

# Words of support

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## Phillip Adams

*Journalist*

I remember it as though it were yesterday — Don Chipp taking young Adams to lunch to tell me of his plans (hopes? dreams?) to start the Democrats. A wildly improbable, even insane, undertaking. But it happened — and it turned out to be eminently sensible. Though otherwise engaged (in a love-hate relationship with the AL bloody P), I was enthralled by the new party's impacts and achievements. Many of its too many leaders became friends — and on a good day, and the party had many good days, the Democrats were great for our democracy. Without them, Australian politics would have been even more mendacious and mediocre, more sleazy and cynical. That's why I'd like the Dems to rise again, refreshed from their sabbatical. You'll never keep the bastards honest — that's an impossible task — but you can dramatise their deceptions and duplicities.

## Alastair Nicholson

*Retired Family Court judge*

It is hard to overstate the importance of the Democrats since their foundation. They provided a real alternative to the two major parties during periods when there was a danger that the position of the individual would be subsumed by machine-like politics.

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The Democrats have also been instrumental in calling public attention to human rights issues, which the present government in particular has not only ignored but effectively abandoned in so many areas. During my term as Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, it was my practice to brief major parties on family law issues, and throughout I found the Democrats to be the most receptive to discussion on these important matters. It is to be hoped that they will continue to play their important role in the future.

## Helen Caldicott

*Anti-nuclear campaigner*

Ever since Don Chipp left the Liberal Party to form the Australian Democrats to 'keep the bastards honest', the Democrats have indeed played a vital role to do just that. The Democrats have been a leveller, a trustworthy party throwing the spanner between the two major parties, as they succumbed to political and corporate pressures while not necessarily representing the best interests for their constituents — the Australian people.

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On my issues, uranium mining and all things nuclear, they have been consistently opposed, and in this way have been totally reliable — a rare phenomenon these days in Australian politics. On behalf of the Australian people, I salute the Australian Democrats and wish them well for a long and fruitful life in the future.

## Anne Summers

*Author and journalist*

Thirty years ago a Liberal renegade, Don Chipp, fundamentally changed the political landscape of Australia with his decision to 'keep the bastards honest' by starting a new, third party. It was an inspired decision and one that was utterly in keeping with the political times, since it catered to a large and growing group of centrists who were alienated by the Liberal Party but not willing to embrace the ALP. The Australian Democrats are to be congratulated for this milestone and their accomplishments of the past three decades.