

SUBMISSION DISCLOSURE LAW REFORM AFROCAB (Australians for Refunds on Cans and Bottles)

AFROCAB is a coalition of litter volunteers that support the introduction of National Container Deposit System. AFROCAB has been lobbying for CDS and litter reform since 2004.

We believe the aim of improved donation disclosure laws should be not just awareness of political donations but a cap on donations that creates a level playing field between corporate interests and community based organisations.

It is self evident that individuals and companies that donate large sums of money to political parties expect something in return. If donations buy ministerial access that is access which is usually not available to community groups. Secondly, community groups do not have deep pockets which allow business groups to employ lobbyists.

Example

In 2004/05 Coca Cola Amatil donated a total of \$205,000 to the ALP, the Liberal Party and the National Party. Coca Cola Amatil was the main opponent of CDS. What would they want the major political parties back then to do or not to do? The so-called pub test would regard this as undemocratic and borderline corruption. This is why many people feel political donations should be made illegal.

Principles

To be democratic access should be equal. It should not depend on the depth of your pockets. Therefore before the next election donations should be capped at \$1000 and limited to one per industry or per person, per year. Disclosure should be immediate and a federal ICAC should be created to oversee disclosures.

Conclusion

In the meantime we support the proposed amendments to the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918. The definition of reporting entities should be extended. Lower the threshold. Require disclosure when the sum of donations is greater than the threshold. Increase the power of the AEC. Add civil penalty provisions for serious breaches.

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