

Question on Notice

No. 1745

Asked on 23 October 2019

MS C MCMILLAN ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General provide an update on how Queensland's real time donation disclosure laws are working?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mansfield for her question.

From 1 March 2017, the Palaszczuk Government introduced the real time reporting of gifts equal to or more than the gift disclosure threshold of \$1,000 received by registered political parties, their associated entities and candidates, and gifts equal to or more than the gift disclosure threshold made to political parties and candidates. Real time reporting was also introduced for loans to candidates, gifts used for third party expenditure for political purposes and large gifts.

Under the real time reporting requirements, names and addresses and other particulars must be submitted in a disclosure return to the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) through its Electronic Disclosure System (EDS) within seven business days, which is then made public. The EDS is accessible on the ECQ's website and provides voters with real time information. As a result, Queensland boasts the most transparent electoral system in the country.

In the 2018-2019 financial year, 2,774 gifts to registered political parties and State candidates were disclosed totalling \$8,823,236. The number of returns are expected to increase as we head into the 2020 election year. The ECQ's Annual Report for 2018-2019 provides additional information on the use and application of the EDS, particularly in the context of supporting the prohibited donor ban.

The Palaszczuk Government also recently introduced the *Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019*, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 16 October 2019. That Act enables 24 hour reporting to be imposed in the last seven days before an election and will be implemented by an amendment to the regulation in the near future so that it is in place for the 2020 State general election similar to those taken for Local Government elections. This will improve the integrity of our elections in Queensland so that electors will be better informed about who is making donations to electoral participants and may be influencing those participants right up to election day.