



Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for Training and Skills

In reply please quote: 572305/1, 3159274

16 MAR 2016

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition No. 2507-15, tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 16 February 2016, requesting that the House give serious consideration to enacting legislative provisions which impose caps on political donations, prohibit property developers from making such donations and restrict indirect campaign donations, similar to the New South Wales *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981*.

The Queensland Government is strongly committed to ensuring transparency and integrity in the electoral processes at both a State and Local Government level.

To this end, the Government acted immediately, following the State election in 2015, to introduce amendments to strengthen accountability measures that apply to Parliamentary candidates under the *Electoral Act 1992* (the Act). In particular these amendments reinstated the \$1,000 gift disclosure threshold, and reduced the threshold for permitted anonymous gifts to political parties from \$12,800 to \$1,000. The previous Government's law made it possible for someone to walk into a Member of Parliament's office and donate \$12,000 and there would be no requirement to report it to the Electoral Commission of Queensland. The Government considers that these amendments ensure that Queenslanders can be confident that decisions made by the Government have not been influenced by secret political donations.

The electoral donation disclosure requirements of a candidate or third party for a Local Government election in Queensland are regulated by the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011* (LGEA) which falls within the portfolio responsibility of the Honourable Jackie Trad MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade and Investment. Currently, under the LGEA, candidates for Local Government elections are required to disclose gifts of \$200 or more, while third parties who receive gifts to enable expenditure for political activity are required to disclose amounts of \$1,000 or more.

The Government will continue to monitor Queensland's electoral laws, and related developments in other jurisdictions, consistent with the Government's ongoing reform agenda.

(2)

In this context, the recent report of the Crime and Corruption Commission '*Transparency and accountability in local government*' which was tabled in December 2015, should also be noted. This report made six recommendations to enhance accountability at a Local Government level. These recommendations are currently the subject of Government consideration.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvette D'ATH'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'Y'.

YVETTE D'ATH MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for Training and Skills