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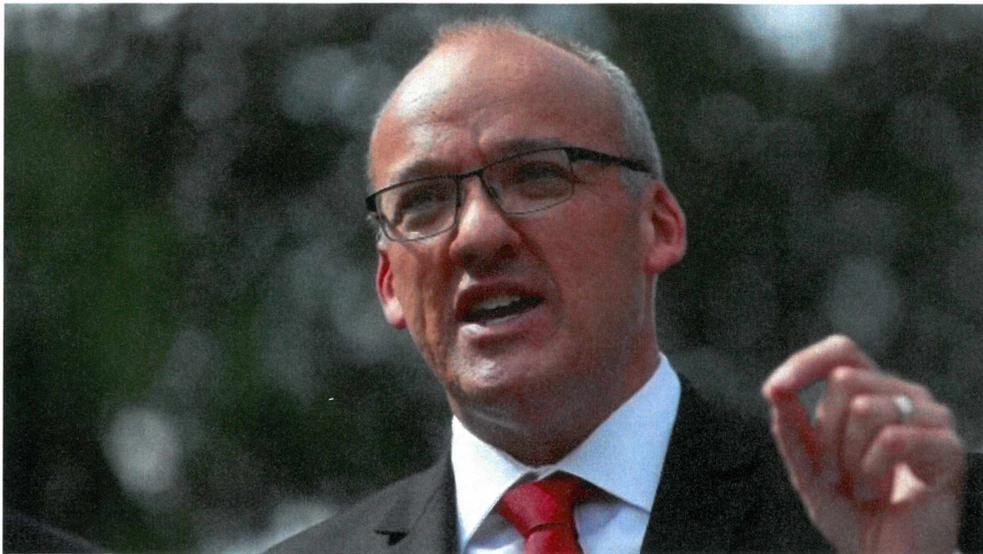
Political donations: NSW Labor's Luke Foley pledges 'real-time' reporting

By Kirsty Needham

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NSW Labor will become the first Australian political party to disclose political donations as they come in, with a system to be up and running in 2017, NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley will outline on Sunday.

The major transparency pledge will be made in his first leader's speech to the party's annual conference at Town Hall.



"Disclosure delayed is disclosure denied": Luke Foley. JOOSEP MARTINSON

"A cornerstone of our state's democracy must be timely and transparent disclosure of political donations," said Mr Foley.

"Currently, voters in NSW wait up to 17 months to find out who has donated to which party and how much. Disclosure delayed is disclosure denied."





Federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten with his family at the NSW Labor Conference at Sydney's Town Hall on Saturday. JAMES BRICKWOOD

Mr Foley said NSW Labor's disclosure regime will go beyond the recommendations of an expert panel headed by senior public servant Kerry Schott, which had urged the Baird government to bring in online, real-time reporting of donations for the six months preceding any election.

Mr Baird is yet to act on the recommendations.

"No more delay – I challenge Mr Baird and the Liberals to make the same commitment," said Mr Foley.

He has requested Kaila Murnain, expected to be elected as NSW Labor general secretary on Sunday, to have the new system up and running next year.

Details of a reportable donation to state Labor campaigns, including the source of the donation and the amount, will be publicly available online within seven days of it being received by the NSW party office, under the reform.

The donations will be reported continually, not just during an election period.

The Schott panel recommended that the Baird government introduce online disclosure of donations more than a year ago.

The expert panel was formed in response to ICAC hearings that revealed Liberal Party candidates had accepted donations from banned donors ahead of the 2011 state election. Ten Liberal MPs resigned in the wake of the ICAC hearings.

The Schott report, released in December 2014, described NSW as having an "archaic paper-based disclosure system" where "reporting is so delayed as to be of little interest to voters".

The report urged the real-time disclosure of donations over \$1000.

The Baird government has said it accepted the Schott recommendations in principle.

As an interim measure, there was a one-off special disclosure of donations made before the March 2015 election.

NSW Labor said it recognised the new donations policy will be a major technical undertaking as the NSW Electoral Commission doesn't yet have the systems in place for continuous reporting of donations.

The former NSW electoral commissioner Colin Barry, who resigned in January, warned last October about the Baird government's lack of progress, saying it would take 12 months for new funding and disclosure laws to be drafted.

He said they needed to be in place well ahead of the next election.

The NSW Electoral Commission has told a NSW parliamentary committee that it has put forward a business case to NSW Treasury for an online portal for political donations.

Property developers, liquor and gambling companies are banned from making donations under NSW's strict electoral funding laws. There are also donations caps in place.

**Kirsty Needham**

Kirsty Needham is China Correspondent for The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age.