



MEDIA STATEMENT

12 March 2024

Electoral reforms must allow political competition

Kate Chaney MP, Federal Independent for Curtin, has cautiously welcomed news the government looks set to move on its promised electoral reform, saying fairness and transparency is essential to restore Australians trust in their federal political system.

Since her election in 2022, Ms Chaney has advocated for the overhaul of the donations system underpinning the federal politics and putting an end to so called “cash for access”. Ms Chaney introduced her ‘Restoring Trust’ Private Members’ Bill to the House of Representatives last year proposing reforms to improve transparency, reduce financial influence and level the playfield.

According to news reports today, the Federal Government looks set to limit the size of donations for parties and individual candidates, as well as seeking to cap the amount spent in each electorate and increase public funding for political campaigns.

Ms Chaney has emphasised to the Government that with crossbench support, key reforms on transparency and banning lies could be in place for the next election.

Comments attributable to Kate Chaney MP:

“Voters deserve to know who is funding their candidates and be protected from outright lies in political advertising. They also deserve a competitive choice of candidates.

“No one thinks it’s good for democracy when one individual can spend \$100 million to influence the outcome of an election. But if taxpayers fund election campaigns instead, through an increase in public funding, it entrenches the status quo. We need competition in business, and we also need competition in politics.

“When I see the proposed legislation, I will be looking for the reforms that will rebuild trust, like greater real-time transparency and stopping outright lies.

“I will also be looking at whether the major parties have colluded to structure any caps in a way intended to arrest the decline of their own vote, by making it hard for new challengers to get their message out there. Running a campaign from a standing start is expensive and parties have huge economies of scale as well as the many benefits of incumbency. Any cap system will need to treat different funding structures fairly and in a way that maintains political competition – whether candidates receive donations from companies, unions, crowdfunding intermediaries, or individual citizens.

“We need to keep the door open for new candidates – a third of Australians didn’t give their first preference to a major party at the last election and 99.6% of Australians are not a member of a major party. Communities clearly want the choice to be represented differently and any election law reforms must respect that.

Electorate office

Cnr The Boulevard and Floreat Ave
Floreat WA 6014
PO Box 186 Floreat WA 6014

T. 08 9388 0288
E. kate.chaney.mp@aph.gov.au
W. www.katechaney.com.au

Parliamentary Office

PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

T. 02 6277 4655



Kate Chaney MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR CURTIN

“We don’t let Coles and Woolies make the laws about supermarket competition, but there’s a real danger here that the two major parties get to make the laws about political competition.

“There are other reforms that should be enacted simultaneously such as stopping political parties using the postal voting process to harvest data and banning government contractors from political donations. These changes are likely to also have majority support in both houses.

“I will keep pushing the government on reforms to improve transparency, reduce financial influence and maintain a level playing field so that as many reforms as possible can be implemented before the next election.”

[ENDS]

Media contact: Emma-Jane Morcombe | P: 0439 272 262 | E: emmajane.morcombe@aph.gov.au

Electorate office

Cnr The Boulevard and Floreat Ave
Floreat WA 6014
PO Box 186 Floreat WA 6014

T. 08 9388 0288
E. kate.chaney.mp@aph.gov.au
W. www.katechaney.com.au

Parliamentary Office

PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

T. 02 6277 4655