

Greens Democracy for Sale report

\$8m in misreported donations



Senator Lee Rhiannon
Greens democracy spokesperson
24 May 2016

The Greens' Democracy for Sale¹ project has revealed that \$8m in donations has been reported by donors since 2010 which has not been disclosed as donations by parties. This research demonstrates serious failings in the donations disclosure regime.

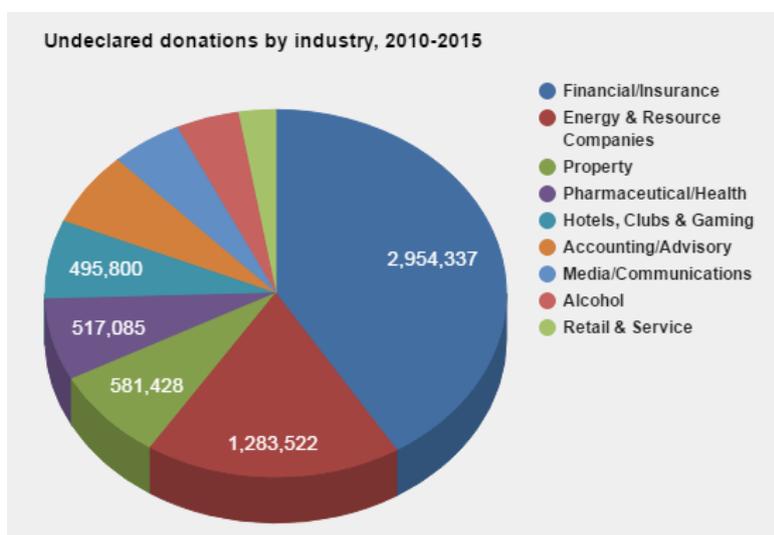
This data shows amounts disclosed as donations by donors, but not disclosed as donations by parties. The amount might not have been disclosed at all by the political party, or more commonly it was disclosed as an 'other receipt' payment. Payments not classified as donations by parties will not appear in a party donations search on the Australian Electoral Commission's database.

ALP and Liberal Party annual totals for political donations disclosed

ALP		LP	
2010-11	\$618,217.00	2010-11	\$452,079.00
2011-12	1,007,607	2011-12	\$647,988.00
2012-13	\$1,325,749.00	2012-13	\$741,100.00
2013-14	\$903,131.00	2013-14	\$713,100.00
2014-15	\$575,825.00	2014-15	\$185,100.00
Total	\$4,430,529.00	Total	\$2,739,367.00

Industry categorisation

The Democracy for Sale project categorises donors into industries to analyse trends in political donations. The project examines lobbying activities and changes in government policies that may impact on donor sectors. This analysis has been applied to the \$8m in misreported donations. We know that some industries rely more on political intervention.



¹ <http://democracyforsale.net/search-aec/>

Biggest donors

The biggest donors who have had donations misreported are some of the heavy hitters in corporate Australia. These donations will not appear in a party donations search on the AEC's database.

Undeclared donations by donor, 2010-2015		
Visa AP Australia Pty Ltd	\$	581,732.00
National Australia Bank	\$	573,650.00
Woodside Energy Ltd	\$	456,500.00
Macquarie Group Limited	\$	445,400.00
Registered Clubs (Clubs NSW)	\$	316,300.00
KPMG	\$	303,400.00
Lion Pty Ltd	\$	298,500.00
Macquarie Telecom	\$	287,133.00
Chevron Australia Pty Ltd	\$	208,550.00
Santos Limited	\$	199,945.00

Controversial donors

Several donors found in our research have been linked to scandals involving shadowy associated entities, tax evasion and corruption.

Company	Donation amount	Controversy
Manildra Group	\$58,775	Ethanol fuel laws; tax evasion
Leighton Holdings	\$23,800	Corruption through Unaoil scandal
Yuhu Group	\$20,000	Donated to Trade Minister and will benefit from China FTA
Xiang Rong (Australia) Investment Group	\$75,000	Have donated to discredited Free Enterprise Foundation
Chevron	\$208,550	Investigated for tax evasion and controversial Gorgon Gas Project
Clubs NSW	\$316,300	Alleged to have sought influence over poker machine reform

Further information

Our researchers used the donor analysis function on the AEC database to match donor and party returns. Scripts were used to find different disclosures, then a manual check was performed to account for entries which the scripts might have missed (e.g. Australian Labor Party vs ALP). A third manual check was performed on all amounts over \$20k and links to the original returns were added. The donor types were then analysed according to the donor type definitions² on D4S.

It is important for the public to be able to easily access donations information. The High Court recognised last year that patterns of donations have a corrupting effect on democracy³. When a party does not disclose a payment as a 'donation', it will not appear in donations searches on the AEC's database. This effectively hides millions of dollars in payments each election cycle.

² <http://democracyforsale.net/categories/>

³ <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/3408640/opinion-power-of-corporate-patrons/>