

**Submission  
No 18**

**INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE ELECTION  
FUNDING, EXPENDITURE AND DISCLOSURES BILL  
2011**

**Organisation:** Sporting Shooters Association (NSW)  
**Name:** Mrs Diana Melham  
**Date received:** 11/01/2012

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10 January 2012

The Hon. Dr. John Kaye, MLC  
Committee Chair  
Select Committee,  
Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Amendment Bill 2011  
NSW Parliament  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Dr Kaye,

**NSW Upper House Select Committee on the provisions of the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Amendment Bill 2011***

The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (NSW) Inc ("SSAA NSW") welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the impact of the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Amendment Bill 2011*.

SSAA NSW does not support the proposed changes that will remove the ability of not-for-profit associations, community groups, and corporations to make political donations.

SSAA NSW is the peak organisation with a membership of 42,000 sporting shooters within NSW and is committed to ensuring the future viability of our sport through representation, education and promotion of the shooting sports. As a representative body we advocate on behalf of our members, 48 Branches and 105 Affiliated Clubs as well as the 180,000 licensed firearms owners who reside in NSW.

SSAA NSW strongly supports the right of every Australian to participate in the political process. In addition, we recognise the valuable role organisations such as SSAA NSW play in representing the interests of individuals that share common views and objectives. Part of this role includes the ability to aggregate funds for the purpose of making donations to political parties who share and champion the same policies.

The suggestion that as an organisation we should continue to play such an active community role in promoting safe and responsible firearm ownership but not be given an opportunity to engage in the political process would, we believe, be a serious stumbling block in the Parliament's efforts to ensure an open and transparent political process.

In our opinion, the current power and authority of the Election Funding Authority will not be enhanced or increased through the banning of organisational political donations or by prohibiting the ability of affiliated clubs to aggregate funds. In fact, SSAA NSW believes the passing of the Bill before parliament without amendments would be undemocratic and unfairly disadvantage the many organisations currently undertaking valuable advocacy work within our community.

In recent years the issue of firearms has been routinely debated on radio and television and indeed within the NSW and Federal Parliament. Members of SSAA NSW have, for many years, urged our organisation to try and get a fair go for law abiding, licensed firearms owners who simply want to be able to participate in their chosen sport. That widespread belief among our members has led to SSAA NSW playing a more active role in Parliamentary affairs and has seen us provide financial support to candidates who represent our shared views and objectives in the NSW Parliament.

SSAA NSW members are spread throughout the State and represent a diverse range of backgrounds. Their common desire is to participate in their chosen sport without some of the unnecessary political interference from opponents of firearms – some of whom sit in this Parliament.

SSAA NSW is unashamedly supportive of sporting shooters and our members expect and deserve nothing less than our best efforts to achieve positive outcomes on their behalf.

Denying organisations such as SSAA NSW the opportunity to effectively advance the interests of their members through political activity would, in our view, constitute an unacceptable restriction on one of the freedoms enjoyed by all Australians.

SSAA NSW would welcome the opportunity to attend the Inquiry and answer any questions the Committee may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Melham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Diana Melham  
**Executive Director**