

**Submission  
No 25**

## **ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2019 NSW STATE ELECTION**

**Organisation:** The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party NSW

**Date Received:** 25 October 2019

# SHOOTERS FISHERS and FARMERS



## Submission to the Inquiry into the Administration of the 2019 NSW State Election and Related Matters

The Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party would firstly like to thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Administration of the 2019 NSW State Election and Related Matters.

We also recognise the hard work and dedication of all NSW Electoral Commission staff who were readily accessible and easy to work with throughout the election.

The matters we raise for the inquiry to consider:

- Timing of ballot draw and registration of electoral material with the NSW Electoral Commission
- Dis-endorsement of candidates
- Party membership subscriptions
- Timing of Campaign funding (Federal model)
- Timing of Administrative funding to be given in advance (Victorian model)
- Ban on donors in certain industries
- Levels of administrative funding

### 1. Timing of ballot draw and registration of electoral material with the NSW Electoral Commission

The Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party cannot understand why, given the fixed nature of NSW Elections, the ballot draw is only held two weeks before Election Day. This causes parties to rush the design, printing and distribution of their How To Vote (HTV) material.

Notwithstanding the fact that larger parties have more material to print, they can also utilise local printers and distribution networks to ensure timely delivery of material. Minor parties are far more likely to use one printer and then distribute material from a central location.

In our own experience, we relied heavily on volunteers to personally deliver material across the State. We cannot pool our resources together like the major parties do in this sense.

We call for the Ballot Draw and registration of Electoral Material to occur no fewer than twenty-one (21) days before a State Election.

### 2. Dis-endorsement of candidates

The Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party argue that the process for removing individuals as endorsed candidates needs review. On a few occasions, candidates resigned membership of the Party and/or were dis-endorsed. In these circumstances, we made the NSW Electoral Commission

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aware of the candidate resignation/dis-endorsement as soon as possible, almost immediately. Yet, the "candidate" continued to be sent disclosure material and obligations well after this. The NSW Electoral Commission would only remove the member as a candidate on the candidate advising. The NSW Electoral Commission insisted and threatened our Party with fines until disclosures documents were lodged for a candidate that was an independent from the time of resignation from the Party.

We submit that the NSW Electoral Commission should affect a candidate dis-endorsement, including discharging all disclosure requirements following this, immediately upon being notified by the Party Registered Officer or Deputy Registered Officer from the date of resignation/dis-endorsement.

### 3. Party membership subscriptions

While this may fall outside the inquiry terms of reference, the Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party believe it is important to raise nonetheless.

We feel that the current requirement that all membership subscriptions must not be used in an Election Campaign is a restriction on the rights of our members to have their generous contribution of membership fees used in the way that best supports the Party.

Our members expect that their annual subscription should be available to be used in the promotion of the Party during election periods, however the current restriction on placing membership subscriptions into our Campaign Fund means this is not possible.

The Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party strongly believe that all membership subscriptions should be available to be used at the discretion of the Party during an Election Campaign, in so far as they comply with all NSW Electoral Commission guidelines.

### 4. Timing of Campaign Funding

Under the current Act claims by candidates and Party's for campaign funding for the recent State general election had to be made by 2 September. The claim can only be made once. Claims were not submitted until close to the deadline of 2 September in order candidates and Party ensure they capture all claimable expenditure possible. This resulted in the NSW Electoral Commission having to process and make payments within the time period of 14 days as required.

A better option would be to follow the current Federal legislation of lodging and paying an interim claim then a final claim. This would spread the workload and cashflow for campaign funding.

### 5. Timing of administration funding.

From 1 July 2018 the timing of administration funding was changed. Under the application of previous legislation Party's would receive the bulk of funding by the fourth quarter. Under the new

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legislation funding became quarterly half in advance and half in arrears resulting in a delay in cashflow compared to the previous legislation.

At the same time Victoria introduced administration funding that is paid for the year at the start of the year and acquitted after the year. Any unspent amounts are refunded. This is simpler to administer and fairer for minor parties lacking working capital. Some major NSW party's have working capital sufficient to only claim funding annually while minor Party's don't.

## 6. Ban on donations by property developers, liquor and gaming industry

Our position on bans on participants in certain industries is they are not needed when there are donation caps in place. Such bans are discriminatory and undemocratic. The donation caps in place prevent any particular individual or entity from exerting influence due to the small size of the caps. In regional NSW it prevents fundamental parts of the community from participation in the political process based on city issues.

## 7. Levels of administration funding

We have found with continued legislation change that firstly changes requirements for existing record keeping and additional requirements continue to put large demands on small organisations like political parties. The systems needed as we have grown are not required in private enterprise or the not for profit sector.

NSW requirements are the most onerous and complex in Australia. To comply with legislation, we need tailored IT systems that are not purchased off the shelf. We have gone through multiple IT system developments with no providers familiar with the distinct requirements of NSW. This has been costly in terms of Party management time but also in terms of the extent of expenditure.

Options to address this is compliant software being provided for NSW Parties or funding enough to obtain software required.

  
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**Filip Despotoski**  
State Director  
Deputy Registered Officer

  
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**Grant Layland**  
Treasurer  
Registered Officer

