

The Greens NSW

19 Eve Street, Erskineville NSW 2043



Darryl Melham, MP
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

30 August 2011

Ref: Inquiry into election and party funding – supplementary submission from the Greens NSW

Dear Mr Melham,

As foreshadowed in our appearance at the committee's hearing in Sydney on August 9th, below is a supplementary submission dealing with our suggestion for a fair administration public funding model for federal parties. Our submission to the Green Paper outlines the case for party administration funding. Party administration funding has been introduced as part of electoral funding reform in both NSW and Queensland.

Supplementary Submission

Both the NSW and Queensland legislation determine qualification for administration funding and the amount of that funding on the number of elected MPs who represent that party. The absence of a proportionally elected chamber in Queensland limits that funding to parties able to win single-member electorates, and works in an anti-democratic way against parties who secure substantial amounts of the state-wide vote but fail to win a seat.

While the Senate is elected proportionally, the 14.28% quota is more than three times larger than the threshold for electoral funding of 4%. The Greens NSW feel a solely elected-member qualification would not result in a fair party administration funding outcome. Nevertheless, it is possible for Senators to be elected with primary votes below the 4% funding threshold, so a hybrid eligibility system could be desirable.

Administration funding would be paid on the basis of audited claims against the entitlements but could be paid in advance with a reduced entitlement in the next year if the audited expenditure is less than the entitlement amount.

1. Admin funding qualification and entitlement for registered parties - state/territory

For registered parties an annual payment based on the numerically higher of state-by-state House or Senate vote multiplied by an specified amount with the funds going to state divisions or to the federal division where there is no state division or the state division so nominates.

An appropriate amount would be 50 cents per vote resulting in a national public cost of approximately \$6.5 million per annum.

2. Admin funding qualification and entitlement for registered parties – federal

In addition an appropriately smaller amount based of nation-wide party vote going to the national level of the party if it exists. An appropriate level could be 10 cents per vote resulting in a public cost of no more than \$1.3 million per annum.

3. Admin funding qualification and entitlement for independents

For independent members of parliament 50 cents per vote received in their electorate. Approximate cost \$200,000 per annum.

4. Development funding for smaller and/or newly registered parties

For very small and newly registered parties/state divisions the greater amount of \$10,000 per annum indexed, or 50 cents per vote received in a state or territory plus 10 cents per vote nationwide for the federal division of the party. Eligibility should be for a specified term as applies in NSW for the policy development funding. Estimated cost \$100,000 per annum.

5. Interaction with State based party administration funding systems.

If party administration funding exists in the relevant state jurisdiction then the same party should not receive administration funding from both the Commonwealth and the state.

The Greens NSW commend this supplementary submission to the committee's consideration.

Chris Maltby
Registered Officer
The Greens NSW