



## Additional Comments – Senator Lee Rhiannon

### **AUSTRALIAN GREENS ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

#### The Greens vision for electoral funding

The Australian Greens are working to change Australia's electoral funding laws to limit election expenditure, to bring in caps and bans on political donations and introduce speedy and transparent public disclosure of donations to allow voters to have access to full information about the source of funding of political parties.

#### Recommendation 1

- A ban on donations from for profit organisations.
- A cap on the amount of money that can be donated in a year to a political party or candidates.
- Caps on expenditure by political parties, candidates and third parties.
- Adequate public funding for political parties, including both funding for election campaigning and for other administrative work of the party.
- Continuous disclosure of all political donations above \$100, within two weeks of all donations being made.

## Short term measures

While the Australian Greens support comprehensive reforms to the electoral funding system there are a number of interim steps that should be implemented to increase transparency and public trust in the electoral funding system.

### Common funding rules for Commonwealth and State elections

Electoral funding rules vary enormously between the Commonwealth and the various states. This is a serious issue when it comes to the disclosure of donations and expenditure. Efforts at a state level to regulate money in politics have been undermined by the ability of donors to funnel money into party federal election accounts which are not under the jurisdiction of state election funding laws.

#### Recommendation 2

The federal government to initiate discussions between states and the Commonwealth in regard to political donation disclosure thresholds, time periods for disclosures, and the definitions of donations and other incomes that must be disclosed with a view to developing uniform laws.

### Detailed disclosure of electoral expenditure

Political parties are now required to provide an overall amount of expenditure by the party in their annual return to the Australian Electoral Commission, yet there is no requirement for details on how parties spend their campaign funds. More information will assist the assessment of appropriate levels of expenditure caps.

#### Recommendation 3

Political parties to be required to disclose how much was spent during the election period on each type of expenditure, such as wages, advertising and printing.

### Ban on donations from certain key industries

There is a pressing need to ban donations from certain industries with a record of engaging in lobbying to influence policy. In particular the property development, tobacco, alcohol and gambling industries are all dependent on government policy and have funnelled large amounts of money to both political parties. Also companies involved with government contracts that are expected to provide a financial gain should not be involved in making political donations.

The Australian Greens and the Australian Labor Party do not take donations from the tobacco industry, but other parties continue to take these donations. These industries are now banned from giving donations for NSW state elections under NSW legislation.

**Recommendation 4**

Ban donations from the property development, tobacco, alcohol and gambling industries, and from companies that have entered a tender, public-private partnership or any other government contract or arrangement that confers a financial gain.

**Senator Lee Rhiannon**

