

# Senator Rachel Siewert

## Australian Greens Senator for Western Australia

After half a lifetime at the forefront of the environmental and social justice movements, Rachel Siewert is ready to give voice to the concerns of Australians demanding a new social, economic and environmental agenda.

In the face of the ever increasing sameness of the major parties' political agenda, Rachel sees the Greens as the one ray of hope on the Australian political landscape.

Drawing on her 16 years as coordinator of the Conservation Council of WA, a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and a lifetime of grassroots campaigning Rachel is well prepared to take on major issues at a federal level.

Combining localised knowledge with a global outlook, Rachel has unparalleled experience in tackling issues of environmentally sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and natural resource management in Australia.

In addition to her extensive environmental background, Rachel has campaigned hard on key social justice issues including fair treatment of Asylum Seekers and Indigenous Australians, opposition to the Iraq war and the US free trade agreement.

Rachel has served her political apprenticeship as the Co-Convenor of the Greens (WA) between 2002 and 2004, working closely with WA's State Upper House Greens MPs and taking an active role in a variety of prominent NGOs.

She is a highly skilled strategist and politically savvy tactician who is committed to the Green ideals of peace and nonviolence, participatory democracy, ecological sustainability, and social justice.

## Background

Rachel (43) was born in Sydney, moving to Perth with her family when she was thirteen.

She completed her secondary education at Balcatta Senior High School then studied Agricultural Science at the University of Western Australia, graduating in 1984.

Her first job out of University was as a field trial technician with the Department of Agriculture in Jerramungup in the south coast region of WA. She then moved on to become a Research Officer in salinity and soil conservation at the same office.

Rachel moved back to Perth to take up the position of Coordinator for the Conservation Council of WA – a position she held for the next sixteen years.

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During her time with the Conservation Council, Rachel became one of the leading advocates for conservation in Western Australia. She represented community conservation interests at the local, regional, state, national and international level. Her campaigns included:

- declaration of the Shark Bay World Heritage Area,
- declaration of the Lesueur National Park and prevention of coal mining in the area,
- legislation on clearing of native vegetation,
- recognition of the salinity problem in WA,
- protection of Perth's wetlands,
- air pollution in Perth,
- the Save Ningaloo campaign,
- ... and many more.

Although Rachel has worked on most conservation issues in WA, she has focused her efforts particularly on natural resource management, clearing of native vegetation, loss of biodiversity, salinity, rangelands/pastoralism and marine matters. She represented conservation interests on the Natural Resource Management Council and a number of its sub-committees, including chairing the Salinity Investment Framework Working Group and various funding committees.

In 2001 Rachel was pre-selected as the lead senate candidate for the Greens (WA) and took long service leave to focus full time on her campaign. After a narrow defeat, she resumed her role with the Conservation Council before resigning to work on the 2004 election campaign in January 2004.

In addition to this extensive environmental background, Rachel has campaigned on social justice and global issues - including fair treatment of Asylum Seekers, opposition to the Iraq war and US free trade agreements.

Rachel's career has involved analysing and handling complex issues, managing an enormous workload and working with the highest levels of government and industry. She has extensive experience in negotiating with a wide range of stakeholders, and running a growing organisation. She has strong teamwork and advocacy skills, and a demonstrated gift for public speaking and strategic planning.

Rachel has successfully juggled this incredible workload with the demands of raising her son Aaron, who is now 15 and much taller than she is.

Rachel wants to see a more just, equitable and greener society. She believes her skills and experience enable her to contribute to this by supporting community activism through the political system. She is committed to a new social, environmental and economic agenda and that she will pursue throughout her term in the Senate.

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