

PO Box 1146
Port Lincoln. SA 5606
25 November 2017

Mr G McNally
Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee into the Political Influence of Donations
PO Box 6100, Parliament House. Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr McNally

Re. your letter of 6 November 2017 requesting information on donations

Thank you for your letter. We did, in one year some time ago, donate a significant amount to a political party. This was highly unusual – as we have no political affiliation in any way. In fact, we stay as far away from political parties as possible – because politics scares us. We do not understand it – and frankly, the less we have to do with it the better.

However, fishing is possibly the most regulated industry of all. It is governments which control our every move. Whether we like it or not, we have to meet with government. In our case, we do the maximum possible through regulatory Agencies, and avoid the political arm as much as possible.

The reason for the donation

As we said at the time, our motivation was very clear. A Minister had told us that something would not happen in that particular year – so we went out and employed a lot of people and borrowed a lot of money to produce our product in the annual cycle. This was people's lives and families at stake.

We were completely naïve. We operate in a business where your word is your bond – so for us to be let down like we were, shattered our faith in governments forever. We later accepted that the Minister acted in good faith in making the promise but perhaps did not bargain on subsequent events which gave the Government wider reasons to trade us off for much greater national priorities. That did not reduce the financial and emotional impact it had on the Port Lincoln community. We have moved on.

In sheer frustration at the time, we donated the money. Obviously it was an impulsive mistake.

The wider issues

We are part of the deep frustration in the community about political parties breaking promises. In our case we, naively, took out our frustration with a donation – and we should have known better.

Yours sincerely

Brian Jeffriess
CEO – Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association
PO Box 1146. Port Lincoln SA 5606