



CHIEF MINISTER

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800
chief.minister@nt.gov.au

GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

Senator James Paterson
Chair
Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Paterson

Thank you for your letter of 21 September 2020, inviting submissions into the Inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Banning Dirty Donations) Bill 2020 being undertaken by the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee.

As you may be aware, my Government recently implemented a suite of reforms to improve the openness, accountability and transparency of the Northern Territory's electoral system. We looked across Australia to implement best practice, taking into consideration the Northern Territory's unique context, to put in place reforms to ensure Territorians are represented fairly and in their best interest.

Our recent reforms create greater transparency around political donations through the introduction of a new scheme to regulate political donations and campaign expenditure across candidates, political parties, associated entities and third party campaigners. The new scheme commenced on 1 January 2020 and was in place for the Northern Territory general election held on 22 August 2020.

Key elements of the reforms include an indexed \$40 000 cap on electoral expenditure for individual candidates, with a pooled cap for political parties. The cap is intended to reduce reliance on private donations, level the playing field across all candidates and minimise excessive advertising. Another key component of reforms was greater transparency of political donations and expenditure, particularly in election years, to increase the availability of up-to-date donation information that can be accessed by the public during the voting period. Members of the voting public are now able to see the identity of donors and the amount of political donations that have been received by candidates and parties, prior to voting.

The Northern Territory's reforms have worked well in our recent election by achieving increased electoral fairness and transparency. Further information on the arrangements in place in the Northern Territory can be accessed from: <https://ntec.nt.gov.au/financial-disclosure>.

Yours sincerely

MICHAEL GUNNER

-- 2 NOV 2020