

**Submission
No 118**

INQUIRY INTO ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Organisation:

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Attention: Rachel Simpson

I write in relation to the establishment by the Legislative Council of a committee to inquire into the debasement of the NSW political process by political donations. This debasement was clearly spelt out in the article in the Sydney Morning Herald on Monday 28th January, 2008, when one of the Party donors openly told the reporter "you don't get the meeting with the minister or the premier until you have made the donation you can't get a foot in the door without being a significant and regular donor to the party".

I believe this sums up what everyone has come to suspect about an unacceptable culture that is rife in our present state government. While government incompetence and neglect has left our critical services such as health, education, transport crime and other critical services in disarray, private developers and gambling organisations have reaped massive rewards and continue to dictate to this present government to achieve outcomes which are hugely in their favour.

The property developers have bulldozed their way into dominating and thus undermining the democratic process of balanced, sensitive and consultative development within NSW by their unhealthy influence over this government as a result of their political donations. Our inner city areas, our suburbs, our coastal areas and our heritage are now being literally bulldozed by greedy property developers. Their legacy is and will continue to be one of the destruction of all that is and has been vital to the beauty and heritage of the Sydney Basin and our coastlines.

The concessions made to the gambling sector are another example of the power of political donations to influence the policy making of this government. How could such concessions be made in a state which already has one of the highest access to gambling in the world? Why, because it brings more money into coffers of those organisations who, like the developers, are making huge donations to this government.

I would like the outcome of this inquiry to ensure that in future there are strict controls and monitoring of all donations from the private sector to political parties and public funding of elections be increased to reduce private sector donations. This is a critical and important inquiry and it is hoped its outcomes will be such as to reverse the current debasement of our political process by political donations.

Cheryl Sutherland