

Media Release

The Hon Gavin Jennings MLC
Special Minister of State
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council



Getting Things Done.
Making Things Fair.

Tuesday, 8 March, 2018

STRICTEST DONATION LAWS IN THE COUNTRY

Victoria will soon have the strictest and most transparent political donation laws in Australia under legislation introduced into the Parliament today by the Andrews Labor Government.

The *Electoral Legislation Amendment Bill 2018* will overhaul Victoria's political donations regime by eliminating large donations and usher in Australia's most transparent donation disclosure laws to give Victorians increased confidence in political decision-making.

The legislation will:

- Cap donations at \$4,000 over a four-year parliamentary term, completely eliminating large donations to political parties, associated entities, and third-party campaigners
- Reduce the disclosure limit from \$13,500 to \$1,000 per financial year
- Ban foreign donations
- Introduce tough penalties for failing to comply including up to 10 years imprisonment for breaches

For the first time in our state, every disclosable donation under the new rules will be published online in real-time by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) – shining a light on who donates and when.

Any organisation that is a member or an affiliate of a political party will also be required to report on their political activity and donations on an annual basis.

Given the strict new administrative requirements upon political parties and the need to ensure continued participation in election campaigns, the existing public funding formula is also being changed to reflect these stringent new donation rules and limit the influence of private donations in the political process.

The additional cost of these new public funding arrangements will be \$45 million over four years.

The Bill will specify a minimum number of parliamentary advisers for non-government parties to provide greater certainty and transparency for staffing arrangements, and limit the discretion of the Government of the day.

The legislation modernises Victoria's outdated electoral rules by streamlining early voting arrangements, and allows for the earlier processing of such votes to enable more of them to be counted on election night. The Bill also enables registered political logos to be printed on ballot papers consistent with Commonwealth law.

Political bunting and signage around polling stations will be restricted, with political parties and candidates limited on the number of signs allowed around voting centres.

These tough new rules on donations and other electoral changes will be phased in from the 1 July 2018.

Quotes attributable to Special Minister of State Gavin Jennings

"These tough new donation laws will be the strictest and most transparent in the country, because Victorians deserve to know who donates to political parties, how much, and when."

"Whether it's banning all foreign donations, capping the amount of money that can be donated or bringing in real time disclosure of donations, this reform is long overdue."

Media contact: Chris Piper 0458 715 135 | chris.piper@minstaff.vic.gov.au