

**Submission
No 69**

INQUIRY INTO ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Organisation:

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Date received: 11/02/2008

P. J. Marshall

11th February 2008

The Director
Select Committee on Electoral and Political Party Funding
Legislative Council
Parliament House
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Thank you for this opportunity to submit my comments on electoral funding to the public inquiry. I believe that the system currently in use is so seriously flawed that only comprehensive reforms will resolve the many complex issues and loopholes that have been shown to affect the electoral process in NSW.

My observations of the 2004 Local Government election in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA demonstrate that it is possible for the current system to be utterly manipulated by unscrupulous people with vested interests. I know this is not the only LGA where such manipulations occurred.

This opportunity to radically simplify the process by prohibiting private political donations outright should be seized by your committee and welcomed by the people of NSW.

- I support public funding to provide sufficient funds for political parties and candidates to be able to participate fairly and effectively in elections. Alongside this public funding I believe that private political donations should be banned outright, with a strict and sensible limit placed on expenditure for election purposes.
- The competition between parties and candidates to outspend each other and secure more publicity through ever increasing campaign funds must be halted. It is not in the interests of true democracy that votes can be 'bought' by the candidate or party with the biggest advertising budget.
- Radio, TV and other non- print media advertising must be limited and controlled so all have fair access. Use of the internet must also be subject to controls to ensure equity to all candidates.
- All electoral expenditure must be disclosed compulsorily without loopholes such as presently exist.
- Public funding should apply to elections at both local and state levels of government, (as well as federal, in my opinion) with candidates being required to lodge a reasonable bond to demonstrate their sincerity. This bond should be refunded to all candidates who secure a set percentage of primary votes, although the 4% set currently may be too high.
- Funding in itself should not be dependent on gaining an unattainable percentage of the vote, but it must be made impossible for a candidate to profit simply by standing for election.

- Strict guidelines should apply to use of funds for pre-election advertising by sitting members.
- The Federal government needs to be co-operative and supportive of any reforms in NSW.
- There should be increased funding for public education about electoral matters and this should be a focal point in school studies in senior years. It should be organised by the Department of Education and not be an opportunity for party propaganda to be spoonfed to young people.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours sincerely

(Mrs) Penny Marshall