

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION**

*Forty-seventh Report — “Electoral Amendment Bill 2020” — Tabling*

**HON DR SALLY TALBOT (South West)** [10.59 am]: I am directed to present the forty-seventh report of the Standing Committee on Legislation, titled “Electoral Amendment Bill 2020”.

[See paper [4613](#).]

**Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT:** The report that I just tabled advises the house of the Standing Committee on Legislation’s findings and recommendations in relation to the Electoral Amendment Bill 2020, which proposes to amend the Electoral Act 1907. The Legislative Council referred the bill to the committee with the power to inquire into policy on 10 September 2020. The policy objectives of the bill are to improve disclosure laws around political donations, ensure more timely disclosure of those donations, place a total ban on foreign donations in WA and introduce expenditure caps for election campaigns.

The first of these objectives would mean that any donation made to a political party or associated entity of \$1 000 or above would have to be declared, with details of the donor included, in returns to the Western Australian Electoral Commissioner. The current disclosure threshold is \$2 500. The committee sought an explanation of some details of the proposals and recommends that the disclosure threshold should be amended to “an amount above \$1 000” so as to establish a requirement that is simpler and easier to communicate.

The second objective would be achieved by introducing quarterly reporting of gifts and donations received by political parties and associated entities, instead of the current requirement for an annual report. A majority of the committee found that the move to quarterly reporting would create administrative difficulties for political parties, associated entities and the Western Australian Electoral Commission for no material benefit, and recommends that clause 12 of the bill be deleted. A minority of the committee, however, found that quarterly reporting is an important step in the direction of a more transparent system of disclosure.

The placing of a total ban on the receipt of foreign donations or gifts by election participants was generally welcomed by the committee and, subject to the receipt of satisfactory explanations from the Minister for Electoral Affairs, enactment of clause 13 should proceed.

Proposals for the introduction of expenditure caps on election participants were considered. Comparisons with such caps in other jurisdictions were made, and the contents of the government’s tabled paper 4104, “Explanation of the justification of the expenditure caps in the Electoral Amendment Bill 2020”, were discussed. A majority of the committee recommended that this measure not be passed, while a minority supported the clause. The committee has made 14 findings and 16 recommendations. I commend the report to the house.