

LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

Federal Director

28 October 2019

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' inquiry into the conduct of the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Real Time Disclosure of Political Donations) Bill 2019.

It has been the long-standing position of the Liberal Party that Australian democracy is best served by a legislative framework for political party funding that is fair to all parties, is not unduly onerous for party administration, and takes adequate account of the role of third parties, such as trade unions and activist groups.

Australia's political parties are subject to a rigorous funding and financial disclosure regime under Part XX of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918.

The disclosure scheme requires candidates and federally registered political parties, their associated entities and donors to lodge financial disclosure returns with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The disclosure returns are published on the AEC website. Furthermore, registered political parties are audited on an annual basis and their financial disclosures are also regularly examined and audited by the AEC. The Liberal Party has always been committed to complying fully with the requirements of funding and disclosure legislation.

The Liberal Party does not support changes to these arrangements that would unnecessarily add to the already considerable administrative and compliance burdens placed on political parties. The Liberal Party does not support changes which fail to recognise that political parties are broad-based organisations with large volunteer wings and limited resources.

The Liberal Party supports the existing funding and financial disclosure regime, including the arrangements for the lodgement and publication of annual returns which have been in place under successive governments.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director