



Disclosure of Donations to Political Parties and Candidates

PUBLIC HEARING – CANBERRA, TUESDAY 11 MAY, 2004

Federal Parliament's Electoral Matters Committee is holding a public hearing on Tuesday 11 May 2004 in Canberra for its *Inquiry into the Disclosure of Donations to Political Parties and Candidates*.

The inquiry was referred to the Committee by the Senate on 4 March 2004 and reopens the Committee's *Inquiry into Electoral Funding and Disclosure* which lapsed at the 2001 federal election.

In August 2000 the (then) Special Minister of State, Senator the Hon Chris Ellison, requested that the Committee inquire into those recommendations of the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) 1996 and 1998 Funding and Disclosure Reports not currently incorporated in legislation or not previously examined by the Committee. The Committee was asked to report on the desirability of incorporating the remaining AEC funding and disclosure recommendations into the existing legislation.

The Committee will again consider the evidence provided to it in the last Parliament and will also examine any amendments to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* necessary to improve disclosure of donations to political parties and candidates and the true source of those donations.

Details

Where: The Function Room, Parliamentary Library, Parliament House, Canberra.

Time: 4pm – 6pm.

Witness: The Australian Electoral Commission

The Chair of the Committee, Mr Petro Georgiou MP (Member for Kooyong) said, "Prior to the dissolution of the 39th Parliament, the Committee had received 21 submissions to its electoral funding and disclosure inquiry and held three public hearings, taking evidence from the AEC, the Liberal and Labor Parties and the Australian Democrats".

"At the hearing, the Committee will further discuss with the Australian Electoral Commission those changes to the Electoral Act that are necessary to improve the current funding and disclosure provisions". Mr Georgiou said.

A transcript of the hearing, as well as submissions to the inquiry will be progressively loaded onto the Committee's website: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/donations/index.htm>. Transcripts of the hearings and submissions to the inquiry in the 39th Parliament can also be found at this address.

For media comment, please contact:

Electoral Matters Committee Chair, Petro Georgiou MP, on (03) 9882 3677

For further information on the conduct of the inquiry:

Frances Gant, Inquiry Secretary on (02) 6277 4209, or visit the Committee website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/em/

The members of the Electoral Matters Committee are:

Mr Petro Georgiou MP (*Chair*) (Liberal Party of Australia, Kooyong, Vic)

Mr Michael Danby MP (*Deputy Chair*) (Australian Labor Party, Melbourne Ports, Vic)

Senator George Brandis (Liberal Party of Australia, Qld)

Senator the Hon John Faulkner (Australian Labor Party, NSW)

Senator Brett Mason (Liberal Party of Australia, Qld)

Senator Andrew Murray (Australian Democrats, WA)

Senator the Hon Robert Ray (Australian Labor Party, Vic)

Mr John Forrest MP (National Party of Australia, Mallee, Vic)

Mr Daryl Melham MP (Australian Labor Party, Banks, NSW)

Ms Sophie Panopoulos MP (Liberal Party of Australia, Indi, Vic)

AEC FUNDING AND DISCLOSURE REPORTS

BACKGROUND

Under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* the AEC is required, as soon as practicable after a federal election, to provide a report on the operation of the Funding and Disclosure (FAD) scheme for tabling in the Parliament. The FAD scheme was first introduced for the 1984 federal election and has two principal features - public funding of election campaigns and a requirement for disclosure of certain financial details by registered political parties, candidates and other persons and groups in accordance with Part XX of the Electoral Act.

FAD reports tabled in Parliament include recommendations to the Minister for State about how the FAD scheme in the Electoral Act could be improved by legislative amendment.

Copies of the 1996 and 1998 FAD reports can be obtained from the AEC's website:

http://www.aec.gov.au/_content/who/party_reg/index.htm

For more information about the FAD scheme, see AEC funding and disclosure handbooks:

http://www.aec.gov.au/_content/how/political_disclosures/index.htm