

To the Economics and Governance Committee,
 I am writing to communicate my concern over the state of political donation laws in Queensland and to support the Bill put forward by Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar; the Electoral Legislation (Political Donation) Amendment Bill 2018. The capacity for big business to give huge donations to political parties, especially when their circumstances present a clear conflict of interest, is alarming and warrants urgent attention. It is the vocation of our elected representatives to maintain the needs of all sectors in society which includes an obligation to protect our natural environment. In the current state of things the interests of big business are winning out over the needs of the community and vulnerable habitats and their dependent species.

It is outrageous that a company who are seeking approval for a massive development are legally permitted to give tens of thousands of dollars in donations to the parties who are in Government and opposition and who ultimately hold the power to approve their project. I cite the specific case of the Toondah Harbour development which is a project of the [REDACTED]. This company has given over \$25,000 in donations to the Queensland Labor and Liberal parties (see screenshot from the ECQ's records below). Common sense tells us that companies that are seeking approval from political parties in power should not be able to buy their influence with massive donations. The potential for corruption is breathtaking.

The screenshot shows the ECQ Donor Location Map interface. At the top, there are navigation links for GIFT MAP, REPORTS, and HELP & SUPPORT. Below the navigation, there are filters for Election periods, State, Electorate, Parties, and Candidates. A summary bar indicates \$25,700 in unreconciled gifts. The main table lists the following data:

Donor #	Recipient #	Date Gift Made #	Donor electorate #	Donor address #	Gift value #
[REDACTED]	Australian Labor Party (State of Queensland)	29-06-2017	—	GPO Box 4073 Sydney	\$1,500.00
[REDACTED]	Liberal National Party of Queensland	04-10-2017	—	GPO Box 4073 Sydney	\$1,300.00
[REDACTED]	Liberal National Party of Queensland	25-05-2017	—	GPO Box 4073 Sydney	\$5,300.00
[REDACTED]	Liberal National Party of Queensland	31-03-2017	—	GPO Box 4073 Sydney	\$2,200.00
[REDACTED]	Liberal National Party of Queensland	31-01-2017	—	GPO Box 4073 Sydney	\$4,400.00
[REDACTED]	Australian Labor Party (State of Queensland)	21-06-2016	NSW	21/1 Ferrer Place Sydney	\$11,000.00

This is just one example of many where big business is legally permitted to buy influence through donations to political parties. Why should the people of Queensland have any faith that the decisions made by our Parliament are fair and objective and have not been coloured by the inflow of massive donations? The old saying goes “money talks” but, as a citizen of what is upheld to be a democratic country, why do we allow money to talk whilst the needs of the public and the environment upon which we depend are bulldozed by the interests of big business? It is clear to me that the Electoral Legislation (Political Donation) Amendment Bill 2018 must be passed in order to gain any semblance of fair representation for all of the people of Queensland.

Thank you,
 Miranda Bertram

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