

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC FUNDING OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Organisation: Shire Wide Action Group
Name: Ms Tina Petroff
Position: President
Date Received: 19/01/2010

Partially Confidential



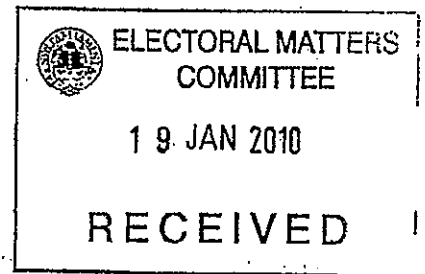
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SHIRE WIDE ACTION GROUP

Party Agent: Stan Petroff

17th January 2010

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney. NSW. 2000



To the Chair

Mr Robert Furolo

Dear Mr Furolo,

Re: Parliamentary Committee Enquiry

Inquiry into public funding of election campaigns

Thankyou for allowing SWAG the opportunity to comment on election funding issues. SWAG's Executive Committee agree with the recommendation (1) especially since we are aware that individuals had provided substantial donations to [CANDIDATE] to assist [THEM] at the ***

Council elections, providing [THEM] with a huge amount of large photographic posters, advertising material and advertisements in local papers, which then allowed [CANDIDATE] to submit a 'nil' expenditure (copy attached).

This is a hidden expenditure and is a distinct advantage over other Groups and Candidates who followed the new disclosure laws, despite it only being released in full just week's before nominations were due.

SWAG, for instance, is a registered party, but we do not take yearly subscriptions from our Members. Members contribute 'in kind' support eg. polling booth duty and organizing campaign support, benefit nights etc. Our only focus is to provide better services, infrastructure and facilities to our local area to support our constituents, as our Constitution attests to. Funding for Local Council campaigns is donated solely from within our Group. Even though it usually doesn't exceed \$2,500 in expenditure and donations, we have to bear the burden of up to \$1,500 in Auditors fees to double check our calculations. 6 months later we now have to have our Auditors audit their own charges, and whether we have an Election or not, we are forced to have our 'nil' donations and expenditure disclosures audited every 6 months.

Registered Groups have to fill out extensive annual reports to maintain our registration, far more accountability than an unregistered group or candidate has to endure, so why are registered groups singled out for excessive, expensive auditing criteria ?

As for Item (d), Party Agents are required to collect any donations and bank it in our SWAG/Group bank accounts, which makes donations and expenditure easier to follow, and would become harder to account for if donations were given directly to individuals within

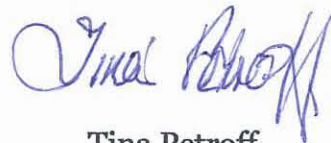
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our group. If individuals would like funding to come directly to their individual campaigns, then they should run on their own initiative, and not be part of a team/group.

Campaigning is a costly endeavour, when all we want is to support our local communities and constituents. Any unnecessary expenditure such as 6 monthly auditing only serves to assist government departments and Auditors in general, not the people it was intended for.

N.B. A hard copy of this letter will be forwarded by mail for your reference.

Yours Sincerely,



Tina Petroff
President/SWAG

On behalf of Shire Wide Action Group Members

This letter was emailed 18/1/10.