brunt formed the N.Z. Values Party.

With the assistance of a few friends and supporters the Values Party slowly grew in strength until a television current affairs programme catapulted it into the national consciousness five weeks before the election. With the national publicity gained, Values was launched as a national political party, and hundreds of people besieged radio and television stations to find out how to get hold of its organisers. Eventually the party stood 42 candidates instead of the six or seven initially envisaged and gained two per cent of the total vote.

Since then the Values Party has undergone considerable change. Consistent with its policy of community and social action, there has been considerable activity at branch level - recycling projects, conservation and environment protection, town planning activism, legislation resisting high-rise development and over-catering for private cars, and the presentation of submissions to Government select committees considering such matters as population and education.

In 1974 the Values Party moved into local body politics, an area which many party members believe to be equally as important as national politics. As a result, a number of councillors were elected at the October elections. At its second annual conference late last year the party decided it should, for the purpose of contesting the 1975 general elections, develop a stronger central organisation. In deciding to contest the elections the party decided its campaign should be primarily one of education - to use the political arena as a means to make people aware of the ideas and policies it believes are crucial for the survival and well being of people in New Zealand. In April of this year those policies were formulated at a national policy-making conference of party members in Christchurch. Reg Clough, of Auckland, was elected leader of the party in 1974 and Cathy Wilson, deputy leader. Tony Brunt stood down in order to concentrate on local body politics and has since been elected to the Wellington City Council.

It is a stated intention of the Values Party to become the Government, thus placing it in the best possible position to implement policy. At the same time, recognising the urgency of action in many areas, it offers its ideas to all others. If another political party and/or government adopts Values policy, we count that as a success. On that basis the Values Party has achieved a number of successes in its short life - including its part in the greatly heightened awareness of environmental issues and the very serious consideration the Government is currently giving to a population policy.

As in 1972 our election manifesto is an important part of our campaign. We believe a clear yet comprehensive reference to our policies is the best way to enable voters to consider what we are advocating. We believe the Values Party has already made a positive contribution to our society and that it has an important role to play in the future.

If you would like more information on the parties or any of the policy outlined in the manifesto, write either to Dave Straton, National Secretary, 47 Stanley Avenue, Palmerston North; Norman Smith, National Organiser, Box 137, Wellington or to any of the electorate/branch contacts listed here.