Panel of Experts – Political Donations

Submitted by Charmian Eckersley

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Having been an Official Agent in a few elections I understand that the keeping of records for the EFA may seem onerous but it is all in the interests of maintaining and building a fair, open and honest democracy that benefits all Australians and that the political process is not rorted by a few who lack in moral fibre.

In this vein I strongly propose that:

Donations from mining companies, their staff and contracted public relations and lobbying firms should be prohibited immediately.

Steps must be taken immediately to prevent the caps and prohibitions that apply in New South Wales being circumvented by the use of Federal affiliates in the lead up to the 2015 election.

As complementary measures to donations reform, New South Wales needs to implement the outstanding items from the 17 recommendations to clean up lobbying made by the ICAC in 2010 and the outstanding ICAC recommendations for cleaning up the planning and development approval process.

Most importantly, donations disclosure should be much more timely and made more accessible in user-friendly databases for the public to search for key terms and names, with data able to be downloaded, and viewed across time. The archaic reliance of masses of forms to be filled out needs to be rationalised so maintaining and submitting records is made easy for the Official Agent and she or he is not subjected to undue influence from political parties or candidates.

regards,

Charmian Eckersley