



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Inquiry into all aspects of the conduct of the 2016 Federal Election and matters related thereto

Issue date: 12 December 2017

Review of political donations

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters is conducting a review of political donations as part of its inquiry into the conduct of the 2016 election.

Committee Chair Senator Linda Reynolds said the committee believed a multi-partisan review would answer questions concerning transparency, political campaigning and the scope or need for changing legal definitions within the Electoral Act.

“The committee is determined to develop a robust and transparent political donation process, which requires multi-partisan support,” Senator Reynolds said.

The Committee published a [discussion paper](#) in September on the issues it will be considering as part of this review and a number of submissions have now been received.

This discussion paper follows the Committee’s Second Interim Report on foreign donations, which identified four desirable characteristics of a reformed regulatory model for political donations. These included:

- Simple and streamlined;
- Transparent and timely;
- Clear and understandable; and
- Levelling the playing field.

The Committee’s discussion paper asks ‘what other characteristics are important in the new framework?’

In addition to the inquiry into political donations, the Committee has also received a reference to examine the Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform) Bill 2017. This Bill would ban donations from foreign bank accounts, non-citizens and foreign entities and has potential implications for the Committee’s review of political donations. The Committee has been requested to report on the Bill by 2 March 2018.

The Committee is mindful that the Australian legal system recognises an implied right to freedom of political communication. The Committee is considering rulings of the High Court on political donations, which have involved both freedom of speech issues and the integrity of Australian democratic institutions.

Public hearings for the Committee’s review of political donations are being planned for the week commencing 29 January 2018, at times and locations to be determined. The Committee intends to present its next report for the inquiry into the 2016 federal election in late-March 2018.

For more information about the inquiry visit <http://www.aph.gov.au/em>.

Enquiries:



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