



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report:

*Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering the Donation
Disclosure Threshold) Bill 2019*

MAY 2024

Introduction

On 28 May 2020, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters tabled a report titled *Inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering the Donation Disclosure Threshold) Bill 2019* (the Report).

On 2 December 2019, the Member for Mayo, Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP introduced to the House of Representatives the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering the Donation Disclosure Threshold) Bill 2019* (the Bill). The Bill sought to amend the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, to decrease the political donation disclosure threshold from \$13,800 to \$1,000, and to remove ongoing indexation of that disclosure threshold.

The Government's response to the recommendations of the Report follows below.

Government Response to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Report: Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering the Donation Disclosure Threshold) Bill 2019.

#	Recommendation	Government Response
1	The Committee recommends that the Bill not be passed.	<u>Noted</u> The Government notes the recommendation. Given the passage of time, a substantive government response is no longer appropriate.

Dissenting report by Australian Greens

#	Recommendation	Government Response
1	Amend the definition of 'gift' under the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> to membership subscriptions and payments for attendance at events and fundraisers hosted by candidates, political parties and associated entities.	Refer to recommendation 1 of the Majority Report.

#	Recommendation	Government Response
2	Amend the definition of ‘third party’ in s.287 to refer to an ‘electoral expenditure threshold’, rather than the disclosure threshold, for triggering when organisations become subject to reporting obligations.	Refer to recommendation 1 of the Majority Report.
3	<p>Amend the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduce a cap on donations to political parties, candidates and associated entities to a cumulative maximum value of \$3,000 per parliamentary term; and • introduce a ban on donations from developers, banks, mining companies and the tobacco, liquor, gambling, defence and pharmaceutical industries to political parties, candidates and associated entities. 	Refer to recommendation 1 of the Majority Report.
4	Revise annual return forms to require more detailed reporting, including specific classifications for each type of income.	Refer to recommendation 1 of the Majority Report.

#	Recommendation	Government Response
5	Ensure that the presentation of political finance data on the AEC website provides greater accessibility and functionality of files to facilitate public research and investigation.	Refer to recommendation 1 of the Majority Report.
6	Increase the regulatory powers of the AEC to monitor and enforce compliance with the political funding and disclosure regime, including aggregation of donations below the disclosure threshold.	Refer to recommendation 1 of the Majority Report.
7	Ensure AEC funding is adequate to allow implementation of the above recommendations.	Refer to recommendation 1 of the Majority Report.