

MEDIA RELEASE

Vic political donations: bill gives voters certainty ahead of election, but challenges remain

03.06.2026

A bill introduced into the Victorian Parliament today would close a massive loophole threatening democracy in the lead up to the November election, but advocates say there is still work to do.

The legislation would restore voters' ability to see who is funding political candidates, reinstate caps on how much can be donated, remove the nominated entity provision that favoured major parties and ban foreign donations.

Democracy Counts Campaign Director Tom Mooney said these were basic democratic principles that voters support.

"Politicians and candidates need money to communicate what they stand for, but it can't be a free-for-all or happen out of sight. Our research shows 71% of Australians support capping political donations and 77% want donations to be disclosed in real time," Mr Mooney said.

"Democracy works best when every voter knows their voice matters more than money."

Democracy Counts – a new civil society campaign including the Centre for Public Integrity and Transparency International – has been campaigning for urgent action to close campaign finance loopholes ahead of the election while pushing for broader reform to level the playing field.

"While we are disappointed this bill was developed behind closed doors and progressed quickly through the Victorian Parliament, we recognise the need to fill the existing transparency vacuum," Mr Mooney said.

"We are pleased to see the Bill would establish an independent review of the state's political finance laws, drawing on expert analysis and public consultation, following the election."



“Expert and public scrutiny is particularly important when we’re talking about laws that govern the conduct of politicians themselves.”

“This bill is a really important step in the right direction and its proof that when citizens and civil society speak up for democracy, we get results.”

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