



Andrew Wilkie MP
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR DENISON

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Department of Justice
Office of the Secretary
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Submission to the Electoral Act Review

Tasmania has Australia's weakest political donation laws. Businesses, groups and individuals can donate whatever they want to political parties and candidates in Tasmania, sure in the knowledge that their "investment", and the return on that investment, remains hidden from effective and timely public scrutiny. To the degree that some Tasmanian political donations might be covered by the Commonwealth Electoral Act, the threshold on such disclosures is too high at more than \$13,800, and hardly timely when it can take up to 19 months for publication by the Australian Electoral Commission.

By comparison, Victoria is setting the bar in this area and introducing some of the strictest and most transparent donations laws in Australia. There would obviously be great merit in Tasmania studying these reforms if it's genuine about cleaning up politics and putting in place safeguards that would help protect the public interest.

Highlights of the Victorian reforms include:

- a cap on donations by individuals, unions and corporations over a parliamentary term;
- public disclosure of donations above \$1,000;
- a ban on foreign donations;
- real-time disclosure of donations; and
- tough penalties per offence.

Moreover Tasmania should go further. For example:

- by defining "political donations" more tightly to capture all monies and gifts-in kind from any source which has the effect of assisting any political party or candidate at any point during the electoral cycle. This would, for example, have included the Tasmanian Hospitality Association, and Federal Group, during the 2018 Tasmanian State Election who would have had to reveal in real-time their pro-poker machine campaign expenditure above the \$1,000 threshold); and

- implementing effective campaign expenditure limits, and public funding for parties and candidates, to minimise the disproportionate political power of wealthy donors.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Wilkie', with a small dot at the end.

Andrew Wilkie MP
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