

Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 027

Submission By: [REDACTED]

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To the Committee,

I am writing to express my absolute opposition to the Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025.

Despite the Orwellian title claiming to "restore fairness," this Bill appears designed to do the exact opposite: it restores the influence of deep pockets, removes independent oversight, and legalises financial loopholes that were previously closed to prevent corruption.

As a resident of Ipswich, a council area that has historically suffered from the consequences of poor integrity and developer influence, I find the proposed rollback of these protections particularly alarming.

My specific objections are as follows:

1. The "Restricted Donation" Loophole (Clauses 32–35) The Bill introduces the concept of a "restricted donation" for local government, allowing prohibited donors (such as property developers) to donate to political parties provided the money is not used for "electoral purposes".

This ignores the basic economic reality that money is fungible. If a prohibited donor gives a party \$100,000 to cover "administrative costs" or "staff wages" (which this Bill legalises), that frees up \$100,000 of the party's other revenue to be spent on attack ads and billboards.

This clause does not stop developer influence; it simply creates an accounting trick to launder prohibited money into the party machine. It effectively renders the ban on developer donations void.

2. Re-allowing Property Developer Donations at State Level (Clause 17) Clause 17 explicitly omits Part 11, Division 8, Subdivision 4 of the Electoral Act 1992. This action completely removes the ban on property developers donating to State election campaigns.

Queensland has a well-documented history of "pay-to-play" politics where planning approvals were perceived to be traded for campaign contributions. Removing this ban invites a return to the "brown paper bag" era of Queensland politics. There is no public benefit in allowing entities whose profits rely on government planning decisions to bankroll the people making those decisions.

3. Removal of Preselection Oversight (Clause 8) Clause 8 removes the Electoral Commission of Queensland's (ECQ) ability to oversee preselection ballots.

By removing the "cop on the beat," you are effectively green-lighting branch stacking. Without statutory oversight, internal party democracy becomes a farce, allowing powerbrokers to install candidates without fear of independent investigation. This ensures that candidates are beholden to party factions rather than their local communities.

4. Weakening of Donation Caps (Clause 14) Clause 14 changes the "donation cap period" from the electoral term to "each financial year".

This is a cynical move to quadruple the influence of wealthy donors. A cap is meaningless if it resets every July 1st. It allows a single donor to max out their contributions four times over a standard term, flooding the political system with cash that average Queensland families cannot match.

This Bill weakens Queensland's anti-corruption framework across the board. It treats the electorate with contempt by assuming we won't notice that "restoring fairness" actually means "restoring the ability to buy influence." Further, its submission and consideration over the Christmas period appears to be designed to obscure and obstruct critique of the Bill.

I urge the Committee to recommend that this Bill be rejected in its entirety.