

Letters

Campus Liberals locked in a bitter past, with no ideas for the future

FIRST WORD

It seems there is little hope for the NSW Liberals. Not only does their executive exist in an ingrained ultra-conservative branch-stacking culture, but these same ideologies are entrenched within the young faithful. My beliefs in individualism and free enterprise recently led me to join the Sydney University Liberal Club. About five minutes into my first meeting I

began to feel uneasy, and at the halfway point was positively disenchanted.

The prevailing attitude in the room was retrospective and close-minded. Instead of discussing current and future policy and engaging in debate, as one might hope, they spent the meeting dwelling on the past.

The first motion passed was "that the Sydney University Liberal Club recognises the Howard legacy and reaffirm his principles for the future". It was then amended to include a note

that the party "shall not go soft". At this point derisive opinions of Brendan Nelson and Malcolm Turnbull were muttered by some members.

After a short discussion dominated by an opinionated few, another motion was passed: "That the Sydney University Liberal Club regrets the Liberal Party apologising to the 'stolen generation'."

What I found to be most disturbing was not the mere conservatism, but the hardline bitterness with which it was conveyed. Arrogant and sarcastic

jokes were made at the expense of anyone with a different point of view. As some motions were passed one particularly vocal member would assume a comical voice and garner laughs by feigning disagreement, rendering it impossible to raise serious debate or voice a genuine disparate opinion.

It is apparent that these young party faithful are much more interested in the politics than in the people of Australia.

Although the club is officially a

separate organisation to the Young Liberals, most of its members belong to branches of the Young Liberals and some hold executive positions in those branches.

I believe in a forward-thinking nation that is courageous enough to acknowledge the mistakes of the past and a government that is mature enough to genuinely debate policy.

There doesn't seem to be a political party in NSW for me.
Anna Kunz Newtown