

Received from Ben Smith, July 31 and reproduced unredacted except for a named reference to an alleged source for the article.

*"This was not the case in the federal electorate of Flinders. Climate 200 was pulling strings well before the election campaign even began. However, their preferred candidate, Ben Smith, got 21.2% of the primary vote, and fell short on preferences to the Liberal Party's Zoe McKenzie."*

- Climate 200 were not pulling strings. They provided funding to assist I4F in advertising for a candidate whom they would select.

*"Worse was to come. Without any explanation to I4F members, the selection process was changed. Two frontrunners emerged – Ben Smith and Bronwyn Currie. Smith got the guernsey, despite members of I4F unanimously saying at a meeting in June that they preferred a female candidate."*

- "Worse was to come"? Is this a lesson in persuasive writing or quality investigative journalism? Did you put questions forward to the I4F Committee to corroborate this piece? I suggest this wasn't done and therefore only provides opinion of one person.
- Interesting that your source, XXXXXXXX, released confidential information after signing an NDA. Bronwyn Currie doesn't live in this electorate, and is an organiser in another political party, which is likely why she wasn't selected.

*"Five people from outside the Flinders electorate were employed to run Smith's campaign, including a Climate 200 employee."*

- At no time did I hire a Climate 200 employee. It took a number of months to hire all my staff, and of course I would select people with experience in successful campaigns, something no Independent had done on the MP.

*"Almost overnight, Smith's face appeared everywhere"*

- This is how campaigns work. One day they don't exist, then they launch, then the candidate is everywhere.

*"Arguably, the biggest misstep by the Smith campaign brain trust was hiding his strong connection to a breakaway branch of the Mormon church. In fact, he was an ordained minister in the Community of Christ, which had changed its name in 2001 from the Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church is the second-largest of the Latter-day Saints movement."*

- Good to see you got as far as Wikipedia for this bit of "research". At no time did I hide my connection with Community of Christ. It was in my first press release. It was on my campaign website. It is clearly in my work history on LinkedIn.

*"Campaign bosses claimed that [media reports \(\\$\)](#) of Smith's Community of Christ membership were "misinformation". Campaign workers at pre-poll places and on election day, asked about Smith's Community of Christ connection, told voters it was "in his past". This does not appear to be true given recent Facebook posts [here](#) and [here](#)."*

- At no time did any of my team suggest my membership of Community of Christ was misinformation. What was misinformation was the use of the term 'Mormon' and any reference to the LDS church - clearly misidentifying my faith. Community of Christ is completely separate from the LDS church. The claim (included in your own socials post erroneously) has the effect of misinforming the electorate about important principles I have regarding the separation of church and state, inclusion of the LGBTQI+ community, the importance of women in leadership, and a woman's rights to choose - particularly around abortion. All of those principles are vastly different to the position held by the LDS church.
- Those linked posts are re-posts of poetry I wrote over a decade ago. You would have known that if you asked me when I wrote them and they were first published.

*"A few weeks before pre-poll began, all digital evidence of Smith's ministry with the Community of Christ was deleted from the Community of Christ website. This caused people to question Smith's integrity."*

- I have zero control over what Community of Christ does with its website. I question the plural use of 'people' who questioned my integrity. Not once was I asked about this during the campaign.

*"Throughout the five-month election campaign, Smith's top people talked up his chances of success, a not unreasonable tactic in this modern era of spin, but many of the claims were fantastic. For example, a WhatsApp message sent to volunteers stated that Smith was on track to win on first preference votes."*

- At no point did we make this assertion (that we would win on first preferences). The reference to 'votes needed' was always about the flow of all votes, including preferences. Published polling always cited 2CP polling.

*"It was baloney. The full distribution of preferences showed he needed an extra 5,258 from almost 115,000 formal votes to "make history"."*

- This is, of course, using actual votes cast post-election to suggest we somehow were lying about our prospects prior to this time. Every team before

a match says 'we can win this' and at half time says 'we're in this, only x points behind' and the results of the match are then determined afterwards.

*"In the wash-up, Smith's Climate 200-driven campaign has attracted vigorous criticism. A grassroots movement became a top-down campaign that repeated mistakes made by both major and minor parties in the modern era."*

- I challenge you to cite one single source of 'vigorous criticism'. Very dishonest. I'd suggest holding the Liberal Party to their lowest primary vote since WWII would have not been predicted by anyone, nor a doubling of the primary vote for the community independent.
- Campaigns are not grassroots movements, and to suggest a grassroots movement can't have a leadership structure is to be ill-informed. This grassroots movement grew from 50 people to over 700 volunteers. I'd suggest if it were as bad as you claim it was, those people would not have joined.

*"What happened to the grassroots campaign? The kitchen table conversations? Integrity? Financial transparency? Of the 35 candidates listed by Climate 200 as beneficiaries of its fundraising, 19 disclosed their donations, with Smith among those who didn't."*

- The grassroots campaign informed the entire base and focus of the campaign. The KTC's informed that focus. It has grown up and moved on from previous campaigns.

Again, I suggest this piece is ill-informed and provides nothing but a one-sided perspective from one person.

Ben.