

Beer's an offer you can't refuse

JACK HOUGHTON

FACING two elections with a dwindling membership base, the Liberal Party is considering enticing new members with sign-on bonuses — cut-price deals on premium beer and chocolates.

NSW Liberal officials are also willing to throw in hefty discounts on a new pair of RM Williams boots, presumably for those who might be tempted to join the National Party.

Discounts on Coopers beer

Alex Dore, chair of the membership working group. He said party members could be offered a discounted or free subscription to publications of interest, such as *The Spectator Australia* or *IPA Review*.

“Discount partnerships could be pursued with companies like RM Williams, Haigh’s Chocolate, and Coopers. This would elevate the ‘selling point’ of membership and enable small businesses in the Party to promote their products.”

and Haigh's Chocolates are part of the radical marketing offering floated to boost member numbers ahead of state and federal elections next year.

The proposal, published this week in a report by the party's State Executive, mirrors a push by the UK Conservative Party to give a Nando's discount card to new members — an idea that was widely ridiculed.

The report, titled *The Future of Membership*, obtained by *The Daily Telegraph*, said high membership fees, particularly in traditionally non-Liberal suburbs, deterred voters from joining the party, a mission that was now crucial with the rise of new conservative parties.

"Given the increasing number of right-of-centre political parties now competing for members, a strong value proposition and competitive membership pricing are more important than ever," wrote

Liberal members pay \$100 for 15 months membership.

At the 2016 federal election, there were not enough Liberal volunteers to man polling booths and fundraising was so dire that former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull donated \$1.75 million of his own money to top up the coffers the campaign's final week.

At a time when the Labor Party has employed advanced social media tactics to galvanise younger voters, the Liberal Party's report, suggests social media and media training for members, as part of the strategy to drive growth.

The working group also suggests offering free or half-price membership for voters in regional and rural areas, where membership has been bleeding to other parties. It says the Liberals should consider abolishing or discounting attendance charges at state councils to encourage new members.