

PO Box 851
PALMERSTON NT 0831

15 December 2017

Commissioner John Mansfield
Political Funding and Donations Inquiry
GPO Box 4396
DARWIN NT 0801

Dear Commissioner Mansfield

Inquiry into Options for the reform of Political Funding and Donations in the Northern Territory

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my views as a taxpayer and interested observer of the news. In the interests of full disclosure, I advise that I was once a member of a political party but resigned in 2008.

Public Funding

The benefits to the taxpayer of public funding would appear to be limited to reducing reliance on political donations. This same benefit would be obtained by putting a cap on spending on political advertising. The media usually does a good job of presenting the political views and issues and the savings generated could be better spent elsewhere.

To support the democratic process, I support limited public funding for independent candidates to recognise that independents usually have greater difficulty in funding advertising. However, to reduce any opportunity for rorting, I would like to see provision for refunding the funds received that if they subsequently joined a political party within a reasonable time.

Donations / Disclosure

The most important requirement is disclosure – and this should be in real time before and during election campaigns so that the voter can take this into account when deciding on who to vote for. I would prefer that donations to both party and candidates should be limited, perhaps to about \$200, and be permitted only from individuals who are on the electoral roll. This would mean that anonymous and foreign donations are not allowed. These types of donations should be immediately returned or given to an unrelated charitable organisation. I also believe that disclosure of MLA interests should also be made publicly available and updated regularly especially prior to Parliamentary sittings and elections.

Audit and Enforcement

I support independent audit with real penalties for non-disclosure including progressively heavy fines for late submissions. Penalties should be harsher for second offences.

Your sincerely,

Clare Hasewski

Taxpayer