

**Submission
No 28**

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

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Date received: 16/01/2012

Dr John Kaye MLC
Committee Chair

Select Committee
Election Funding, Expenditure and
Disclosures Amendment Bill 2011

Legislative Council
NSW Parliament
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

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

The Shooters and Fishers Party welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry and appear before the Committee.

In our previous two submissions to the *NSW Select Committee on Electoral and Political Party Funding in 2008* and the *Inquiry into Public Funding of Election Campaigns by the NSW Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in 2010*, the Shooters and Fishers Party has held a consistent position. Namely, we do not support provisions in the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Amendment Bill 2011*, which seek to ban corporate, union, community or not-for-profit political donations.

The Shooters and Fishers Party reminds the Chair that there are already rigorous means to guard against undue influence and to ensure transparency of political donations. Details of political donations are publicly available on the Election Funding Authority's website where they may be scrutinized in detail. If anyone has any concerns, these may be raised with the Election Funding Authority, or with the ICAC.

The current Bill proposes restricting donations to individuals on the electoral roll. It seeks to ban corporate, union, community and other not-for-profit organisations from using or donating funds to support particular candidates or parties. This is undemocratic and undermines the right of likeminded citizens to band together to participate and engage in the political process.

It sets the electoral playing field firmly to the advantage of those individuals on the electoral roll, who through hard work, good luck or family bequest have large monetary resources at their disposal. These resources can then be turned unfairly toward political advantage for their chosen party or cause. There are many examples in our society today of personal wealth created foundations pushing all sorts of weird political views and positions. To allow wealthy individuals the right of third party campaigner registration, whilst not allowing aggregation of the less well off to participate in the political debate, is undemocratic and unfair.

The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia for example, is one peak body representing 48 branches and approximately 100 affiliated clubs throughout the State, and is an organisation representing a large group of people who have come together for an explicit purpose. They do so conscientiously, and as citizens of this state, they participate and engage in the political process. They have an undeniable right to empower their organisation or association to make political donations to parties they feel will best serve their interests.

One has to wonder about the motivation of a government willing to push such biased amendments, which clearly favours the more affluent voter, and someone who would be more inclined to support the proposed changes.

The Shooters and Fishers Party recommends the following changes be made to the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Amendment Bill 2011*:

Recommendations

- 1. The Shooters and Fishers Party recommends against the imposition of donation caps and prohibition on the aggregation of electoral expenditure by community groups, clubs, unions and not-for-profit organisations (whether incorporated or not) and corporations.**
- 2. The Shooters and Fishers Party recommends that a funding formula for the Political Education Fund be reintroduced, so as to recognise the performance of parties in the Legislative Council and/or the Legislative Assembly. It is apparent that much needs to be done to educate the voting public on the current and future requirements of the electorate.**
- 3. That this Public Education Fund grant should not be tied to performance in the Legislative Assembly, but be an open grant to all elected members of both Houses. This grant should be \$50,000 per annum per Member.**
- 4. The Shooters and Fishers Party recommends that a ban on donations from developers and tobacco companies be introduced.**
- 5. The Shooters and Fishers Party recommends the removal of the distinction between administrative and electoral monies, from expenditure and funding.**
- 6. The current administrative grants of \$80,000 per annum per member be increased to \$150,000 per annum per member for any Party that has four or less members in either House.**
- 7. The current administrative grants be converted to general grants and the audit, tracing and reporting powers of the Commissioner be extended, so as to properly audit and report all expenditures of Parties and Members.**
- 8. The Shooters and Fishers Party recommends that the current requirement for registration and accountability for third party campaigners be retained, but all expenditure caps be removed.**