

TIGHTER DONATIONS LAWS

TRANSPARENCY AND LIMITS ON POLITICAL INFLUENCE FOR A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY

The ACT Greens believe that grassroots democracy is central to a strong, transparent political system. We want to ensure politicians are motivated by a desire to get good outcomes for the people and planet, and are not unduly influenced by harmful industries.

The harms that come from the fossil fuel industry, the tobacco industry and the gambling industry are well known. We also know those industries have a vested interest when it comes to political donations.

That's why the ACT Greens will keep big money out of politics and ban donations from these harmful industries, and limit how much anyone can give to a political party, so that political influence is distributed across broad grassroots movements.

THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Reinstatement of the \$10,000 cap on donations to political parties
- ▲ Expansion of the scope of 'prohibited donors' to include fossil fuel companies, the nicotine industry and gambling licencees
- ▲ Matching or exceeding Commonwealth reforms as they arise

REINSTATING THE \$10,000 CAP

The human instinct of reciprocity can have a corrupting influence in politics. Without donation caps, parties can be entirely beholden to and dependent on a small number of significant donors, and inclined to return favours to them.

This is why the ACT previously had a cap on donations that prevented anyone from donating more than \$10,000 to a political party in a financial year. Unfortunately, this was repealed by the Labor and Liberal parties in 2015, with Shane Rattenbury being the only MLA to vote against the repeal.

It's not just pro-democracy organisations like the Centre for Public Integrity¹ who are calling for this to be restored. Elections ACT² has also argued for the reinstatement of the cap.

Donation caps need to be applied to all political actors, including third party campaigners and candidates. The Greens will work to restore this tool of political integrity in the ACT.

EXPANDING PROHIBITED DONORS

There are particular industries which have a clear corrupting influence on politics. We've already banned donations from property developers and foreign organisations, but these aren't the only problematic sectors.

¹ See the Centre for Public Integrity's 2022 briefing paper: [Big money still calling the shots](#)

² Inquiry into the 2020 Election by the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety. See [Submission 008](#) by the ACT Electoral Commission, Recommendation 21.

We've seen the extent to which the gambling industry goes to keep people on the pokies. We've seen governments worldwide become captive to fossil fuel interests which make climate change worse. We've seen big tobacco turn the nicotine replacement therapy of vapes into a new drug dependency.

These industries are particularly insidious with their lobbying and we need to cut their ties to politics if we want to reduce the potential for harm.

That's why the ACT Greens will put forward a comprehensive proposal to ban donations from fossil fuel companies, the nicotine industry and the gambling industry.

We know that vested interests will fight back, so it will take a lot of work to build the cases and get these bans to stick, but the Greens are up for the challenge.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ELSEWHERE?

The Greens will remain alert to what is happening interstate. If another jurisdiction achieves good progress, we will attempt to replicate or exceed them. Regardless, there is nothing stopping us from implementing what we know can and should be done in the ACT.

Federal donations laws are especially loose. Unfortunately, Labor has stopped negotiating with the Australian Greens on federal donation reforms, so we don't know what they have planned. It'll probably be a far cry short of what Australia needs, but if anything passes which is better than what the ACT

already has, we'll commit to replicating it in the ACT for consistency, if not doing it better.