

Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 065
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To the committee,

As a very concerned Queensland citizen I request that you reject this proposal as I believe it will only result in more corruption and less transparency of political parties. I offer the below points of contention on each change proposed.

1. Regarding the proposal of prohibiting persons serving a sentence of imprisonment or detention of one year or longer from voting at State elections and referendums and local government elections:
 - All citizens living in Queensland deserve the right to vote. Social and economic disadvantages can mean people can be incarcerated for simply being unable to pay a parking fine so to deny them the right to vote is abhorrent. Meanwhile, the wealthy who commit crimes but can afford to stay out of prison will still be able to vote.
2. Regarding the proposal of applying existing caps on political donations for State elections to financial years, broadly aligning with the length of Commonwealth gift cap periods:
 - It is hypocrisy to say this is 'restoring electoral fairness' when it will allow financial-year-round lining of political party pockets that will only serve those paying and not the Queensland public. If we want fairness then we should be reducing political donations or introducing more transparency for political donations.
3. Regarding removing the ban on political donations from property developers and related industry bodies for State elections, as well as refining and targeting the ban for local government electoral purposes (including through closing loopholes and anti-circumvention measures):
 - Again, the hypocrisy to think this could possibly result in electoral fairness couldn't be more blatant. Developers are a big contributor to the current housing crisis, and this bill will just enable them to 'buy' more power and make housing less affordable for the average Queenslanders. We want developers to have less power over our government, and this will only encourage corruption not mitigate it.
4. Regarding the proposal of allowing loans from financial institutions to be used for electoral expenditure for State elections, broadening electoral funding sources to include regulated lenders:
 - This will only be putting more money into some of the wealthiest institutions in the country (banks) and can not be expected to result in fairer elections. If anything we should be introducing more caps on financial expenditure on elections, not increasing the options for the wealthy to get wealthier under the guise of 'electoral fairness'.
5. Regarding the proposal of enhancing the independence of registered political parties by enabling them to conduct preselection ballots without the oversight of the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ):
 - Without oversight from the ECQ, political parties would be able to lie about any preselection ballots they might run and falsely represent 'public opinions' in our communities. We already have outlets like Fairfax media manipulating the narrative around political elections, so proposing to allow this by political parties, in conjunction with the above proposals, is a recipe for less transparency and more lies being spread in the lead up to elections.
6. Regarding the proposal of changing authorisation requirements for election materials and how-to-vote cards for State elections to apply to the period 12 months before an ordinary general election (rather than the current period of 26 days) and to allow post office boxes or other prescribed addresses to be used:
 - This proposal on its own will mean Queenslanders will be hounded for 12 months with materials from the major parties, or those backed by the wealthy, and when you consider this in conjunction with the proposal to allow developers to contribute to our political parties then it will be even worse. If anything, we should be regulating all election materials to require them be factual and have harsher penalties for any political representative/party that breaches the current period and/or disseminating false information.

In summary, I believe this bill is this antithesis of restoring electoral fairness and, if passed, will only result in further corruption, a lack of transparency and negatively impact Queenslanders and as such, I urge the committee to reject this bill.