

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Ballots and billions: academic releases first article on what went wrong for the Palmer United Party

University of Tasmania Lecturer Dr Glenn Kefford has co-authored the first academic investigation into the rise and fall of the Palmer United Party (PUP).

The article was published in the Australian Journal of Political Science this month and is based on interviews with current and former members, candidates and staffers from the Party from across the country.

Dr Kefford and co-author Duncan McDonnell from Griffith University's School of Government and International Relations argue the PUP was not designed to last; it was simply a vehicle for Clive Palmer to boost his personal and business interests.

"If we measure success by achieving the goals you had at the start, PUP has certainly been successful to some degree," Dr Kefford said.

"Palmer has seen off both Campbell Newman and Tony Abbott. The carbon and mining taxes have been abolished. Most notably, PUP won three Senate seats and the seat of Fairfax in its first election – the best debut election result in decades.

"It held the balance of power just when Palmer's enemies in the Liberal Party needed crossbench support."

However, Clive Palmer had no intention of building up the party structures to ensure its longevity, Dr Kefford said.

"In Palmer's world, members were valuable foot soldiers and names on ballot papers during election campaigns," he said.

"Beyond this, they were an unwelcome distraction. Grassroots involvement in anything resembling traditional party functions was not only lacking, it was actively discouraged."

The party's registration in Tasmania has now been cancelled by the Tasmanian Electoral Commission, and public notice was given by Commissioner Julian Type on February 10.

Future political parties could learn from the Palmer United Party's mistakes, Dr Kefford said.

"If the PUP had actually been managed like other parties created by extremely wealthy businessmen - Silvio Berlusconi being a notable example - the party would almost certainly have been much more professional and consequently done even better," he said.

Dr Glenn Kefford is a lecturer in Politics and International Relations. His research focuses on political parties, elections, political campaigning and political leadership.

Click here to read the full article: ["Ballots and Billions: Clive Palmer's Personal Party"](#)

Dr Kefford is available for interview today on 0403 174 939. Please note Dr Kefford is unavailable after 11am tomorrow, Friday, February 19.

Information released by:

University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office

Phone: 61 3 6226 2691

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au