




Speech By
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ELECTORAL REFORM AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (5.43 pm): I rise to speak to the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013. I note there are quite a number of changes, one being the change to the threshold for gifts. I have a very big concern here about electoral funding, where \$2.90 goes to a party and \$1.45 goes to the Independents on a per vote basis. I disagree with that so much. I am absolutely disgusted by this. The Independents are a voice. Likewise, they do not have access to the same funds that parties do, with their backing by the big corporates who believe that if they can provide governments money they will be able to buy themselves into development or buy themselves into a mining development operation or be able to swing governments in the direction that they want them to go in. I believe this would be a much better parliament if we had more Independents and more minor parties to shift the direction in which the major political parties are going at the moment.

I also have a big concern about the fact that a party can be given up to \$12,400 before that donation needs to be declared. I believe that can pave the way, and will pave the way, for corruption. There is no doubt about it. Like the member for South Brisbane was saying before, there will be a return to the use of brown paper bags. It is inevitable. It will happen. Remember this day when this bill was brought forward. One of the bill's objectives states—

- returning the basis for electoral public funding to a stated dollar amount per vote and increasing the threshold for entitlement to public funding from 4% to 10% of the primary vote to reduce the cost of funding to the community;

I know that the minister has foreshadowed that he will be moving an amendment to increase the threshold to six per cent rather than 10 per cent. We considered a 10 per cent threshold as very high and basically it should remain at four per cent. Even though the minister has changed that, I do not know where along the line he showed compassion, showed a little bit of sympathy. I do not know where he got this. I do not know the reasons or the motives behind this. It could have been what happened at the Redcliffe by-election that somehow he decided to show a little bit of compassion, even though we feel that we are just kicked in the guts. Or it could have been what happened in South Australia where the Liberals campaigned very aggressively against the two Independents, meanwhile the Labor Party was in power. And what happened? The Independents were elected and they hold the balance of power. Then the Liberal Party was sulking and sooking because they would not side with them. Why on earth would they want to side with them?

Ms Trad: They are big sooks.

Mr KNUTH: That is right. Now that I see this legislation, the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill, before the House, I know that the government are desperate. They are clutching at straws. They just cannot believe what has happened to them. They believed from the beginning, 'We are the LNP. Do you realise that we have a mandate? We have a mandate to do what we like.' But that arrogance is starting to filter right across Queensland where it is becoming unstoppable. But you do not have to legislate to get rid of opposition. You do not have to legislate to push the funding per vote down for the smaller people, like we have here, to try to prop yourselves up. If you want to capture the

audience, capture the voters of Queensland, it is about good governance. It is about accountability, honesty and integrity. That is all you have to do to win back the people of Queensland. But I do not know whether that is going to happen. I do not think it will. Like I was saying, it is a tidal wave that is virtually unstoppable. These are the issues that I wanted to bring to the attention of the House.

I have one more point to make in regard to having to have some form of identification. This is going to be very, very difficult, especially in Indigenous communities. You need to get the hard sell out there, especially telling the Indigenous people that they need a licence to vote. These people are in very, very remote communities. I believe that this absolutely discriminates against them for that reason. You need to give it a good hard sell. I heard someone before saying that we vote with the Labor Party. As the member for Condamine said before, we vote with nobody; we just vote against the LNP. I do recall when the LNP came to us to ask us to vote on their bill in relation to categorising video games to protect children. It was a very good bill as far as we could see, but the devil was in the detail. We thought, 'We will support them this time. This is so lovely what they are putting forward to protect children.' Then we found ourselves in the *Sunday Mail* as voting with the LNP to sack 200 court reporters and outsource their work to India! So this is why we find it very difficult to vote with the government. When they do put something good in a bill, there is always devil in the detail.

Ms Trad: Duplicity.

Mr KNUTH: Yes, duplicity. I believe that this is very discriminatory. This kicks smaller parties in the guts. Actually, it kicks everyone in the guts while it gives the LNP a great boost. I believe that in the end the Queensland voters will see through this; in fact, I think they are seeing through it now. I completely oppose this legislation.