



Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
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Redlands2030 submission

Electoral Legislation (Political Donations) Amendment Bill 2018

Redlands2030 Inc. is an incorporated not-for-profit association advocating good governance and community participation in government decisions about matters and issues affecting the Redlands.

Redlands2030 welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee about this proposed legislation dealing with improved regulation of political donations.

Objectives of the Bill

Redlands2030 supports the Bill's objectives, to restore faith in the political system by eliminating actual and perceived corruption as a consequence of corporate donations to politicians, candidates and political parties.

Application to both State and Local government

Improved regulation of political donations should apply to both State and local government.

Alignment with New South Wales legislation

The concept of modelling legislation on the New South Wales Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosure Act 1981 provisions is supported. This legislation has been in place for many years and has withstood a High Court legal challenge.

Industry representative associations

Any prohibition upon corporations should also apply to industry associations, as provided for in the proposed legislation.

Application of proposed ban on making donations

Application of a ban on making political donations to all corporations is supported.

We note that the more selective approach adopted by New South Wales may be a useful transitional step, focusing on industry sectors where it is considered that there is a greater risk of corruption.

The risk of corruption is likely to be greatest when government regulation or other decision making has a significant impact on the industry.

Industry sectors of particular concern

Industry sectors which are targeted in New South Wales are property development, tobacco, liquor and gambling. Businesses operating in these sectors should be banned from making political donations in Queensland also.

Other industry sectors which should be considered as a high priority for regulation of political donation activity including mining, forestry and any other industry which utilises natural resources owned by the state.

The infrastructure construction sector depends significantly on government spending. It makes sense for businesses which depend on public cash flowing into infrastructure projects to be subject to bans on making political donations. This should include major contractors but could also include corporate advisors and consultants.

Waste collection and management are services provided by government (and local government) which involve significant public expenditure (particularly at the local government level) and government regulation. This industry sector should also be targeted for a ban on businesses making donations.

Another sector which should be considered a priority for regulation of political donations is the health, retirement and nursing home sector.

Implications of reduced cash being donated to politicians and parties

If the Parliament were to pass this Bill and prevent all corporations from making political donations then it is likely that the major parties would have less cash to spend on electioneering. Many Queenslanders would likely think this to be an excellent outcome. Parties would have to work harder and smarter to get their message across. With less electioneering 'noise' people could focus on policies and performance of politicians.

A Redlands case study

In local politics in south east Queensland, candidates for mayor receive the lion's share of political donations. At the 2016 Redland City local government elections incumbent ██████████ declared gifts worth \$81,605.65.

But if a ban had been in place on donations from corporations in the sectors discussed above (property development, mining, alcohol, waste collection, and retirement accommodation) the money she received would have been reduced by \$30,500 (██████████ \$10,000, ██████ \$5,000, ██████████ related to ██████████ \$5,000, ██████████ \$4,000, ██████████ \$4,000, ██████████ \$2,500) leaving her with just \$51,105.65 to declare.

At the 2016 local government elections ██████████ had only one challenger, ██████████ He self-funded his campaign and is understood to have spent about \$40,000 on his campaign. A ban on political donations by corporations in selected industry sectors, as discussed above, would have made the 2016 Redland City mayoral contest more even.

Chris Walker
Secretary
Redlands2030 Inc.

15 June 2018