

**Submission
No 161**

INQUIRY INTO ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Organisation:

Name: Dr Michael F Harris

Telephone:

Date received: 27/02/2008

[REDACTED]

27th February 2008

Select Committee on Electoral and Political Party Funding
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Chair,

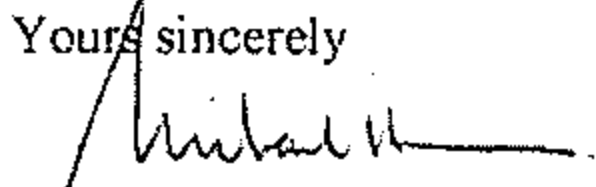
I am very concerned that donations to political parties and to candidates in political elections are subjecting political parties and politicians in Australia to inappropriate pressures and probably corrupting decisions.

I support the following 10 points. I believe they are based on a submission from ASH (Action on Smoking and Health Australia).

I ask for the following to be recommended by the inquiry and to be implemented by federal, state and local governments:

1. Measures to increase transparency in the source of donations, including:
 - (a) prompt and transparent reports at least quarterly and in the month before an election, to a public website maintained by the Election Funding Authority;
 - (b) requirements for party committees or other fundraising bodies to state the sources of their donations; and
 - (c) a requirement that all funding disclosures must be accompanied by a report from an accredited auditor.
2. Limits on donations; no more than \$1,000 per year per donor.
3. Either a total ban on political donations from organisations, including corporations and trade unions; and a total ban on donations from foreign or trans-national entities.
4. Caps on total electoral spending by all parties and candidates; and tighter controls over "independent" campaign spending by the supporters of political parties and candidates.
5. An independent committee to monitor all government advertising campaigns and ensure that public funds so spent are for the purposes of public education, not political gain.
6. In local government, introduction of public funding, conditional on compliance with caps on private funding and transparent disclosure prior to elections.
7. Increased penalties for breaching political funding laws.
8. Adequate funding to the EFA to enforce these laws.
9. Political donations no longer tax deductible - as proposed by the Assistant Federal Treasurer.
10. NSW Parliament to recommend to the Federal Government that a National Summit be convened to develop a national strategy to fundamentally reform - at federal, state/territory and local government levels - legislation in this area; measures 1-9 above should form the basis of the NSW position at the national level. This Summit should include not just politicians but a wide range of legal experts, academics and community representatives; it should be allowed sufficient time for proper consideration and comprehensive debate of all reform options.

Yours sincerely


Dr Michael F Harris, FRACP