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**Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into Commonwealth
Electoral Amendment (Lowering the Donation Disclosure Threshold) Bill 2019**

Dear Committee

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission.

This Bill is very modest. All it does is lower the disclosure threshold from the current disclosure threshold of \$14,000 to \$1,000.

The Bill implements a recommendation made in 2018 by the Senate Select Committee into the Political Influence of Donations. That Select Committee recommended that the disclosure threshold be lowered to \$1,000.

This Bill is important to improving transparency in Australia's political donations system, preventing impropriety and improving public confidence in the political process.

The only criticism that could be directed at the Bill is that it does not go far enough. Much more is needed to improve the integrity of Australia's political donations system. Other needed reforms include real time disclosure of donations (like exists in some States and overseas), caps on donations (like exists in some States and overseas) and caps on political advertising expenditure (like exists in some States and overseas).

I hope for more positive action from this Committee and the Parliament than has been the case in the recent past. In December 2019, this Committee recommended against passing the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Real Time Disclosure of Political Donations) Bill 2019. Instead, in a way that was not consistent with a genuine commitment to improving integrity in the political donations system, the Committee issued a short report that was perfunctory and unsophisticated.

Transparency is good for democracy and it is good for individual politicians and political parties. This Bill makes a vital first step towards improving the integrity of Australia's political donations system. It should be passed as soon as possible.

I trust this submission is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

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