

5 October 2017

Our ref WD NFP

Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: [em@aph.gov.au](mailto:em@aph.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary

### **Inquiry into 2016 Federal Election - Review of political donations**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Discussion Paper on the Committee's review of political donations as part of the Committee's inquiry into the conduct of the 2016 federal election. Queensland Law Society appreciates being consulted on this important issue and being allow a short extension of time to provide this correspondence.

The Queensland Law Society (QLS) is the peak professional body for the State's legal practitioners. We represent and promote nearly 12,000 legal professionals, increase community understanding of the law, help protect the rights of individuals and advise the community about the many benefits solicitors can provide. The QLS also assists the public by advising government on improvements to laws affecting our community and working to improve their access to the law.

This response has been compiled with the assistance of the Not for Profit Law Committee who have substantial expertise in this area.

The submission is quite short but members of the Not for Profit Law Committee can be available if required to develop the single point set out in the submission.

It has come to the attention of at least some of the members of our Committee that it is possible to avoid or minimise the impact of regulation of political advocacy by choosing to remain outside of the charity regulatory regime.

It is a general principle inherent in the rule of law that all citizens, and as a part of that all organisations through which they express themselves, should be treated equally under the law.

QLS raises for consideration by the Joint Standing Committee whether or not it is in the national interest for different regimes to apply to charities than other not-for-profits or for profit organisations? If so, why and if no, why not?

## Inquiry into 2016 Federal Election - Review of political donations

Should the Joint Standing Committee wish to explore these ideas further then please contact QLS on the details below and the Chair or another member of the Not for Profit Law Committee can provide further information that may be of assistance.

If you have any queries regarding the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact our Acting Principal Policy Solicitor, Wendy Devine on (07) 3842 5896 or [w.devine@qls.com.au](mailto:w.devine@qls.com.au).

Yours faithfully



Christine Smyth  
**President**