= Liberal Movement (Australia) =

The Liberal Movement (LM) was a South Australian political party in the 1970s . Stemming from discontent within the ranks of the Liberal and Country League (LCL) , it was organised in 1972 by former premier Steele Hall as an internal group in response to a perceived resistance to sought reform within its parent . A year later , when tensions heightened between the LCL 's conservative wing and the LM , it was established in its own right as a progressive liberal party .

When still part of the league , it had eleven state parliamentarians . On its own , it was reduced to three parliamentarians ? Hall and Robin Millhouse in the lower house and Martin Cameron in the upper house . At the 1974 federal election Hall won a Senate seat and was replaced by David Boundy . At the 1975 state election , Millhouse and Boundy retained their seats , while John Carnie won a second seat and Cameron retained his seat in the upper house , bringing the party to a peak of five parliamentarians .

In the 1974 federal election , it succeeded in having Hall elected to the Australian Senate with a primary vote of 10 per cent in South Australia . It built upon this in the 1975 state election , gaining almost a fifth of the total vote and an additional member . However , the non @-@ Labor parties narrowly failed to dislodge the incumbent Dunstan Labor government . That result , together with internal weaknesses , led in 1976 to the LM 's being re @-@ absorbed into the LCL , which by then had become the South Australian Division of the Liberal Party of Australia . The non @-@ Labor forces again failed at the 1977 state election but succeeded in winning government for one term at the 1979 state election .

A segment of the LM , led by former state attorney @-@ general Robin Millhouse , did not rejoin the Liberals , but instead formed a new party ? the New LM . This party , combined with the Australia Party ? under the invited leadership of Don Chipp ? formed the nucleus of the Australian Democrats which aspired to a balance of power in the federal Senate and up to four state upper houses for three decades . The LM and its successor parties gave voice to what is termed " small @-@ l liberalism " in Australia .

= = Party system = =

Before parties became established in the Australian colonies in the later 19th century , all members of the colonial parliaments were independents , occasionally labelled as " liberal " or " conservative " , amongst other terms . With the advent of Labor , these groups combined to form anti @-@ Labor parties . " Liberal " , in the Australian context , refers to what could be described as classical liberalism , and is distant from the modern meaning that the word has acquired in the United States and some other countries . As a train of thought , Australian liberalism has been less rooted in any defined ideology and more in pragmatism and opposition to Labor . Liberalism in Australia represents the centre @-@ right of the political spectrum , while Labor represents the centre @-@ left .

The first Labor party in South Australia was the United Labor Party in 1891 , born out of a trade union association that recommended and supported trade unionist candidates . In response , the National Defence League (NDL) was born two years later . In 1909 , the NDL combined with the Liberal and Democratic Union and the Farmers and Producers Political Union to form the Liberal Union , later known as the Liberal Federation . The ULP morphed into the Australian Labor Party in 1910 , and has been known by this name ever since . A separate Country Party subsequently emerged , representing rural interests , but this was assimilated back into the conservative side of politics with the formation of the Liberal and Country League (LCL) in 1932 . The South Australian party system has not deviated from this two @-@ party divide , and all other parties gained negligible representation or influence , until the emergence of smaller parties such as the Australian Democrats in the late 20th century , and the Australian Greens and Family First Party in the 21st century .

= = Liberal representation = =

Political scientists Neal Blewett and Dean Jaensch characterised the LCL as a strange amalgamation of differing groups : " the Adelaide ' establishment ' , the yeoman proprietary (farmers and regional workers) , and the Adelaide middle class " . Of these groups , the middle class was the most electorally depressed , both in parliament and within the party itself , owing to a 2 : 1 ratio favouring regional areas both in electoral legislation and the party organisation . The establishment influenced the party with its financial backing , while the yeoman proprietary was the most numerous . Only in 1956 did the urban middle class achieve parliamentary representation through Robin Millhouse , who was elected to the urban middle class seat of Mitcham .

Millhouse was a vocal advocate of his broader constituency , championing their case in a party dominated by rural conservatives . He wrote a paper on the ' Liberal Case for Electoral Reform ' , arguing for a fairer electoral system , as it was biased against voters resident in the capital city , Adelaide , whether they be progressive or conservative , Liberal or Labor . Many younger urban middle class voters , who would have normally been attracted to the LCL , were abandoning the party for Labor owing to their dissatisfaction with the malapportioned electoral system known as the ' Playmander ' . But this concerned the rural conservatives little , who hoped to retain their hold on power through the present system , which included a Legislative Council where suffrage was based on land ownership , resulting in a body dominated by the ruling class and the rural landholders , and a 16 ? 4 LCL majority . Millhouse 's paper was quickly ignored .

The LCL had governed , primarily under the stead of Sir Thomas Playford , for 32 years , and finally lost to Labor in 1965 . A year and a half later , when Playford retired , Steele Hall was elected to replace him . A young farmer from a rural constituency , Hall had never conflicted with the party line , and was expected to uphold the existing LCL principles , having spoken out in support of the Playmander and the restrictive Legislative Council before . However , when the LCL was returned to office in 1968 under his leadership , with the help of malapportionment , Hall was under pressure . Labor had led the LCL 52 @.@ 0 to 43 @.@ 8 % on primary votes , but owing to the Playmander , both ended with 19 seats and an independent supported the LCL and returned them to power . Large protests against the Playmander broke out , and there were strong calls for reform .

The LCL had routinely ignored such protests before , but Hall 's course differed from what was expected . He appointed Millhouse his Attorney @-@ General , and continued a raft of social reform that had begun under the previous Labor government . This was opposed by some conservatives within the party ; lines began to be drawn , and factions began to appear . Hall commented in the party 's newsletter that " too many people see the LCL as a party tied to conservative traditions . We must show voters that we can move with the times , that we are ' with it ' . "

= = Electoral reform = =

The level of malapportionment had grown to a level in excess of 3 : 1 in favour of rural areas , and Hall , having won the 1968 state election on 46 per cent of the two @-@ party @-@ preferred vote , committed himself to a fairer electoral system . Previously 39 members were elected : 13 from metropolitan Adelaide and 26 from the country . Hall 's first attempt for reform was a system with 45 seats and 20 from the country ; this proposal received scorn from both Labor and the rural councillors , and was seen as not going far enough by the former and going too far by the latter . A second proposal , for 47 seats with 19 in the country , was adopted with bipartisan support in the House of Assembly , but encountered opposition in the Legislative Council . The new system would make an LCL win near @-@ impossible at the coming 1970 state election , and Hall and the LCL were aware of it . For his weakening of rural constituencies , Hall became an enemy to those councillors who stood in defence of the previous system . Hall saw the political situation as untenable and felt the LCL needed reform to cope with the removal of an artificial situation .

Labor 's leader , Don Dunstan , also introduced a bill for reform of the Legislative Council , which sought to remove its wage and property based qualifications and instil adult suffrage . Hall himself stated he would approve the bill if it included a clause guaranteeing that the Legislative Council could only be abolished through a referendum . Dunstan agreed , but Hall 's own party split on the

issue . The bill passed the House of Assembly with Labor support , but failed in the Legislative Council where the LCL 's rural conservatives dominated its restricted electoral base .

Behind the votes in parliament was a personal antagonism between Hall and Ren DeGaris , the leader of the LCL in the Legislative Council . DeGaris , who was elected to the council in 1962 , was a staunch defender of its franchise and electoral boundaries . The two were the de facto leaders of the party 's two factions ; Hall represented the urban @-@ based progressives , and DeGaris the rural @-@ based conservatives . The conflict between the two extended beyond politics and on to a personal level , contributing to the polarisation of views within the LCL and making it difficult for an internal compromise to be reached on the issue of electoral reform .

After the LCL lost government in 1970 , primarily owing to the electoral reform , Hall managed to be re @-@ elected as leader . He convinced a majority of the party 's membership that reform was needed , and sought to remove the influence that the party 's representatives in the Legislative Council held . When the Dunstan government again introduced a bill to introduce universal suffrage to the council , Hall gained the support of 7 out of 20 members in the Assembly , but only 2 of 16 LCL members in the Legislative Council supported the bill . Internally , there was much opposition to any electoral reform when the matter was debated at party conferences .

The conservatives then moved against Hall , putting forward party proposals to lessen the influence of its parliamentary leader . Liberal parties in Australia had long held to a tradition of the separation of houses , independence of members , and the ability of the parliamentary leader to choose his own cabinet . The rural councillors sought to preserve their power , and demanded that cabinet positions not be decided by the leader , but elected by the parliamentary party as a whole . As this would include the Legislative Council , dominated by its rural membership , Hall 's support among moderate Liberals would be overwhelmed by the councillors ' inclusion . Hall privately told Legislative Council Chairman David Brookman that he could not work with De Garis and that he would resign if he was not allowed to choose his cabinet .

After the parliamentary party agreed on this issue 12 ? 8 , Hall resigned the leadership on 16 March 1972 , stating that " I cannot continue to lead a Party that will not follow ; I cannot lead a Party which has lost its idealism and which has forgotten that its purpose for existence is to govern successfully for the welfare of all South Australians . Our Party is still deeply cleft by the persuasive influence of a number of its members in the Legislative Council . " Later in the speech , he said " Over the last three years I have been subject to a great deal of disloyalty on a continuing basis ... I had hoped this afternoon to move a motion of no confidence in the Government ; instead , I found out Party had moved a vote of no confidence in itself . " Premier Dunstan , with whom Hall had never had amiable relations , crossed the floor of the house and shook Hall 's hand in a gesture of solidarity . Hall said he " was knifed " and said the conservatives ' actions were " a clear example of how deeply the wooden horses of the Legislative Council have entrenched themselves in the ranks of the Assembly membership " . The LCL President Ian McLachlan put on a brave face , saying " Mr Hall had some personal problems with the party , but these differences do not make a divided party " but he was quoted the next day as saying that the proposal was mooted to gauge Hall 's power . The obscure and low @-@ key conservative Bruce Eastick was installed as the new leader , as some more prominent figures such as Millhouse were seen as too sympathetic to Hall . In the meantime , there was a strong reaction to Hall 's departure among the public , and segments of the LCL , notably the youth wings , demonstrated against the events and made motions of objection . Hall had expected to become a normal backbencher , but the groundswell of support prompted a change of heart .

= = Formation = =

Hall initially sought to appeal to the State Council of the LCL . Although the body had no binding authority over the parliamentary caucus , which chose the leader , Hall and his followers saw it as an opportunity for a media victory . The motion went narrowly against Hall , but it generated much attention and potential embarrassment for the conservatives .

After this , he thought of establishing his own separate party , citing small opinion polls that supported this action , but Ian Wilson , the former member for the federal Division of Sturt ,

convinced him to stay within the LCL and bring about internal change . Strong support emerged from within the party for Hall 's stand , particularly from its youth wing , the Young Liberals . On 21 March 1972 , a faction , but closer to a " party within a party " was formed : the New Liberals . On 28 March it was renamed the Liberal Movement . The conservatives strongly criticised Hall and his new movement , accusing them of undermining Eastick , disrupting the party and being disloyal .

 It quickly gained support within the LCL 's membership , capturing a number of party branches and began preselecting its own members . Robin Millhouse was a member of the faction , and served as both the deputy leader of the LCL and the LM . Thanks to the electoral reform that had occurred , with more urban electoral districts to contest , the urban @-@ based LM greatly increased its parliamentary representation , with seven members in the House of Assembly (including Hall , Millhouse and future Premiers David Tonkin and Dean Brown) , three in the Legislative Council , and one in the Australian House of Representatives (Ian Wilson) . Soon there were factional clashes during parliamentary debate , combative television debates , and some LCL members began campaigning anonymously against the LCL . One LCL branch president publicly called Hall a " traitor " . The LM managed to worry the conservatives by managing to seize control of some rural branches within electorates held by strongly anti @-@ LM representatives , including that of De Garis . The conservatives tried to remove Hall 's endorsement for his seat , but failed . Several bitterly fought pre @-@ selection battles followed . As a former premier , Hall was much more proficient than Eastick at dealing with the press , and used his skills to generate more media publicity , prompting Eastick to claim bias .

 The LM sought to seize control of the LCL agenda by winning key positions on the state executive at the annual general meeting in September , but this was difficult as the malapportionment towards rural groups was entrenched at party level , and because the conservatives had anticipated the LM 's plans . The LM President Alex Perryman challenged McLachlan for the party presidency and in a high @-@ profile contest received 47 % of the vote in a narrow defeat . He received around 90 % among urban delegates and around 33 % of the rural votes , the latter figure shocking the conservatives . The LM later generated more publicity by inquiring about alleged impropriety in the balloting process .

 The LM 's policies were generally progressive , and Hall himself stated that " we had no major differences with the written philosophies of the LCL " . The LM 's colour , purple , was described by observers as " LCL blue with a dash of Labor red " , signifying the faction 's location on the political spectrum . The LM was less concerned with creating differing policy as it was taking over and reforming the LCL ; however , on the electoral reform front , the LM started by calling for the Legislative Council to be devoid of ministers . Worried by the LM , conservatives in the LCL tried to change the party rules to prevent members from criticising the organisation in public , and enforce discipline . This backfired as the LM exploited it to portray the conservatives as repressive , and the media also viewed it negatively , and the move was put on hold . The non @-@ Labor forces , in their disunity , were in a poor position to challenge the dominance of charismatic Premier Dunstan . The LM itself contained two poorly defined internal groups : moderates , concerned with the inequalities of the electoral systems and the LCL 's aging image ; and radicals , who espoused the aforementioned in addition to the desire for wide @-@ ranging social reform . Some of the latter felt Hall was the most progressive option available , but not progressive enough . Nevertheless , the LM had generated a large amount of campaign funds and had great name recognition ; Hall was also favoured in opinions as a better leader than Eastick by a threefold factor . They cited such figures to portray themselves as the main threat to Labor and justify why they were the direction the LCL needed to take . Late in the year the LM received another boost when Wilson regained the seat of Sturt for the Liberal Party at the 1972 federal election , making much of his LM membership .

 In the 1973 state election , the LM largely ran a separate campaign from the LCL as a whole . The majority of the LCL 's metropolitan candidates were also within the LM , and it was hoped that enough seats would be gained so that not only would the LCL return to power , but that the LM would be able to overpower the conservative faction in the House of Assembly and re @-@ elect Hall as leader . To do this , they needed to capture at least three marginal Labor seats in Adelaide . This also meant the conservatives in the LCL would be better off losing to Labor if they wanted to

maintain their hold on the party , as Labor 's vulnerable seats were in all in the city , and a Labor loss meant a LM gain . The LCL campaign chairperson explicitly said that she would prefer losing if it meant keeping control of the party . While the LM ran an innovative campaign , the LCL itself faltered , losing support in the country to a separate Country Party and to Labor in metropolitan Adelaide . One LM seat held by a rural member was lost to the Country Party . The LM were branded by the LCL conservatives as being the reason behind the LCL 's defeat . The LM saw itself as a more modern and appropriate alternative to the LCL , more in tune with urban mainstream , but there was no evidence that urban LM candidates were more popular than conservative LCL candidates in Adelaide . LM members made up the majority of urban LCL candidates , but were unable to wrest any Labor seats in Adelaide .

 Labor 's convincing win was not unexpected , particularly as infighting in the LCL had been ongoing for over a year . Friction was present throughout the campaign as well as before it , particularly as much of the donations were given directly to the LM . In the months before the election LCL members had thrown punches in the corridors of Parliament House . Internal battles between conservatives and LM members for party pre @-@ selection were keenly contested . Around half of the LCL candidates were LM supporters and avoided mention of the LCL and its conservative leader Bruce Eastick in their pamphlets . Some of the LM faction candidates instead trumpeted Hall as their leader and printed books detailing their policies . There was also an incident where a LM function celebrating Wilson 's win in the 1972 federal election clashed with Eastick 's main policy speech . Eastick and his conservatives arrived at Wilson 's dinner after they finished campaigning for the night , but then walked out when Wilson was delivering a speech calling for the LCL to be more tolerant of the diverse opinions within the party . Labor ran a sedate campaign , but made much of the internal LCL divisions .

 = = Split = =

 Despite the LCL 's defeat , the failure of the LM to gain internal supremacy over the conservatives was seen by the latter as a vindication of their policies . Pressure from the LCL 's leader , Bruce Eastick , who called on the LM to disband , and the conservative wing of the party , saw machinations against the LM . Hall reiterated the LM 's intention to continue , but Millhouse was removed as the LCL deputy leader in 1973 , and pressure began to be mounted on the faction , which did not have any members on the frontbench ; Hall did not pursue a position in the shadow ministry . Tension continued as rumours spread claiming that the LCL State Council was contemplating the forbidding and vetoing of LM members from representing the party in elections . While Hall and Martin Cameron responded by publicly vowing to stand firm , several of their LM colleagues were ambivalent when asked about the intentions if the LM were no longer tolerated within the LCL . However , Heini Becker left the LM .

 On 23 March , a motion was passed at the state council that allowed it to deny membership to those who belonged to " outside political organisations " , and the LM was subsequently declared to be one . Strangely , an LCL member could also be a member of the Communist Party of Australia , but not the LM . A motion by LM members to also declare the League of Rights an outside political organisation failed . The LCL conservatives were confident the LM would capitulate and reintegrate , as third parties had never been successful in South Australia . At first , LM members tried to have their banning from the LCL deemed illegal , but this failed .

 It was not expected that the LM would split to form a separate party . But before it was established , Hall promptly resigned from the LCL , declaring it " hypocritical and decadent " . Martin Cameron quickly followed , and Robin Millhouse consulted with members from his constituency before agreeing to resign from the LCL . Ian Wilson , who had earlier managed to convince Hall not to form a separate party , tried in vain to sway him to remain with the LCL and focus on reforming it from within . He wanted to shut down the LM in an attempt to limit the damage to the party , believing that " political groups come and go , but the ideals we aim for will never change " . All other LCL @-@ LM members did not follow ; three lower house members including Tonkin and Brown , Wilson in the federal parliament , and two MLCs all stayed in the LCL . David Tonkin stated that " every one of

those Liberals who resign from the League is making it more and more certain that the League will remain just as it is " .

A number of LCL branches remained with the LM , and there were mass resignations from the LCL on the whole . Eastick was relatively unconcerned : the LCL had a massive membership of over 30 @,@ 000 and the LM 's split did little to dent it ? Eastick admitted 200 individual resignations . In the meantime , the LCL tried to introduce a requirement for members to make " pledge " that they were not aligned with " an outside political body " . This prompted a second wave of resignations , notably from sections of the Young Liberal Movement . Despite its leader 's show of confidence , many in the LCL were concerned that the expulsion of LM elements had apparently backfired ; it also prompted some disillusioned parliamentarians to suggest that rural and urban elements in the LCL could not coexist .

The new party was formally announced on 2 April after an LM convention . As the LM had already begun establishing an infrastructure while in the LCL , it was able to pick up momentum readily , presenting itself as a centrist moderate party , but it was never able to shed its reliance on Hall .

As Hall and Millhouse were both competent parliamentary performers , it was widely acknowledged in the media that they outperformed the LCL in providing an effective opposition . In one parliamentary division , with the entirety of the ALP and LCL on one side of the house and the LM members on the other , Millhouse took one of many opportunities to taunt Eastick and damage the LCL , labelling him " Dunstan lover ! " The South Australian media , which had earlier warmed to Premier Dunstan , then focused their attention on the LM and gave the fledgling party much @-@ needed publicity .

The primary instigator for the creation of the LM in 1972 had been based around the lack of electoral reform . The electoral system had been expected to continue to return rural LCL members in the Legislative Council , yet at the 1973 state election Labor had , through the mass registration of new voters for the council vote , managed to gain two seats , giving a 14 ? 6 split in the council . As half the council was elected at each election , Labor only had to retain their vote to gain an additional two seats at the 1975 state election , and a minor rise in it would see additional council seats fall to them . It was increasingly plausible that Labor would be able to gain a majority in the Legislative Council within a decade and then carry through their goal of abolishing it , and push through any electoral legislation it so wished .

To the LCL , this was a dangerous situation , and seeing a need to avoid it , they compromised : their position abruptly changed to being in favour of wholesale reform of the Legislative Council . When Dunstan put forward bills to reform it , the LCL relented , and Eastick convinced the LCL councillors to let them pass , conditional on amendments to the legislation . These were a minor change to the particular proportional system used to elect the councillors , and that it remained non compulsory to vote in the council . The new council would eventually have 22 members , with half elected each election from a multi @-@ member constituency covering the entirety of the state . Hall attacked the LCL for its sudden change in stance on reform , and managed to see the first LM policy become law with the lowering of the council suffrage age to 18 .

The reform legislation for the Legislative Council was not to take effect until the next election , and the death of LCL MLC Harold Kemp necessitated a by @-@ election for the council district of Southern on 11 August . Southern was an ultra @-@ safe rural LCL seat , and Labor declined to stand in the by @-@ election . It was contested by the LCL , the LM , a separate Country Party and the Australia Party . The three non @-@ LCL parties agreed on favourable preference deals in the hope of one of them displacing the LCL . The LM gained 29 per cent of the vote , and the LCL candidate won by a 4 per cent margin once preferences had been distributed .

At the start of 1974 , the LCL had undertaken some progressive reforms . They brought in a less conservative membership at the grassroots level , although the old guard was still prominent in parliamentary roles . They tried to broach the possibility of reintegrating the LM . Wilson and the new executive director of the LCL , John Vial were at the forefront , but the LM was optimistic about its future and refused unless the LCL changed leaders and allowed for explicitly separate urban and rural factions , which did not happen .

 In order to give the LM national exposure , Hall decided to stand for the Australian Senate at the 1974 federal election . Another objective was to allow Millhouse and Cameron to become more prominent at state level and dispel the established perception of the LM as a Hall party . The move was a risk as failure would have left the LM 's main drawcard out of the spotlight entirely until a state election which was not due for another two years , but Hall said the party had no future unless it could gain national stature . Another possible problem was that the media could have lost interest in the LM at a state level regardless of whether Hall won a senate position . The 1975 federal election followed a double dissolution (meaning that all Senate seats , rather than half , were up for election and thus a candidate needed only roughly half of the normal percentage to gain election ; Prime Minister Gough Whitlam was hoping to attain a majority in the Senate) , and all ten South Australian Senate seats were contested . The battle between the LCL and the LM was not seen as a large part of the national campaign , as South Australia was only a small part of the nation and most of the marginal seats that would determine the outcome were in other states . The LM gained 9 @.@ 9 per cent of the vote in the Senate and Hall was elected in his own right , without the assistance of preferences . In the House of Representatives , the LM gained 8 @.@ 4 per cent of the vote across the 12 South Australian seats , ranging from a high of 18 per cent in metropolitan Boothby to 1 @.@ 6 per cent in rural Angas . Fortunately for Hall and the LM , the senate election resulted in Labor and the Liberal @-@ Country Party coalition holding 29 seats each , and Hall was one of two crossbenchers who held the balance of power . The media made much of Hall 's position as a powerbroker at federal level , and the Liberals responded to him in a hostile manner ; for his part , Hall continued to persistently attack them as outmoded and lambasted them over the matter of electoral reform .

 Hall had abandoned his rural Yorke Peninsula @-@ based seat of Goyder to stand for the Senate , and at the 1974 Goyder state by @-@ election the LM were concerned about how their vote would stand without the assistance of its prominent incumbent and in an area outside their urban base ; the LCL had always won the seat easily . The campaign was robust , with strong accusations being traded as what was previously a safe seat became evenly poised and the subject of frantic electioneering . Surprisingly , as the LM was an urban movement , they polled 46 per cent of the vote , which saw David Boundy elected on the back of Country Party preferences with a two @-@ party preferred vote beyond 60 % . Despite most of its preferences flowing to the LM , the Country Party attacked the LM for perceived hypocrisy as they had run in a rural seat despite calling for the anti @-@ Labor forces to be separated into urban and rural divisions . This continued to be a source of tension , as the LM continued to campaign in rural seats , prompting the Country Party to threaten to deny them preferences . The LM triumph embarrassed the LCL , and Eastick survived a leadership challenge from Heini Becker in the aftermath . Over the next year , the LM focused on building the party machinery .

 At the 1975 state election the LM had ambitions of becoming the largest non @-@ Labor party . The campaign was focused primarily on accusations of mismanagement of the economy by Labor , with the LM seeking to positioning itself between the Liberals and Labor , as the centre @-@ ground of South Australian politics . Advertisements attacked the Liberal Party for being a conservative party , and Labor for its perceived socialism and poor economic record . At the time , inflation and unemployment was increasing . The LM slogan was " Vote LM ? You know it 's right " . Despite now being a federal senator , Hall was still synonymous with the LM at state level and he was central in the party 's advertising . The momentum was against Labor , and it was expected that the election could come down to whether Labor would retain their marginal urban seats . The LM proposed to

the Liberals to have a joint candidate in the marginal metropolitan seat of Gilles ? which required a two @-@ party preferred swing of 6 % ? to maximise their chances . The Liberals agreed but wanted the joint candidate to stand in Unley , and no agreement was reached .

Millhouse , now the State Parliamentary Leader of the LM , announced the LM 's policy for the 1975 state election at the Adelaide Town Hall on 2 July . He outlined the LM 's plans for economic rejuvenation : an end to compulsory unionism , budget and tax cuts , and measures to curb rising inflation and cost of living . Social policy included proposals for an early form of multiculturalism and promotion of ' cultural diversity ' and bilingualism . Energy policy appealed to a new generation of environmentalists , and promoted conservation and promotion of solar power . He slammed the proposed City of Monarto as a ' monument to socialist folly ' .

Contesting 45 of the 47 seats , the LM commanded almost a fifth (18 @.@ 2 per cent) of the vote in the lower house and the combined non @-@ Labor forces gained 50 @.@ 8 per cent of the two @-@ party @-@ preferred total . The LM was more effective in the city , recording 20 @.@ 2 % of the urban vote and 13 @.@ 4 % in rural areas . The party increased its parliamentary representation by one , with an additional member in the Legislative Council , and made several formerly safe Liberal seats marginal (including that of its leader , Eastick where they captured 20 @.@ 3 % in the rural district of Light) . The LM withstood a concerted push by the Liberals to oust Millhouse from Mitcham , and retained Goyder . They were also strong in those seats held by LM members who did not break away during the split but stayed with the LCL . However , preferences did not flow as the non @-@ Labor parties had wished , with up to 20 per cent of LM second @-@ preferences flowing to Labor instead of the Liberals or Country Party . With the new proportional system in the Legislative Council after the electoral reforms , the LM captured 18 @.@ 8 % of the vote to end with 2 of the 11 seats available . This was enough to allow Labor and the LM to join together and sidestep conservative Liberal opposition in the upper house . The Liberals , having suffered a 12 per cent reduction in their metropolitan primary vote , and gained their lowest result , quickly dumped Eastick , who was an unimpressive parliamentary performer and seen as an obstacle to reintegration with the LM , as leader . Tonkin became the new leader , the first Liberal leader from a metropolitan seat . The federal Liberal Party was rattled by the strength of the LM , and tried to reintegrate them . Hall was offered a high position in the Liberal senate ticket if he rejoined , and a position in cabinet if the Liberals defeated the federal Labor government . The LM regarded its first state electoral performance as impressive , and optimistic with their future , they flatly rejected the overtures . However , they had also gone into debt to fund their election campaign . Millhouse also found it harder to dominate the Liberals and seize the momentum in parliamentary debate when proceedings resumed ; he found Tonkin a much more formidable opponent than Eastick .

= = = Federal election 1975 = = =

The second consecutive double dissolution 1975 federal election in December was held owing to the dismissal of the Whitlam Government by Governor General John Kerr , and the subsequent appointment of federal Liberal leader Malcolm Fraser as Prime Minister . Prior to the dismissal , the Liberal Party had used its majority in the Australian Senate to block supply bills . Hall voted in favour of the supply bills being passed , and objected to the federal Liberals ' actions . Hall had been praised for his stance on supply , but the Liberals attacked him , accusing him of being " Labor in a purple disguise " and saying that Fraser needed a compliant senate " not hampered by independents sitting on the fence " . Hall countered by saying he was preferencing the Liberals and therefore not Labor @-@ aligned , and that he was a " dedicated anti @-@ socialist " .

Hall saw the double dissolution as an opportunity to capture senate seats in all the states across the nation , and the LM sought to create bases outside South Australia . On 18 November , a LM rally was held at Melbourne Town Hall to launch a branch in Victoria . A branch was formed in Queensland and Hall travelled to Western Australia to oversee the formation of a state branch . Generally , the LM 's attempts to spread its message failed owing to the dramatic and highly polarising effects of Whitlam 's dismissal and the constitutional crisis , which produced angry demonstrations around the country . Amid the tumult , the media was almost completely focused on

the two main parties , giving other groups almost no opportunities to capture the public imagination . The LM also found it difficult to establish a connection with the populace outside South Australia owing to its formation within a state @-@ specific backdrop .

Attempts were made to expand the appeal of the LM through secret merger talks with the Australia Party , who initiated the idea , but these collapsed . The campaign was also hampered by the departure of two LM candidates who relabelled themselves as the Independent Liberal Movement . The first to leave the LM , C. W. Henderson , was a member of the LM Management Committee who criticised Hall 's attempts to make spread the party nationally . He accused Hall of having " delusions of grandeur " , leading to his membership being suspended two days later . The next day , J. Henderson , the sixth member of the senate ticket , quit , saying he did not " want to be a puppet on a party string " . Groves and Henderson aggressively campaigned against the LM , although they were to receive only 0 @.@ 09 % of the senate vote themselves .

When the election was held , there was a 12 percent swing towards the Liberal Party in South Australia , or 7 percent on two party preferred . There was a large swing against Labor owing to the dissatisfaction with the Whitlam administration , but it generally went directly to the Liberal Party . Against this background , and with relatively little media attention paid to the LM and its cause , Despite gaining prominence for his stance on supply , Hall struggled to be re @-@ elected , gaining only 6 @.@ 5 per cent of the Senate vote and relying on preferences , ironically from Labor . In South Australia , Labor gained 41 per cent of the vote , and the Liberals 51 per cent . In the lower house , the LM managed only 6 @.@ 2 % across the 12 seats , again recording its best result in Boothby , with 10 @.@ 4 % . Hall 's hope for Australia @-@ wide support for the LM was dashed owing to the previous events , with the party gaining negligible results for their candidates in other states . The lower house candidates in the Australian Capital Territory registered around 3 % , but the senate candidates in Western Australia , New South Wales , Victoria and Queensland received less than 1 % . Hall 's opinion was that " the Liberal Movement was for its part in the contest happy to have survived . " Nevertheless , Hall was still adamant the LM 's future was as a standalone entity : " The LM is going to continue as an Australia @-@ wide party ... We shall have to go through the sickening process of having the Liberal party make overtures to us once again ... I would like to tell them right now that they will be wasting their breath . " Despite Hall 's defiance , the poor showing meant his senate term was only to last for three rather than six years , and he no longer had the balance of power and the resulting media exposure . This was a problem , as the party was largely centred around his personality .

= = Decline = =

Independent of the LM , the LCL had begun to change . It eventually supported Don Dunstan 's bills for electoral reform , both to the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council , and its internal structure was reorganised and modernised , particular with the arrival of Tonkin , its first urban leader . The LCL renamed itself the South Australian Division of the Liberal Party of Australia to bring itself into line with its federal counterpart . Thus , many of the reasons for the LM 's split had become null . Combined with the LM 's declining membership (one third of members had not renewed) and its large debt , it found itself in a precarious position . Negotiations in 1976 began with the aim for the LM to merge into the new Liberal Party , and news of the secret talks were leaked in April . Once the news became public , Millhouse stated his complete opposition : " I will not rejoin the Liberal Party ... I have meant what I said in the past and I do not see any change in the attitude of the Liberal Party to alter my view . " He said doing so would entail a surrender of honour and self @-@ respect , and described the LM as the only " genuine Liberal party " in the nation , boldly predicting that its agenda would become dominant in society . Millhouse 's stand was widely condemned by the media , who saw it as based on pride rather than pragmatism , and unhelpful for anti @-@ Labor politics . Hall , however , wanted to unite the non @-@ Labor forces , and acknowledged that " there is no prospect of maintaining LM electorate groups ... in simple terms , our alternatives are to swallow some little pride , and unite to fight Labor . " He said to do otherwise would be to " exist in splendid selfish isolation " , and said they could not survive as a relevant force

by holding Goyder and Mitcham and losing upper house seats owing to a dwindling vote . Hall said the LM 's reform agenda had been fulfilled , their finances were untenable and contended there was no ideological reason remaining for a split . This put him at increasing odds with Millhouse , who continued to describe the Liberals as " very conservative " . Some members of the Liberals were also wary of a merger , owing to the long @-@ standing antipathy between the two groups , and persistent criticism of them from the LM over the years .

In the meantime , the negotiations continued , with Hall prominent . During informal discussions following the 1975 state election , Millhouse had been offered the deputy leadership in a merged party , and Cameron a leading role in the upper house , but following the poor showing at the federal election and the deteriorating financial state of the LM , the offer was reduced and the posts that had been offered to Millhouse and Cameron were no longer available . However , Hall was still able to negotiate for the LM President and Treasurer to be given positions on a new executive . He also agreed to forego any further senate bids . An agreement was put in place to protect Boundy from being ousted at a pre @-@ selection of the new party , but this was broken at the next election . The LM was also given an equal voting share on pre @-@ selection committees for three urban lower house seats .

Labor was not pleased with the prospect of its opponents being reunited and potentially more effective , and Premier Dunstan mocked the opposition parties as a " circus " , while his deputy Des Corcoran predicted the new entity would not be able to last . The media continued to criticise Millhouse 's defiance as disruptive .

When the LM voted narrowly in May 1976 to rejoin the Liberals (222 to 211) , Millhouse immediately created the New LM , and became its only parliamentary representative . He tried to put an optimistic view on the matter , saying that the close @-@ run vote as an endorsement of his position , and the merger as an opportunity to start with a clean slate with no debt . The merger was finalised on 4 June when the Liberals ' State Council voted heavily in favour .

He was a prominent member of the Assembly , and a constant irritant to the Liberals , with whom he often sparred . When Don Chipp resigned from the federal Liberal Party , and stated his intention to create a centrist and progressive " third force " in Australian politics , Millhouse 's New LM responded . Chipp 's Australian Democrats was created , and negotiations began for a merger between the two parties . The New LM candidates at the 1977 state election stood under a joint New LM @-@ Australian Democrats ticket , winning 12 @.@ 3 per cent of the vote in the 12 electorates they contested , and Millhouse defeated the Liberal candidate in the lower house seat of Mitcham , which he would hold until 1982 . The merger was finalised on 3 October 1977 and the New LM was absorbed into the Democrats . Meanwhile , the interstate branches of the LM , which had been in existence for only six months , either disbanded in 1976 , or eventually evolved and merged into state components of the Democrats . The Western Australian division of the LM was the strongest interstate branch and renamed itself the Centre Line Party before becoming the state branch of the Democrats .

David Tonkin , an LM member before it split and became a separate party , had gained the Liberal party leadership in 1975 , succeeding Eastick . He worked swiftly to heal the internal party wounds , and to re @-@ establish the non @-@ Labor forces and provide an effective opposition . The 1977 state election saw a decline in Liberal support , but the party gained power after the abrupt resignation of Premier Dunstan , with an 11 per cent swing at 1979 state election , receiving 55 per cent of the two @-@ party @-@ preferred vote . The first Democrats MLC was also elected in 1979 on a first preference vote of 6 @.@ 5 per cent . In 1982 , however , the Labor Party again gained office and would rule for over a decade . The Democrats continued to attract support , and would solely hold the balance of power in the Legislative Council until the 1997 state election .

= = Parliamentarians = =

Steele Hall
Robin Millhouse
Martin Cameron

John Carnie

David Boundy

All went back in to the fold of the LCL successor , the South Australian Division of the Liberal Party of Australia , except for Millhouse who joined the New Liberal Movement (New LM) , one of the predecessor parties that would form the Australian Democrats .