

I wish to write to oppose the upcoming Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform Bill.

This law attempts to stem the sort of minor funding that was evident in the Russia-gate farce, wherein the discontents of the US population were ignored because they were fanned by \$300K donation from Russian sources to internet political sites. This may seem worthy to some people. However, in the case of environmental campaigns e.g. saving the Great Barrier Reef, amounts to an international concern and thus would attract some moderate donations from overseas persons who treasure the reef, climate or aboriginal affairs.

### **Cumbersome**

Such donations would require cumbersome accounting practices, to quote St Vincents' website; "Thus, the ultimate effect for charities will be a set of complex, cumbersome and costly administrative requirements. This will force many charities to divert resources away from frontline services and advocacy. For some charities, it may also have a "chilling" effect, deterring them from speaking out about injustices in order to avoid the onerous administrative costs that such advocacy would incur."

This tangling up of underfunded civic associations is similar to that imposed on unions, paralyzing them, whilst corporations can afford secretarial, accountancy and lawyers for compliance. Is this another example of money buying political influence?

### **Repressive**

Moreover, deeper in the text of the law are politically motivated repressive measures to curtail independent political activism from NGOs, churches and organizations such as Get Up. Anti-democratic opinion is attempting to reduce free speech and political involvement by persons not attached to established political parties. It is every Australian's right to associate with whomever for peaceful political change, and not to have to be associated with and endorse whole complex established party platforms. For instance, a person may support climate change remediation but not wish to associate directly with unions or international trade treaties endorsed by major political parties.

Moreover, such independence will appeal to many Australians and the organizing tactics of such groups (church meetings, telephone advocacy and media releases etc.)

would have more effect if coming from another person not interested in power or career advancement.

Limiting such freedom is part of the repressive goals of the far right; media control, anti-terrorism and banking bail in laws being other components that would limit democratic change in the case of a crisis.

In the case of Get Up, 1.2 million Australians are being educated to make their voice count, and no doubt this threatens the right-wing politicians who rely on lack of transparency and wielding party political power despite only receiving slim majorities (eg corporate tax cuts), while ignoring majority opinion (eg. Marriage equality, climate change, bank rorts). Attempts such as the Electoral Funding and Disclosure Bill are oppressive, anti-democratic and plain old fashioned in an era of internet and possible other forms of voting and citizen involvement. Turning the clock back to eras of paternalistic population control cannot be condoned.