

Submission Review of the Electoral Act 2004 (TAS)

As a member of the public, I have growing concerns about the health of Australia's democracy in light of the findings of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the results of the Banking Royal Commission, the apparent influence of the gaming and hotel lobby during the recent Tasmanian state election and the influence of foreign governments more generally. One thing that all these different issues have in common is the lack of transparency and accountability in the laws regarding political donations and the potential of wealthy entities to buy political favours. While some of these issues are of a federal nature, all of these scandals have a common theme and origin and have the capacity to affect significantly the political stability of our nation. Given Tasmania's low population compared to other Australian states and the resulting close intertwining of political, social and economic networks, it is especially important that the Tasmanian government implement political donation reform in its review of the *Electoral Act 2004*. Imperative measures include:

- Banning donations from all corporate donors;
- Banning donations from foreign governments and foreign corporations;
- A disclosure threshold of \$1,000, fixed and to be calculated cumulatively over a whole party;
- Online, continuous real-time disclosure to the Australian Electoral Commission of donations to political parties, candidates and associated entities;
- Public funding of election campaigns;
- A cap on expenditure for individual candidates and parties in House of Assembly elections;
- Corresponding regulation of the political activities of third parties and associated entities;
- A donation cap of \$3,000 aggregate per donor, per parliamentary term.

My particular concerns relate to companies and individuals that are spurned by the majority of Tasmanians yet continue with their proposals regardless of their apparent lack of social license to operate. Examples include: the "Cambria Green" development on the East Coast, skyscrapers in Hobart, the kunanyi/Mt. Wellington cable car, the logging of protected high conservation value forests, fish farms, the gaming lobby, the firearms lobby, "supertrawler" fishing vessels and the proposal for building more prisons in Tasmania. Political donation reforms will enable the public and the media to better understand and securitize many of these contentious issues. Political donation reform of the *Electoral Act 2004* will allow political parties and individuals to better fulfill their duties of governing for the people of Tasmania, and not be tied to the demands of private corporations and other non-elected entities.