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Independent Member for Nelson

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Shred the Shroud of Secrecy: Strengthen & Implement State Donation Disclosure Laws Call

Independent Member for Nelson Meg Webb has called on the Tasmanian government to commit to further strengthening and the earlier commencement of the State's stalled political donations disclosure laws, in light of today's release of the Federal 2023-24 annual returns by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Ms Webb said the Tasmanian *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023* is only partially in force, with the state donations disclosure requirements not scheduled for commencement until July 1 this year.

"Once again the latest annual Federal political donations disclosures serves to highlight the ongoing secrecy and opacity cloaking donations, and the growing urgency for the immediate implementation of real state reform to shred the current shroud of secrecy," Ms Webb said.

"Democracy relies on healthy transparency and accountability.

"Premier Rockliff likes to claim he leads a transparent government.

"Well, action speaks louder than words. I challenge the Premier to support the lowering of the Tasmanian disclosure threshold to \$1000 upon the resumption of Parliament and to also bring forward the commencement date of the state laws in full as soon as possible.

"In the absence of commenced state donations disclosure laws, Tasmanians have no choice but to rely on the flawed and inadequate Federal system."

Ms Webb said today's federal donations disclosure only details donations reported during the 2023-24 financial year which fails the timely transparency test.

"Further the required disclosure threshold of \$16, 300 or above is not transparent by anyone's definition, let alone when a federal election is imminent.

"The absurd federal disclosure threshold of \$16, 300 actually obscures donations received with the Tasmanian Labor party only disclosing 8.25% of funding received, and the Tasmanian Liberal party disclosing only 14.85% of its funding sources.

"Further, the AHA disclosure reveals donations to Tas Labor totalling \$3250, which the Labor Party did not see fit to include in its disclosure and only comes to light due to it being listed on the AHA return.

"Thanks to both the Tasmanian Liberal and Labor parties, this AHA donation would not need to be declared even under the \$5000 threshold contained in our yet to be

commenced State laws. This highlights why we must amend our new Act to require the lower disclosure threshold of \$1000.

“Effective state laws should rip back that shroud of secrecy and provide Tasmanian voters in real time details of any donations of \$1000 or above, to ensure we know who gave what to whom by the time we go to the ballot box.”

“It is beyond time for both the Tasmanian government and Labor Opposition to come out from behind their political donations curtains, and commit to real and timely transparency as Tasmanians have repeatedly called for over years.”

She also stated that as the Legislative Council election period for the seats of Nelson, Pembroke and Montgomery is currently underway, all donations made to her election campaign of \$1000 or above will be disclosed on her website in real time of notification, and definitely prior the 3 May polling day.

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