



## Dissenting Report—Mr Scott Morrison MP, Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson, Senator Simon Birmingham, Liberal Party of Australia, Hon Bruce Scott MP, The Nationals

The view of the Coalition members of the Committee is that campaign finance reform is a complex issue that requires integrated reform, with no one measure considered in isolation to another.

The Rudd Government is currently working on a Green Paper regarding campaign finance reform.

Coalition Members accept that this is a complex issue and that lengthy delays in the preparation of the Green Paper are therefore understandable.

Coalition Members believe, however, that the introduction of this Bill prior to the release of the Green Paper, significantly diminishes the Government's claims that it is seeking comprehensive campaign finance reform.

Rather Coalition Members believe that the Government is proceeding in a piecemeal fashion, cherry-picking as a matter of priority those measures that address their own partisan political interests, without considering the impacts of these changes on the broader system.

A responsible government would adopt a holistic, broad, bi-partisan view of the issue and most importantly, consider what is in the best interests of the community and our democracy.

### **Recommendation 1**

**Coalition Members believe that further debate in the Senate on this Bill should be deferred until proper public scrutiny and discussion of the Green Paper and the report of the Joint Standing Committee into Electoral Matters into the reference made by the Senate on 11 March 2008.**

## **Anonymous Donations**

This Bill advocates increases in sanctions regarding reporting issues associated with political donations. It is important that in putting forward such measures that at the same time you do not design a system that places an unreasonable compliance burden on those who may be subject to these penalties.

Penalties are intended to act as a disincentive to negative behaviour. Coalition members are concerned that removal of the provision for anonymous donations creates an unreasonable administrative burden, especially for local party volunteers, where the majority of small scale amounts are received.

Furthermore Coalition members believe that the proposal to establish a \$50 limit for anonymous donations as proposed in the report is insufficient to address the issue of this administrative burden and that a higher threshold of \$250 be established.

### **Recommendation 2**

**Coalition Members believe that Clause 40 (proposed section 306AE) of the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Political Donations and other Measures) Bill 2008 be amended to allow for anonymous donations below a threshold of \$250 to be received without disclosure obligation being incurred by the donor, and without the recipient being required to forfeit the donation or donations to the Commonwealth.**

**Mr Scott Morrison MP**

**Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson**

**Hon Bruce Scott MP**

**Senator Simon Birmingham**

