

FACT SHEET

Issued by Office of Greens Leader Nick McKim MP

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POLITICAL DONATIONS

State by State snapshots

TAS

Tasmania has no real-time donations disclosure, so all political donations information is a year old when released by AEC, denying voters up to date donations information. Donations below \$11,500 are anonymous and one donor can make numerous sub-\$11,500 donations, which keep voters in the dark. Political donations are uncapped.

- **1989** Carter Royal Commission recommends state-based disclosure laws and election spending caps, following Liberal Government corruption scandal
- **March 2008** House of Assembly majority supports Greens motion referring political donations reform to Working Arrangements of Parliament Committee.
- **August 2008** Premier David Bartlett unveils '10-point plan' to "to strengthen trust in democracy and political processes in Tasmania".
- **2009** Premier David Bartlett commits to publishing public discussions paper on reforming political donations
- **September 2011** Greens win backing for their motion banning political donations from Big Tobacco in to Tasmania's political parties.
- **September 2011** During the above debate, current Attorney General, Brian Wightman, commits to release public discussion paper on reforming political donations "in the near future".

South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania remain the only states without separate state-based political donations disclosure laws.

NSW

On 14 September, 2011, NSW Liberal Premier Barry O'Farrell tabled a Bill which would ban any donations from corporations, unions or other organizations. Only individuals would be permitted to donate, up to a cap of one thousand dollars. The Bill has been passed by NSW's Legislative Assembly and is being considered by a select committee of the upper house Legislative Council, which is to report by 15 February 2012.

QLD

Last year, Queensland's Parliament amended its *Electoral Act 1992*, via the *Electoral Reform and Accountability Amendment Bill 2011*. Among various reforms, this provided some state funding to political parties and candidates. Election expenditure by political parties, candidates and third parties was capped, as were political donations to candidates and political parties. Donations must now be disclosed within six months of the donation.

WA

Political Finance legislation was amended on 9 November 1996 as Part VI of the *Electoral Act 1907*. This included requiring all political parties, associated entities, individual candidates, groups and individuals to submit a return to the Electoral Commissioner disclosing details of gifts received and election expenditure. Disclosures remain retrospective for the previous year and donations under \$2,100 are anonymous. Public funding is capped by election expenditure, at 4%.

SA

In 2008, Greens MLC Mark Parnell introduced into the *Development (Political Donations) Amendment Bill 2008* – which proposed to require disclosure of donations made to political parties that accompany large development applications. Lib-Lab opposed it.

ACT

In October 2008, following the ACT election, the Greens—holding the balance of power—signed a [Parliamentary Agreement](#) with the ALP, containing a parliamentary reform agenda which included provision for the 'passage of legislation which will require all political donations to be disclosed within one month of receipt and in an election period, on a weekly basis'. The ACT Assembly's Standing Committee of Justice and Community Safety's 2011 report, *A Review of Campaign Financing Laws in the ACT*, made several recommendations, including online donations reporting for parties and candidates, the ACT Electoral Commission to publish details of donations to parties and candidates as soon as practicable after they are disclosed to the Commission and a cap on donations, among a number of other recommendations.

Whether reforms will follow from this is yet to be seen, but the combined influence of the ALP-Greens Parliamentary Agreement, and the recommendations of the Assembly's Justice and Community Safety Committee augurs well for their ultimate implementation.

VIC

Victoria's Liberal Party when in Opposition announced its support for the Canadian model of regulating political donations. This includes limiting individual donations to parties or candidates to a maximum of \$1000; prohibiting all corporate, union, and organisation donations to political parties and candidates; and banning cash donations.¹

NT

No moves to reform NT's *Electoral Act 2004*, which provides for no public political funding. Candidates have no limits on expenditure or level of donations received, although it is illegal to accept anonymous donations of \$200 or more. Candidates election returns must show all gift and donor details over \$200. Political donations below \$1,500 are anonymous. Disclosure is retrospective.

Ends.