

Submission to review the Tasmanian Electoral Act

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To whom it may concern

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Tasmania's Electoral Act is certainly long overdue for review and revision, however due to limited time my comments will be short and directed to one aspect only: political donations.

To ensure fair and free elections in our democracy no individual or corporate entity should be able to potentially influence the outcome of an election by donating large and frequent sums of money to political parties.

It was widely accepted that considerable sums of money were gifted to the Liberal Party at the recent Tasmanian state election by the gambling industry and its lobbyists. The resulting advertising campaign that saturated media outlets, and the state's roadsides with posters designed to persuade voters to place their vote with a Liberal candidate, was [REDACTED]. It would be unrealistic for anyone to consider gambling interests in this state – eg Federal Group – were not expecting the government to legislate, or introduce policies, that could be considered unduly favourable to the gambling industry over Tasmanian residents, especially given the pokies licence is up for renewal.

An electoral review must consider placing a cap on political donations, and that cap should be far lower than it is at present. It should also include a requirement that makes all donations publicly available as soon as they are lodged.

In recent months the issue of foreign donations to political parties has also been highlighted. The acceptance of such donations should be considered completely inappropriate for all political parties, politicians, candidates and staffers due to the real or perceived corrupting influence that such financial 'gifts', or in-kind support, could

engender. Such donations must inevitably place question marks on the affiliations and loyalties of recipients. [REDACTED]

Last year, the Mercury newspaper canvassed its readers on a number of issues one of which was reviewing the Electoral Act. The response clearly indicated a review is overdue. The government is to be congratulated for establishing a review. Please now ensure there are no further delays to its completion.

Having scrutineered at last year's state elections, on the Monday following polling day, it became abundantly clear to me that Civics is a subject that must be more widely taught in schools. The number of spoiled votes was staggering. Many of these spoiled votes were invalid due to voter uncertainty about how to vote in the Hare Clark system. **And I am not advocating for one second that this should be replaced for another system since Hare Clark offers the best and fairest electoral process**, provides the fairest representation in the broadest sense, and ensures smaller parties or independents are not excluded from being elected.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

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