The Future of Politics and Democracy

This is a difficult time, to put it mildly, for democracy, politics and politicians throughout the world. Participation in collective political organisations is in decline, as is interest at elections, where voting is not compulsory. These developments, often seen in terms of the rise of anti-politics, are associated with significant evidence of declining support for democracy in both established and emerging democracies. In this context, it may not be too strong to say that democracy is in crisis. It is certainly an issue that Political Science should take seriously. We want to encourage panels which deal with these issues from a variety of empirical and theoretical perspectives, addressing, among other topics:

- What are the main threats to Australian democracy?
- Is democracy in crisis?
- Can democratic innovations save democracy from crisis?
- What future do political parties have?
- How can we conceptualise ‘politics’ in an age of rapid change in the nature of political participation?
- What will social media play in the future of politics and democracy?
- What are the interactions between old and new forms of politics?
- Is the power of business an important constraint on the operation of democracy?

The Future of Political Science

Here, we have both broad and narrow concerns. First, we want to raise issues about the future of the discipline generally. This might involve looking at the relationship between Political Science and cognate disciplines, perhaps Economics, Sociology and History. It may also be interesting to consider the relationship between Political Science and Political Institutions, an issue in some university departments. Second, we want to explore what people working in particular sub-disciplines think are the important current, and likely future, developments in that field.

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