



New Book Uncovers The Emerging Divide In Australian Society

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A new book by Institute of Public Affairs Research Fellow, Matthew Lesh, exposes the new divide, which is driving Australia's political instability and public frustrations.

Democracy in a Divided Australia is the first empirically grounded investigation of Australia's political tribes, the capture of policymaking by a new elite and charting of a path forward in a divided nation.

The book explores how the left-right economic class division of the past are being superseded by a divide driven by identity, culture and lifestyle. Lesh calls this a divide between Inners and Outers.

"Inners are inner-city progressive cosmopolitans who value change, diversity, and self-actualisation. They are a minority but dominate the upper echelons of Australian society," said Mr Lesh.

"Outers are instinctive traditionalists who value stability, safety, and unity. They are politically,

culturally and economically marginalised in our graduate-dominated knowledge economic era.

“The major parties are struggling to simultaneously speak to two Australias which have separate languages, priorities and interests. The outcome is insincerity and opportunism, which drives further frustrations, instability and fracturing across the political spectrum – including voting for minor parties.”

Lesh argues that while the influence of Inners in many fields should be welcomed, it is worrying how they have created a society in their own image by defining people’s worth based on educational and professional achievements.

“The rise of the Inners, and their propensity towards paternalistic and technocratic policymaking, is undermining Australia’s egalitarian creed,” said Mr Lesh.

In the face of these challenges, *Democracy in a Divided Australia* concludes by proposing a liberal response that empowers communities, families and individuals.

What others have said about the book:

- “A brilliant book. If you want to understand why Australia is more polarised than ever, and what to do about it, read *Democracy in a Divided Australia*.” – **Janet Albrechtsen**, Columnist, *The Australian*
- “New political fault lines have opened up in our world, Brexit and Trump have shaken up politics as usual. Now Matthew Lesh surveys our terrain, the divide between those outside and those inside and the political earthquake to come.” – **Stan Grant**, ABC Chief Asia Correspondent
- “*Democracy in a Divided Australia* is a fascinating and persuasive work. Matthew Lesh uses a wide array of evidence to show how Australia’s new divides are challenging our democracy, unity and wellbeing. The issues identified are very real and troubling.” – The Hon Dr **David Kemp**, former federal minister and author

Review copies of *Democracy in a Divided Australia* are available.

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