

**Submission
No 92**

INQUIRY INTO ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

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BCV Putting Residents First

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Reverend Fred Nile MLC
Chair
Select Committee on Electoral and Political Party Funding
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY. 2000

Dear Reverend Nile,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **Electoral and Political Party Funding**. Burwood Community Voice (BCV) is a local political party in the suburb of Burwood. Presently Burwood Community Voice has one representative on Burwood Council.

The principle concern for BCV is that donations or funding to political parties at State and Local level should be transparent and therefore not create a corruption risk.

1. Political Donations – Amounts

Political donations should be capped for all contributions per year. These limits should be accompanied by an increase in public funding.

2. Political Donations – Sources:

There should be no political donations from entities other than individuals and these should be capped. The donation should be clearly directed and not be used for other purposes such as intra party transfer.

There is a need to circumvent loans, in kind donations, income from 'held assets' and other similar procedures.

3. Political Donations – Disclosure:

Donations, as a term needs to be defined. Donations are not always monetary; it can be disguised as a personal loan to a candidate, exorbitant membership fees of the party, provision of services to help candidate(s), loan of staff and equipment.

All donations are to be disclosed.

There is a need to identify loopholes which permit large donations being concealed in smaller amounts. In identifying this loophole, it is imperative to prevent it from occurring.

The public must be informed prior to the elections the list of party donors.

The public information available could include regular disclosures of donations.

4. Election Expenditure – Amounts

The advantage of imposing limits of expenditure on election campaigns:-

- it focuses on candidates and their policies
- the electorate is not bombarded with campaign material
- there is less disparity between the political parties/individual candidates
- enhances democracy

5. Election Expenditure - Disclosure

Disclosures by the election funding authority should be readily accessible.

All expenditure incurred relating to the election campaign must be disclosed, however how does the electoral commission know if the amount shown as spent by a candidate(s) on a campaign is accurate.

6. Local Government and State Government – Disclosures of Funding

There is a link between local and state government. The Minister for Planning may provide decisions on local issues.

A local government councillor can also be a member of a political party and consequently donations to the main party can influence the decision at local level.

Development applications and rezoning proposals at local and state level requires declaration of any political donations made to the minister, his or her political party or campaign.

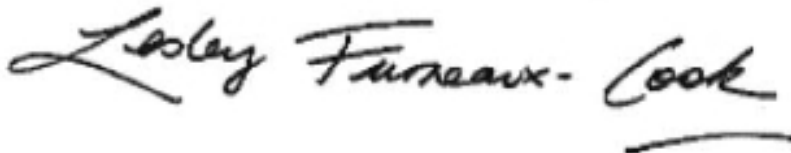
Councillors refrain from discussing and voting on matters affecting the campaign donor or political party donor.

7. Public Funding

Public funding can be misused in elections from indirect sources such as government advertising. Presently several weeks prior to the elections publicly funded literature increases.

Direct public funding generally at current levels is inadequate.

Yours sincerely,



Lesley Furneaux-Cook
Chair Burwood Community Voice.