

**Submission
No 159**

INQUIRY INTO ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

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SUBMISSION TO THE POLITICAL DONATIONS INQUIRY

The only way to halt undue influence by powerful lobby groups in politics is to ban donations from corporations, unions and organizations to parties and candidates. Such a ban should encompass both state and Commonwealth politics.

Canada's Federal Accountability Act 2006 and changes to the Canada Elections Act do just that, and individual persons' contributions to parties and candidates are limited to \$1,000 per year. The Canadian legislation came into force in 2007. (see www.elections.ca/)

The culture of large and influential political donations and payoffs that has developed in Australia in recent years is an invitation to corruption, and it needs to be changed swiftly. A higher level of government funding to permit a sensible level and length of campaigning should aim to put an end to saturation spending over long periods. Some PR workers might have to retrain.

In a new approach to campaigning, candidates might be encouraged to hold public meetings where they will actually talk to voters about policies instead of just wandering around shopping malls with a smile/hello and extensive boring media coverage.

We don't need to feel sorry for political parties losing donations - they have already discovered that putting information on the internet is cheap. That seems to be the way for the 21st century.

"The purchase of influence or the appearance of the purchase of influence is a threat to democracy because it negates the value of the votes of electors and fosters disillusion and distrust of the political system." (A Women's Charter for Political Reform 2001, p.17)