Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 014
Submission By: Family First Queensland
Publication: Making the submission and your name public

Family First

worth fighting for

17 December 2025

Mr Martin Hunt MP, Chair
Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Hunt

Inquiry into *Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025*

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the Inquiry into *Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025* by the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee.

This submission is made on behalf of Family First Queensland, a registered political party, which has contested the 2024 State Election and the recent Hinchinbrook by-election.

After considering the Bill and associated materials, Family First Queensland:

- Supports the overall intention and objectives of the Bill,
- Welcomes the changes to voting by prisoners,
- Appreciates the narrowing of prohibitions on donations by property developers to align with the recommendations of the Belcarra report, and
- Applauds the removal of the Electoral Commission of Queensland involvement with internal preselection ballots, and
- Is grateful for the changes to authorisation requirements.

In line with the aim of the Bill to "improve and restore fairness and equality to the regulation of elections in Queensland", we believe that there are some further amendments which should be made to the *Electoral Act 1992*, and the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011* and *Referendums Act 1997* where applicable.

These changes, outlined below, we believe will not be controversial, are largely administrative in nature, but will have a disproportionate impact on the fairness and equality of the electoral system in Queensland.

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Qualifications of Auditors

Section 197 of the *Electoral Act 1992* currently defines an auditor, for the purposes of election funding and financial disclosure as being *"an individual who -*

(a) has the qualifications or experience prescribed for this definition; and

(b) *is not, and has not ever been, a member of a political party."*

The qualifications prescribed by the Electoral Regulation 2024, section 8, involve registration under the *Corporations Act 1991* (Cth) or membership. All of these required qualifications involve professional independence obligations which would preclude an auditor from acting where there could be any real or perceived conflict of interest.

Against this background, the additional requirement that the auditor "*is not, and has not ever been, a member of a political party*" is unnecessarily burdensome and completely disproportionate to the legitimate requirement for independence. In our experience this has precluded the engagement of a highly competent auditor who had been a member of a different political party while at university, more than three decades previously, who had no subsequent involvement with any political party.

Recommendation: We recommend that the second element of this definition be removed, or at least limited to involvement with the political party being audited.

Requirement to keep State campaign account

As currently applied by the Electoral Commission of Queensland, a State campaign account required under section 215 of the *Electoral Act 1992* must not only be maintained by a registered political party, but also all candidates.

This remains the case despite the approach taken by our Party to manage all political donations and electoral expenditure through the Party State campaign account. Our decision was made to ensure greater transparency and accountability over all donations and electoral expenditure. Centralised management provides greater certainty and assists record keeping. The requirement to have candidates establish, and then close, individual bank accounts which have no transactions imposes not only a considerable unnecessary administrative burden, but also adds a further impediment to participation.

Recommendation: We recommend that, in line with the current arrangements under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Cth) applying to Federal elections, that the requirements for separate State campaign accounts for each candidate be removed when a registered party's account will be used for all political donations and electoral expenditure.

Requirement to obtain donor statements for minor and/or recurring donations

The current requirements to obtain a donor statement, as defined in section 251 of the *Electoral Act 1992* is cumbersome, administratively burdensome, and unnecessary for proper transparency and accountability. This is particularly the cash for minor gifts, below the gift threshold defined in section 201A, and for regular, recurring gifts.

Recommendation: We recommend that:

- donor statements no longer be required for donations below the gift threshold,
- are only required once in relation to recurring donations that total more than the gift threshold, and
- greater flexibility is explicitly provided in relation to the manner and form in which applicable information is collected.

As indicated above, we believe that these simple additional changes will not be controversial, are largely administrative in nature. Despite their simplicity, they will address some clear deficiencies in the current legislation and have a clear impact on improving the fairness and equality of the electoral system in Queensland.

Yours faithfully

Lyle Shelton

National Director

Alexandra Todd

[Deputy] Registered Officer