

**Submission
No 133**

INQUIRY INTO ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Organisation:

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Date received: 18/02/2008

I am mindful that local elections will be held later this year and am hopeful that the Inquiry's recommendations will be released before hand. My submission to this Inquiry is to seek greater transparency.

I speak from the local level because it is here where people feel the effects of political donations most. The following are two stories that illustrate my point.

On 24 April 2007, Randwick Council resolved on two particular issues:

- i. the destruction of sections of Coogee's sandstone wall as part of a proposal to build a block of units and underground carpark. One councillor declared a pecuniary interest in this matter and did not participate in the discussion or voting process. Another councillor declared a non-pecuniary interest and voted in favour of the development (but did not contribute to the discussion). It was subsequently revealed in the local newspaper that the developer had donated to their political party. The news article has not been refuted.
- ii. the installation of flood lights on a designated Neighbourhood Park. The Plan of Management covering Bardon Park (Coogee) prohibits organised sports and prohibits the installation of flood lights on the open space. In the lead up to debate, Councillors were advised the land was "owned" by Council (i.e. fee-simple) whereas Bardon Park is Crown Land (under the care, control and management of Council). One Councillor declared a non-pecuniary interest being an associate of the football club wishing to use the grounds; he voted in favour but did not participate in the discussion. The location of Bardon Park is 500 metres from a hotel that has donated to the political party of this councillor, a hotel that will most likely benefit from increased trade associated with organised sports activity.