

**Submission
No 99**

INQUIRY INTO ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING

Organisation: Christian Democratic Party
Name: Mr Phil Lamb
Position: NSW State Director
Telephone:
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Christian Democratic Party (NSW Branch)SUBMISSION to the inquiry on
ELECTORAL FUNDING AND
POLITICAL ADVERTISING9th February 2008

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Electoral and Political Party Funding
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15 FEB 2008

Dear Rachel,

Please find below, the submission from the Christian Democratic Party for your Inquiry.

1. Re-funding of election expenses

The level of 4% of primary votes to receive electoral funding is at an unrealistic level as an arbitrary figure set down as the minimum votes before election funding can be claimed, as it favors major parties. In the Lower House, CDP believes there are two valid alternatives:-

- a) The percentage figure should be reduced from 4% to 2.5 %. In the Upper House, CDP suggests that the figure be reduced also to 2.5 %, or if elected. (This would have made a difference only to the Shooters Party in the Upper House in 2007. In the Lower House, this would have helped the Australian Democrats in 4 seats, Country Labor in 1 seat, Independents in 17 seats, The Greens in 7 seats, Unity Party in 8 seats, Fishing Party in 1 seat, AAFI in 15 seats, and CDP in 17 seats. That is a total of 70 extra candidates receiving funding, who would have been eligible for a total of \$104,843 funding at last year's election rates, which is only a 2.8% increase in the funding entitlements for the 2007 election.)
- b) Alternatively, There should be a set amount for all votes gained, no matter how small the vote, as this allows all candidates to have a say in politics. Governments should not demonstrate political discrimination against anyone seeking office as a Candidate. There is strong support for this position with the Christian Democratic Party.

2. Refund of expenses, or dollar value per vote.

CDP is very concerned at the complexity of returns required by the NSW Electoral Commission. If ever there was a disincentive to become involved in standing as a candidate, it is the onerous requirements of the Candidate to provide all receipts of expenses, and all sources of income and in kind to the EFA. It would be true that the NSW Electoral Funding Authority may have been equally frustrated, as the writer heard many instances where candidate returns were re-submitted many times before they were accepted.

The simpler and fairer alternative system is one where the funding is distributed in proportion to the votes received - at a dollar value per vote determined by the Government - provided that the party can demonstrate they have made a serious effort to campaign. The total amount allocated to the Upper House and to each Electorate is published before the

election. This amount can then be shared fairly among the candidates in proportion to their vote. (Would this provide a situation whereby people or parties which did not achieve a representative amount of votes would be able to profit from electioneering?)

CDP recommends that two weeks before the election, the AEC / Electoral Commission produce a leaflet containing information on every candidate, and/or a HTV for each Candidate, and distribute this to the electorate.

3. Maximum amount of money spent on an Election.

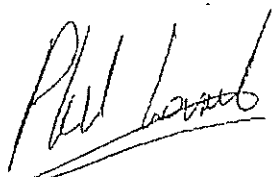
CDP believes that it is undemocratic to set a maximum amount of money to be spent on an Election. In a democracy, all registered parties should be given equal time to make policy speeches and ask for the people's vote. The ABC has a system of allowing parties to make policy speeches, but excludes parties under 5%. This ABC policy is discriminatory against minor parties. The Government should legislate to allow all parties that have registered and qualify as a party candidates, equal time / space to make minimum time to present policy speeches on all forms of media covering the election for each party, not including political ads.

The CDP believes that it would be undemocratic to set a maximum limit on how much each party can spend on an election campaign. If the public believe in a party, they will contribute towards that party to help it become elected. However, the CDP opposes the use of Union funds that are compulsorily taken from member's Union fees to contribute towards a party that they would not support. The CDP calls on the Government to legislate stopping of members' union fees from being used against their will to contribute to a political party. In other words, the use of membership fees to make a Union political party donation, without the permission of the member, should be made illegal. Union Fund-raising by soliciting members for non-compulsory donations would be an acceptable form of Union election fund-raising.

CDP is against the idea that an organisation's members should compulsorily have part of their membership fees go towards political party donations. The Government should also prevent donations from all other organisations with membership fees coming out of those fees, such as the Australian Hotels Association, Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Registered Clubs Association of NSW.

Money that is invested by shareholders in publicly listed organisations should not being donated to political parties.

Any funding of a political party should not be in the form of compulsory deductions from wages or salaries.



Phil Lamb
NSW State Director