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27 June 2008

Mr Adem Somyurek
Chair
Electoral Matters Committee
Parliament House
Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Mr Somyurek

Re: Electoral Matters Committee Inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the above inquiry.

The Property Council of Australia represents the interests of the property industry. The Property Council is the largest and most influential industry organisation within its sector and has in excess of 2000 member companies throughout Australia, with approximately 500 of those in the Victorian Division, representing property assets of over \$300 billion nationally.

The Property Council and some of its members make donations to political parties. Political donations allow political parties to adequately capitalise their activities. In addition the act of fundraising encourages politicians to engage with sections of the community.

While we welcome the Committee's inquiry into the matter, any changes to the current system should be consistent with the outcomes of the Federal Government Green Paper on electoral reform.

The following addresses the questions raised by the Electoral Matters Committee.

Disclosure of contributions, donations and loans to political parties and candidates

The Property Council supports protecting the public interest by applying effective disclosure provisions.

Limits/bans on contributions, donations and loans

The Property Council does not support sector-specific limits or bans on contributions, donations and loans. The Property Council sees no evidence of any abuse of the political donations process unique to the construction or development sectors.

The Voice of Leadership

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**PROPERTY
COUNCIL**
of Australia



Limiting contributions is currently being considered by the Federal Government Green Paper. Any decision on limits and bans should be considered after the findings of the Federal review and be consistent with these findings. The Property Council does not support different rules for different jurisdictions.

Public funding of election campaigns

The Property Council supports public funding of election campaigns providing the process is transparent.

Contributions from entities having contracts or tendering for contracts with the Victorian Government

The Victorian Government's tendering process should be robust and transparent enough to deal with potential conflicts of interest. However any changes to the current system should be considered in light of international best practice, and the need to treat sectors equally.

Limits on electoral campaign expenditure

Any limits on electoral campaign expenditure should be applied to all sectors equally on a national basis.

Please contact me on 03 9650 8300 or jcunich@propertyoz.com.au if you require further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Cunich". The signature is written in a cursive style with large, flowing letters.

Jennifer Cunich
Executive Director