

**Submission
No 176**

INQUIRY INTO ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Organisation:

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SUBMITTED BY: Barbara Fitzgibbon

The information that was unearthed during the Daly Inquiry into Tweed Shire Council showed all too plainly the need to regulate not only the political donations system, but also the accompanying linked activities. Together they form an integral part of an election campaign. This is also applicable to the other two levels of government - State and National.

To stop the practice of buying support through hefty donations I believe we have reached a point where it is necessary to introduce strict and severe controls. The need for action is such that fear of over-regulation has to be put aside.

I support the regulatory strategies (1.5 P 2 discussion paper) and the replacement of the major part of presently privately produced election material with publicly funded material.

SUBMISSION


1. It is important to move immediately in relation to compulsory disclosure of donations received, to ensure ALL donations (no matter how small) and ALL donors be disclosed. This disclosure to also include how these funds have been disbursed. This to be done by a set time before the election and published in the local media of the specific shire or electorate. Placement on the pecuniary interests register is crucial.
2. ALL electoral material supporting candidates or stating a case against opponents to be registered and vetted before distribution/publication(all media) x weeks before an election to allow swift rejection of material that does not conform
3. Distribution and publication (all media) of all materials supporting or stating a case against a candidate to cease at least three days before election day.
4. Limits to be placed on the number of letterbox drops per candidate, (see note 1.)
5. Candidates to be allowed only one information table at each booth. (See note 2)
6. No handing out of how-to-votes to be allowed on election day. (see note 1.)
7. I support publicly funded election material, one suggestion being the production of booklets that would carry informational material about candidate and their policies . This would compensate for the reduction in letterbox drops and also assist in the vetting of material.
8. I submit that the lowest level of government would be the most appropriate place to introduce the above reforms.

Note 1. Current arguments supporting sustainability measures will assist public acceptance of actions 4 & 6.

Note 2. In England during a national election, while staying with friends involved with the Liberal Democrats I found myself assisting with the LD campaign. I walked the streets dropping flyers through letterboxes and sat in the school entrance just outside the room in which the vote was made at the LD table checking off registration numbers as LD voters arrived..

Only one flyer was dropped into each letter box. No political tables other than the one per party were allowed. There was no elbowing throng outside the voting place and there was not one scrap of paper inside the grounds or out on the footpath.

Barbara Fitzgibbon


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