

## 10 STATE ELECTION

# Gifts under the radar

## Political donations slip in before new disclosure rules

**David Killick**

A rush of donations to avoid new disclosure laws, and the timing of the July 19 state election, mean voters will still remain in the dark about who provides the bulk of the funding for their political parties.

Tasmania has long lagged behind the nation, but the Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act came into operation on Tuesday and creates a new state-based donations disclosure scheme.

Political donations must now be disclosed to the TEC within seven days of being made during an election campaign. And whole-campaign returns are due within 60 days.



**Greens MP  
Tabatha  
Badger**

Greens member for Lyons Tabatha Badger said it was a major step forward for transparency.

“While this important reform means donations over \$1000 will be made public for the remainder of this campaign, we are calling on both major parties to follow the Greens’ lead by voluntarily disclosing donations made prior to July 1,” she said.

“The major parties have

been able to keep political donations secret from the public for too long.

“It’s meant big corporates like salmon farming companies, the pokies lobby and developers have been able to influence government policy behind closed doors.”

Ms Badger said she believed there had been a rush in donations before the new laws came into effect.

“We know the Liberal and Labor parties have spent the first weeks of the election raking in big sums ahead of July 1,” Ms Badger said.

“We hear Labor in particular has tried to beat the July 1 start time by hosting an expensive fundraising dinner

last week. With a major party reportedly filling a room with vested interests paying a price of thousands of dollars a head, and who knows how much more flowing in from other sources, there is a serious problem.

“What does Labor have to hide from Tasmanian voters?” Independent MLC Meg Webb said this election would still be marred by the old regimen.

“Under the new laws, political donations of \$1000 must be disclosed within a seven-day period to the TEC. The Commission then has up to a further seven days by which to make those disclosures public,” she said.

“This potential 14-day time lag means donations of \$1000 or more made up until Tuesday may not become public until July 14, and any donations received on or later than July 6 may not be made public until after polling day on the 19th.”

Premier Jeremy Rockliff rejected calls for the major parties to disclose all of their donations for the entire election campaign.

“We’ll be complying with the law,” he said.

Labor leader Dean Winter said much the same.

“We will comply with all of the laws when it comes to disclosure,” he said.

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