

## Part A

# Political Donations, Public Funding and Election Campaign Expenditure

## 1 Political donations

### Issues for consultation - Political donations

1. Are the existing laws in relation to political donations effective in protecting against the potential for undue influence and corruption?

**RESPONSE:** No they are not. Too often we hear the name of one particular company over and over again, or a lobbyist group as being a large donor and then anytime a decision comes down in their favour there is the overshadowing suspicion that their donations had something to do with it. In order to protect against undue influence and corruption and even just the perception of such the laws need to be simplified.

2. How can the existing laws in relation to political donations be made more effective?

**RESPONSE:** The current laws, guidelines and regulations are unnecessarily complicated. There is no need for such an involved rigmarole to surround this issue. To simplify the issue the following could be introduced:

1. A set amount for donations (\$5000 or less) Whether directly donated or through a fundraising venture, or volunteer labour.
2. All Donations during the capped expenditure period would be for campaign only.
3. No other donations form of donation (with the exception of party membership) would be allowed throughout the capped expenditure period.
4. Donations could be set at a value of \$5000 or less,
5. Donations should be limited to individually registered voters
6. All donations should be indexed and deposited into the one account.
7. Any fundraising conducted raises campaign donations only.
8. As a company cannot vote they also cannot donate.
9. This does not mean \$5000 to Candidate A, \$5000 to Candidate B and \$5000 to the political party. It means \$5000 total. The \$5000 can be divided any way the donor sees fit but all donations cannot exceed the accumulated amount of \$5000.

This would greatly diminish the buying politician's persona.

E.g. If John Citizen donates \$5000 to Candidate A his donation limit has been met.

- If Candidate A holds a fundraising dinner at \$1000 a head, John Citizen cannot purchase a ticket as he is already capped out for his donation amount.
- His wife Juliet Citizen can purchase 2 tickets at a total of \$2000 because she has not previously donated any money to Candidate A.

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- At the fundraiser she can make a further donation to Candidate A of up to \$3000 to cap her out at the \$5000 limit or \$3000 to the political party for \$3000.
- All of the money from that fundraiser becomes campaign money and is deposited into the campaign account.
- A company cannot purchase a table or even 5 tickets equalling \$5000.
- Anything auctioned at the fundraiser or given as door prizes would be required to be donated to the candidate prior to the commencement of the capped expenditure period and documented on the an appropriate register or index.

Comment is invited, in particular on:

- whether political donations should continue to be capped in Queensland (option a);
  - **RESPONSE: YES:** at \$5000 per individually registered voter. This is an even amount easier to manage when balancing the account.
- if so, whether the cap should apply to all donations and not just those intended to be used for campaign purposes (option b);
  - **RESPONSE: YES:** There should not be any delineation between what is for campaign and what is not. All donations during the capped expenditure period are for campaign purposes only.
- whether political donations should only be able to be made by individuals on the electoral roll (option c);
  - **RESPONSE: YES.** A company, organisation or industry does not get to lodge a vote on Election Day, therefore they should not as that company, organisation or industry be allowed to donate money. This levels the playing field and ensures that no particular industry holds undue influence over any candidate or party.
- if not, whether there should be additional member/shareholder endorsement requirements for receipt of donations from industrial organisations and corporations (option d);
  - **RESPONSE: NO:** Companies cannot vote as an entity therefore should not be allowed to donate. This also removes any suspicion overshadowing any decision based on industry.
- the treatment of fees for attendance at functions and fundraising activities (option e) and membership fees (option f);
  - **RESPONSE:** Membership fees should be exempt from contributing to campaign
  - **RESPONSE:** Attendance at functions/fundraising activities should be considered campaign contributions and be accumulated – ie all donations whether directly or through fundraising cannot be more than \$5000 per individually registered voter
- whether additional disclosure requirements should be introduced (option g); and
  - **RESPONSE: YES:** All donations should be disclosed. Get a spreadsheet and balance the donations with the bank deposits into the one campaign account.
- whether there are any opportunities to streamline the existing administrative arrangements (for example by removing the requirement for dedicated campaign accounts (option h)).

- **RESPONSE:** One Dedicated account for campaign funds will ensure that there is no impropriety, moving of funds or any suspicious activity. It makes budgeting and accountability a lot simpler.

### 2 Public funding for elections

#### Issues for consultation – Public funding of elections

##### 1. Are the public funding arrangements in Queensland fair?

**RESPONSE:** There should be no public electoral funding for elections. It is up to the political party and the candidates to fund their own campaigns. Once the voting public of Queensland elects them, then they get paid by Queenslanders, until then they are on their own working for every vote. Not only would this save the public purse it would also ensure that candidates and political parties actually get to know their electorate and meet the people and understand the demographic physically as opposed to figures on a spreadsheet.

Comment is invited, in particular on:

- whether public funding of political parties and candidates should be on a per vote basis (option a));
  - **RESPONSE:** Any administrative funding based on votes should be just that. Each vote should be allocated an amount. The number of votes the candidate gets is multiplied by the vote value and that is the funding. It is simple and it is fair. You get 234,190 votes then you get 234,190 x vote value.
- whether a limit on public funding should be introduced that is based on the winning party's entitlement (option b);
  - **RESPONSE:** Each vote is worth the same amount, each candidate should get paid for each vote they get.
- whether a limit on public funding should be introduced that is based on the number of votes received (option c); and
  - **RESPONSE:** Yes
- whether there are any opportunities to streamline the existing administrative arrangements (option d).

### 3 Election campaign expenditure

#### Issues for consultation – Election campaign expenditure

##### 1. Are the existing laws relating to electoral expenditure effective in creating a more level playing field?

**RESPONSE:** No. There is no level playing field in politics.

##### 2. How can the existing laws in relation to electoral expenditure be made more effective?

**RESPONSE:** Each candidate should be able to use the full amount of their campaign donations on their campaign and nothing more. Each political party should be able

to use the full amount of their campaign donations on their campaign and nothing more. This means that everything comes from that one account. Printing, wages, advertising, it is all defined as campaign and all comes from one account.

Comment is invited, in particular on:

- whether electoral expenditure should continue to be capped in Queensland (options a and b);
  - **RESPONSE:** No: if you capped donations to registered voters and limited to \$5000 whether to a candidate or a party individually or combined then there is no need to cap electoral expenditure
- whether the expenditure of a party should be aggregated with the expenditure of its affiliated organisations (option c);
  - **RESPONSE:** No
- whether the expenditure of affiliated organisations should be aggregated (option d);
  - **RESPONSE:** No
- whether the definition of 'electoral expenditure' should be clarified (option e);
  - **RESPONSE:** Yes: it should include all things to do with the campaign...appointment of staff, advertising material – etc. this should all be paid for from the one campaign account.
- the treatment of volunteer labour (option f); and
  - **RESPONSE:** Volunteer labour should be valued at a set amount per hour. \$25. This would accumulate and add to the donation amount of each registered voter. If not a registered voter (ie 16-17 year olds) then it is classed as free.
  - **RESPONSE:** E.g. If John Citizen donates \$4900 then he can work 4 hours (volunteer work) which would equate to \$100 and then cap out his donation.
- whether there are any opportunities to streamline the existing administrative arrangements (option g).
  - **RESPONSE:** YES: Everything is paid for from the one campaign account so that everything can be balanced.

## Part B—Other Options for Improvement and Change

### 1 Truth in political advertising

Issue for consultation – Truth in political advertising

1. Should truth in political advertising legislation be introduced in Queensland?

**RESPONSE:** No. The truth is subjective and introducing legislation would only compound legal proceedings and cause a lot more 'he said, she said' back and forth. There is no point to legislating it unless those that lied are somehow brought to justice. If the consequences to lying are not going to be quick and severe then there is no point.

A solution is to **not allow** the parties to comment on other parties campaigns (unless it is already a legislated, documented policy) and to simply state what they are going to do.

E.g. If Party A is in power and has legislation that says one thing and Party B is planning on changing that if they gain power then they can comment. (I.e. we will repeal the legislation on road ownership)

If Party A during the campaign simply said "We are going to give \$50 million to those in the public with blonde hair" Party B can say 'Rather than giving \$50 million to only blondes haired public members, we intend to use that \$50 million to encourage all the public to go blonde.'

2. If so, should it extend beyond advertisements to other inaccurate and misleading statements?

**RESPONSE:** While not applying it to advertising a legislated ban should apply to Misleading Statements and severe very effective punishment should be applied.

le. If the current opposition leader or the current premier says in writing and in speeches during the campaigning, We will not change the traffic light sequence and then once in power changes it, then they should be

- stood down,
- removed from all political life,
- forfeit any pensions and benefits usually awarded
- be made to pay back all campaign donations
- lose their democratic right to vote ever again
- In their electorate the candidate with the next highest amount of votes automatically takes office.
- If the position is the Premier the party must elect a new leader.

## 2 How-to-vote cards

Issues for consultation – How-to-vote cards

1. Should how-to-vote cards be subject to increased regulation? If so, how?

**RESPONSE:** How to vote cards should be banned and posters displayed (provided by the electoral commission) at polling booths simply stating the facts and being neutral

Comment is invited, in particular on:

- whether how-to-vote cards should be published on the ECQ's website (option a);
  - **RESPONSE:** Yes and posted at polling booths
- whether the ECQ should have the power to refuse to register a how-to-vote card that is likely to mislead or deceive a voter in casting their vote (option b);
  - **RESPONSE:** The ECQ should produce its own neutral card as the only card
- whether the behaviour of workers who hand out how-to-vote cards should be regulated (option c); and

- **RESPONSE:** If the ECQ produces the only lawful card then there will be no workers handing them out
- whether how-to-vote cards should be banned (option d).
  - **RESPONSE:** Yes: an ECQ neutral one will suffice.

### 3 Proof of identity

#### Issue for consultation – Proof of identity

1. Should voters be required to produce proof of their identity on polling day?

**RESPONSE:** Absolutely. When the ECQ sends out the voting notifications they should include a card for each registered voter – that has a barcode on it. At the polling booth there should be barcode scanners (i.e. a worker at the front who scans your card and then lets you in to vote). If you do not bring your card then you cannot vote.

This would greatly decrease the number of people needed to man polling booths.

1. One person scanning the cards
2. One person to check identification if necessary
3. One person to hand out the voting papers

### 4 Enrolment on polling day

#### Issue for consultation – Enrolment on polling day

1. Should voters be permitted to enrol on polling day?

**RESPONSE:** No there is ample time between calling the election and having to enrol to vote.

### 5 Electronic voting

#### Issues for consultation – Electronic voting

1. Should electronic voting be introduced in Queensland?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. You swipe your barcode card and then you vote using the touch screen. It saves paper, it saves pencils, it saves time and can be programmed to:

1. not allow dummy votes
2. not allow anyone to vote more than once
3. show the how to vote ECQ neutral card on the screen prior to voting.

Comment is invited, in particular on:

- whether Queensland should introduce electronically assisted voting for: blind and vision impaired voters; and voters who require assistance voting because of a disability, motor impairment or insufficient literacy (option a);

- **RESPONSE:** It should be for everyone
- whether Queensland should introduce electronically assisted voting to voters who will not throughout the hours of polling on polling day be in Queensland and/or who do not reside within 20 kilometres, by the nearest practical route, of a polling place; or
  - **RESPONSE:** It should be for everyone
- whether electronically assisted voting should be introduced for all voters in Queensland.
  - **RESPONSE:** Yes: It should be for everyone

### 6 Postal voting

#### Issues for consultation – Postal voting

1. Are there any opportunities to improve the postal voting system?

**RESPONSE:** If not going completely electronic then it should be available to everyone for no reason. Some people just don't like going to a polling booth and having to deal with the mountains of people trying to get your vote, shoving wasted paper in your hands and then being bombarded by fund raising organisations and sausage sizzles as you exit.

Comment is invited, in particular on:

- whether the grounds upon which a person can apply for a postal vote should be expanded (option a);
  - **RESPONSE:** YES: It should be for everyone
- whether online postal vote applications should be permitted (option b);
  - **RESPONSE:** Yes if the system goes completely electronic then you can apply to vote from the comfort of your own home. Your barcode is given its own password and you can sign in and vote.
- whether the deadline for lodging a postal vote application should be brought forward by one day (option c).
  - **RESPONSE:** No, if remaining with the postal option then the application lodging timeframe is fine and should apply to electronically voting from home as well.

### 7 Compulsory voting

#### Issue for consultation – Compulsory voting

1. Should compulsory voting remain for Queensland State elections?
  - **RESPONSE:** Yes: and not voting should come with more stringent penalties. Such as if you don't vote then you:
    - forfeit any Queensland government payments such as rebates for water utilities etc
    - become ineligible for any government scheme or grant including first home owners grant
    - forfeit access to government facilities including libraries etc.

### 8 Voting system

## Issue for consultation – Voting system

1. Should the voting system used for Queensland State elections be changed?
  - o **RESPONSE:** No. There should be no preferences. You vote 1 against the candidate you want and that is it. The candidate with the most votes wins the seat. You vote 1 for the person you want to represent you. Voting for a leader of your State should not be based on the premise of 'oh well if the person I want doesn't get in this one will be okay.'

## 9 Any other matter

**RESPONSE:** Each candidate and each party should have to answer a list of questions supplied by the Electoral Commission of Queensland or that are legislated so that there is a level playing field.

These could include:

1. Tertiary education
2. Government experience
3. Marital status
4. Ministerial aspirations (i.e. what Minister would you want to be)
5. Views on set topics:
  - a. Religion
  - b. Immigration
  - c. Environment
  - d. Transport
  - e. Health care
  - f. Industry etc.
6. What they would repeal
7. What they want to instigate
8. Why they think they are the best person for the job.

The ECQ could then publish these on its website so that the each candidate is represented in one place for voters to access.