



Law Reform · Healthy Communities

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EDO Qld asked politicians to have their say about political party donations ahead of this Saturday's state election. Here's what they said...

What do Queensland's politicians have to say about political party donations ahead of this Saturday's state election?

On behalf of communities and our supporters, EDO Qld asked them. We also asked them to present party measures for reducing the impacts of conflicts of interest and corruption that may result from such donations at a community event *Donations and Other Dangers to Our Democracy* on Tuesday 21 December 2017.

Why? EDO Qld believes politicians need to work with the community on how can we avoid conflicts of interest in decision making and increase transparency and accountability of our politicians and government.

People travelled from far afield to attend the event to hear from politicians as well as a panel of experts and ask questions that matter to them.

CEO Jo-Anne Bragg said: “The response from the community was unanimous -- the revolving door of political and senior industry jobs must end. To do that we need restrictions on Queensland parliamentarians, ministerial staff and public sector executives such that they are prevented from engaging as lobbyists or providing advice to relevant industry for four years after leaving these positions. Confining that rule to third party registered lobbyists is too narrow.

“A major community concern raised was windfall gains to industry, such as the increase in land value when the planning schemes are changed and land is re-zoned.. To reduce the incentive to unethical behaviour we need a betterment tax on windfalls..”

Community lawyers EDO Qld recommend the following reforms are needed (see our full [‘7 Key Changes to Qld Environmental Law’ report and sign the petition](#).)

Ban developer donations

(13) Reform the regulation of political funding, expenditure and donations by amending the *Electoral Act 1992* and the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011* to make it unlawful to receive donations:

- (a) from property developers, resource industry representatives, alcohol, gambling and tobacco industries; or
- (b) in amounts above \$5000 for a registered party and \$2000 for an elected member or candidate; or
- (c) from individuals not currently appearing on the Australian Electoral Roll or an entity that is not an Australian Constitutional Corporation.

(14) Amend the *Local Government Act 2009* and *City of Brisbane Act* by introducing a requirement that Local Government members do not use their position or information gained from their position for their benefit or the benefit of a family member, friend, political party or other related entity.

Reduce the ‘revolving door’ between industry and government

(15) Implement a new Bill which provides for restrictions on Queensland parliamentarians, ministerial staff and public sector executives such that they are prevented from engaging as lobbyists or providing advice to relevant industry for four years after leaving these positions. Confining that rule to third party registered lobbyists is too narrow.

Improve accountability and strength of Crime and Corruption Commission

(16) Amend the definition of “corrupt conduct” under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* so that the definition is not constrained by section 15(1)(d) requiring that the conduct would be if proved either a criminal offence or a disciplinary breach. Adopt a similar definition as in the *NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*.

(17) Provide for a general rule that hearings by the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) be held in public, to ensure transparency and public confidence in the CCC, through amendments to the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*.

Here’s what they said...

ALP, Jackie Trad MP, Deputy Premier of Queensland:

“The first legislation introduced in the 55th Parliament by the Palaszczuk Government gave effect to the election commitment to retrospectively lower the donation disclosure threshold from \$12,800 to \$1000.

“A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will reintroduce legislation in the next term of government to ensure the ban on political donations by property developers will apply at both a state and council election level.”

[<download the full response here, pdf>](#)

One Nation’s Steve Dickson MP, Member for Buderim:

“One Nation is concerned about political donations. This is an important political issue. After the election we are keen to see it address by world’s best practice measures.”

“If donations are to be banned, they must be banned from all sources e.g. Getup Unions and all businesses.”

[<download the full response here, pdf>](#)

LNP, Ian Walker MP, Member for Mansfield:

“We must ensure that there is proper discussion about these issues instead of tarring everyone with the same brush.

“The LNP is happy to consider any measures that strengthen laws dealing with corruption.”

[<download the full response here, pdf>](#)

The Greens, Larissa Waters and Amy Macmahon, candidate for South Brisbane:

“Our Ban Corruption in Queensland policy initiative calls for a ban on all donations from for-profit corporations, including property developers.

“We would also jam the revolving door between big business and politics by banning cash-for-access meetings, extend cool off periods for lobbyists and strengthen our corruption watchdog.”

[<download the full response here, pdf>](#)

Cameron Murray, independent candidate for South Brisbane:

“In Queensland it is the social networks and the professional lobbyist class are the key to gaining political favours. The way to tackle this is to make repaying favours more difficult in the future, by enacting longer and more broad ranging cooling off periods for post-political employment of politicians and senior bureaucrats, and more importantly, by tying the hands of politicians to make sure that any favours they do give, such as through the planning system, do not provide windfall private gains. Simply put, we start charging for the private gains from political decisions.”

*Authorised by Jo Bragg, CEO of Environmental Defenders Office Queensland, 8/205
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**EDO Qld promotes changes to law and policy which protect the environment and advance sustainable development. EDO Qld does not support, promote or oppose any particular political party or candidate. EDO Qld respects the democratic right of all citizens to run for elected office in their own time.*

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