

## Submission to the Inquiry into the TEC

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### Political Donations

To ban specific industries (such as tobacco and gaming) from donating would set a dangerous and undemocratic precedent. A parliament must not alter political funding based on what it considers moral or immoral. Political candidates who possess different ethical beliefs to the current parliamentary majority would be given an unfair disadvantage. Democracy must work on the basis of a legislatively equal footing for all candidates and belief systems.

The prevalence of undisclosed donations is a major driver for banning political donations from 'immoral' industries. The ethical views of voters are vital influencers on voting decisions. By hiding the sources of donations the system prevents Tasmanians from voting fully in line with their own ethical systems. As long as donation disclosure laws remain lax people will seek to ban donations from industries they consider immoral, mistakenly remedying their own dis-empowerment at the voting booth through the dis-empowerment of others. It is the duty of the parliament to empower all citizens equally, irrespective of ideology, to vote according to their own desires. The source of any donations over a significant amount should be disclosed (\$1000 is commonly suggested and seems appropriate). Public disclosure of donations should occur soon after a donation is made so that voters are able to make informed decisions at upcoming elections.

A cap on yearly donation size should be put in place so that companies and individuals cannot overly influence political decisions based on wealth. The consequences of not setting a cap can be seen in the corruption revealed in NSW, where all major parties now support donation caps (currently set at \$5,700).

### Size of the House of Representatives

A lower house of 25 members is too small. A premier needs a larger pool of candidates to choose from when forming his or her ministry. We need to provide our government with a decent population of unused talent in the backbenches. Other state governments have larger lower houses, are two party systems, and can derive ministers from their partisan upper houses. The current three party system in our lower house and independence of our upper house, both chosen by the Tasmanian people, shouldn't be artificially undermined. Therefore we need to increase the size of the lower house, at least to the former level of 35, for the sake of competent governance.