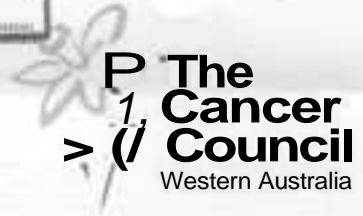


Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Submission No. ^.....-/
DM Received 31/04/2004
Secretary



30 March 2004

Russell Chafer
The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Chafer

Inquiry into Disclosure of Donations to Political Parties and Candidates

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further information to the reconstituted inquiry into electoral funding and disclosure.

The Cancer Council Western Australia (formerly the Cancer Foundation of Western Australia Inc.) wishes to reiterate points made in its previous submission to the inquiry, in joint submission with the National Heart Foundation (Western Australian Division).

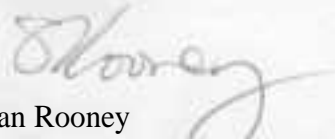
As members of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters will be well aware, tobacco smoking is a major cause of cancer, heart and lung diseases inflicting significant pain and suffering on families and an enormous financial burden, as well as social costs, on the community. The Cancer Council therefore strongly supports measures for reducing the harm caused by tobacco smoking. In the case of regulatory and public policy measures, these clearly do not only rely on broad community support, but also the political will to enact and strengthen legislation, and to adequately fund public education and other programs. It is of deep concern to the Council that political parties and candidates continue to accept donations from the tobacco companies.

We appreciate that most parties have a code on fundraising that makes clear that the party does not accept donations that are subject to conditions of any kind. Nevertheless, we find it incomprehensible that the major political parties continue to accept donations from the tobacco industry. This continues despite the impact of tobacco on our community, the important work done by state and national governments and non-government organisations, in reducing the enormous harm caused by tobacco and the role of the industry in undermining these efforts. Certainly, public perception would be that donors to political parties would have some expectation of support on issues of concern to them.

It is our sincere hope that the committee, in taking into account the harm caused by tobacco and prevailing public opinion, will support our recommendation that the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* be amended to prohibit the acceptance of direct or indirect donations from tobacco companies by political parties and candidates.

If you require further information, or clarification of any points made in this and our previous submission (made jointly with the National Heart Foundation, Western Australian Division), please contact Denise Sullivan, Director of The Cancer Council Western Australia's Tobacco Program on 08 9212 4369 (or email dsullivan@cancerwa.asn.au).

Yours sincerely



Susan Rooney
Chief Executive Officer