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Greens Co-Founder Condemns Party's 'Cult-Like' Shift and Harsh Punishment

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Drew Hutton, co–founder of the Australian Greens, has accused the party of becoming an “authoritarian cult” that punishes dissent, following his expulsion over a free speech dispute.

Hutton, 78, was a founding member of the Queensland Greens in 1990 and later helped establish the national Australian Greens in 1991. He was

expelled by the Queensland Greens' Constitution and Arbitration Committee in May 2025 after refusing to delete comments posted by others on a 2022 Facebook post. While his own post expressed support for both trans rights and women's rights, some responses from others were considered transphobic by the party.

Although an internal investigation found that Hutton himself had not made transphobic remarks, he was held accountable for failing to remove the offending comments. He declined to comply with the directive and was suspended in July 2023, with the expulsion later confirmed by a vote at the Queensland state council in July 2025.

Hutton has said the party's handling of his case reflects a broader culture of intolerance toward dissent, particularly on matters relating to gender. He claims that over 40 members, primarily women and conservationists, have been expelled or pressured to leave over similar disagreements. He argues that the party's complaints system is being used to silence differing views and that this has shifted the Greens away from their core environmental mission.

The decision to expel Hutton was defended by party officials, who stated that upholding trans rights is a fundamental principle and that the party does not tolerate behaviour perceived as discriminatory. However, the move drew criticism from former Greens leaders, including Bob Brown and Christine Milne, who expressed concern over a lack of space for internal debate.

The case has brought attention to ongoing tensions within the party, as traditional environmentalists increasingly clash with younger, more socially progressive members. Former party figures have noted a

tendency towards self-censorship, with members hesitant to express divergent views for fear of disciplinary action.

Hutton is considering legal options to challenge his expulsion. He has warned that unless the party can better balance progressive values with open internal dialogue, it risks further alienating its traditional base and undermining its relevance in national politics.