



4<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.

Senator the Hon James McGrath  
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Senator McGrath,

**Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering the Donation Disclosure Threshold) Bill 2019**

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed Bill under review by your committee.

Vote Australia supports the human rights aspect of this Bill, as stated by Ms Sharkie MP, which is to “improve public confidence in our political system by providing the public with greater transparency regarding how our politicians and the parties they belong to may (or may not) be influenced by donations.”

This Bill seeks to reduce the donations disclosure threshold from \$13,800 to \$1,000 per annum and remove the indexation provisions. We understand that this lower threshold will lead to greater donor transparency, but question why the figure of \$1,000 has been set. In her Second Reading speech, Ms Sharkie says that “I’ve always maintained that if you’re donating in the thousands of dollars rather than the tens or hundreds, or even a bit of coin, then the public has the right to determine for themselves whether those donations are influencing the views and the political positions of the recipient candidate or party.” That is a subjective opinion. The relationship between the donor and recipient of the funds will dictate the degree to which there is any undue influence, regardless of the small or large size of the donation.

Vote Australia does not object to the lower threshold of \$1,000 without indexation but would prefer to see the Bill require that all financial donations and donated professional services to candidates, politicians and political parties, regardless of value, be disclosed.

If complete transparency is the goal, then do not set thresholds.

Yours sincerely,

William O’Connell  
President

**Vote Australia Incorporated (NSW)**

Registered address: c/- HLB Mann Judd, Level 19, 207 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

Mailing address: PO Box 361, Edgecliff, NSW 2027

| Website: [voteaustralia.org.au](http://voteaustralia.org.au)