



14<sup>th</sup> February 2025  
The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
Hobart, TAS, 7000  
Email: [electoralmatters@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:electoralmatters@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Committee Members,

RE: Submission on the Electoral Amendment Bill 2024 (No. 25 of 2024)

I write to provide my submission on the Electoral Amendment Bill 2024, currently under inquiry by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. While I acknowledge that this amendment is minor in scope, I do not support the proposed changes due to significant concerns about election transparency, integrity, and fairness.

Tasmanians rightfully expect transparency in elections. Last year's state election saw a commitment from the Jacqui Lambie Network, of which I was formerly a member, to improve electoral accountability. This mantle has been accepted by your committee, and I thank you for your work. At a time when trust in political institutions is declining, any legislative changes affecting electoral conduct should enhance, not diminish, public confidence in the system.

### **Ongoing Investigations into Electoral Conduct**

Two current inquiries into electoral integrity highlight the need for caution before implementing changes:

1. The Integrity Commission's investigation into the use of public funds in election campaigns.
2. The Joint Standing Committee's broader inquiry into election conduct.

Given these active investigations, I strongly believe that any amendments to electoral laws should be deferred until their findings are available. Prematurely altering electoral legislation risks undermining public confidence in the integrity of the democratic process.

Despite this call for a hold on changes whilst a more comprehensive review is undertaken, I am comfortable with the revised Electoral Disclosure and Funding (Donation Disclosure) Amendment Bill 2024, as recommended by Committee A to align with the original July 2025 implementation dates.

### **[REDACTED] ction & the Liberal Party's Fake JLN Website**

The March 2024 state election provided a stark example of why stronger electoral candidate protections are needed.



The creation of a misleading website designed to impersonate the Jacqui Lambie Network demonstrated that, while such tactics may not have been illegal under current laws, they were certainly unethical.

This incident highlights the need for greater transparency and honesty in political advertising, rather than reducing the scope of existing protections.

## **Risks to Small Businesses & Online Integrity**

The online landscape is increasingly challenging for small businesses, independent candidates, and minor parties. The precedent set by allowing unrestricted use of names and images in election materials could normalise deceptive digital practices, making it harder for candidates to protect their identities and reputations. As artificial intelligence and digital impersonation become more sophisticated, we must ensure our electoral laws keep pace with these threats.

## **Opposition to the Amendment**

While I recognise that the amendment is minor, it does not contribute to improving honesty in political advertising or electoral transparency. I have existing commitments with the Government to review political donations legislation, and I believe a more holistic approach to electoral reform is required. Without sufficient safeguards, this amendment could discourage independent and small-party candidates from participating in elections, further consolidating power among major parties.

In order to mitigate the threat of misuse of personal images and allow for a more open debate in election campaigns, I believe this amendment requires the inclusion of a truth in advertising clause to safeguard against deceptive campaigning.

## **Conclusion**

This amendment does not align with the principles of electoral transparency and accountability that Tasmanians expect. Until comprehensive electoral reforms are enacted, including stricter regulations on campaign honesty and donation transparency, I cannot support this change. I urge the Committee to consider deferring any amendments to the Electoral Act until the findings of the ongoing electoral integrity inquiries are made public and acted upon.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important matter. I would welcome further engagement with the Committee on how Tasmania can strengthen electoral integrity for all voters.

Yours sincerely,  
Miriam Beswick MP  
Independent Member for Braddon