

David Widdup the Camp Candidate

Margaret Jones commenting on the elections, in "The National Times", Dec 11-16, 1972 said, "Have we ever before had a campaign with a CAMP candidate, and how refreshing that we could!" This too, was perhaps a sign that it was time.

Probably the significant result of the campaign was the acceptance by public and media. CAMP was written up as a "micro-party" or a "single-issue campaign" rather than in a series of kinky candidates. David Widdup's advertising campaign which relied in part on homosexual humour captured the imagination of many and probably alienated few apart from his immediate family. The "Sydney Morning Herald" which until recently was loath to mention CAMP was generous in its coverage and twice reported that David "recalled with pride his winning of the R.S.L. prize for all-round merit". In most reportage our candidate's bourgeois background was stressed; his M.Sc. and a thesis on women in education; emphasising the seriousness of the campaign. The "Bulletin" even wrote of CAMP's "attractive candidate".

The only snag was "The Aeroplane Press", a Lowe suburban newspaper which refused to take an advertisement for our candidate. An identical advertisement was accepted by the "Western Suburbs Courier" an opposition local newspaper.

The rejection by "The Aeroplane Press" was based on morality. Mr. Bright, who is second in charge to the Managing-Director objected to the fact that David is homosexual. "The Aeroplane Press" is owned by "Cumberland News" which in turn is owned by Rupert Murdoch. The policy to reject the advertisement out of hand is not typical of Murdoch papers. Mr. Bright's action is indicative of a personal prejudice that is still allowed to exert an influence in the backwaters of our society. Fortunately, David Widdup received the Women's Electoral Lobby recommendation for the electorate and "The Aeroplane Press" was obliged to give David a great deal of free coverage.

There was little adverse reaction on election day. Only a dozen or so of the 63,000 electors refused our "How-to-Vote" cards. Mr. McMahon (the successful candidate and sitting member) also visited each of the polling booths with his wife, Sonia. One of our CAMP workers started to hand Sonia a How-to-Vote and apologised with "I'm sorry, you don't live in the electorate". Sonia replied that she didn't vote. Most people seemed familiar with our candidate's name and the issues involved. There seemed to be a fairly easy acceptance of it all. How much of this was due to our publicity and how much to "Number 96" is difficult to gauge.

Although David Widdup's primary vote was not large, he polled significantly better than the independents standing in Lowe. As Don Aitken stated in "National Times" Dec. 11-16, this was a bad time for single-issue campaigns, if only because of the strong likelihood of a Labor victory, which made the election a party election, "In general the single-issue people ought not to be too disheartened. Their poor performance does not necessarily reflect a low level of support for their policy within the electorate, so much as a refusal on the part of the great majority to regard individual issues as relevant to the outcome of the election".

Gordon Barton commenting on the votes for the Australia party said that it had gained credibility for the party within the electorate. CAMP can boast the same of its campaign. As a political party we have arrived and everything is set for forthcoming State elections.

In the final count 218 people voted for David. His preferences were distributed as follows:

A.P.	62
A.L.P.	59
D.O.G.S.	50
LIB	22
Independents	18
D.L.P.	7



Left and Above: David Widdup
CAMPaigning at an election booth.