

Greens launch updated Democracy for Sale website, release analysis

The Greens have upgraded their [Democracy for Sale political donations website](#), run via Senator Lee Rhiannon's office, and released new analysis on political donations since 1998.

Democracy for Sale has categorised 95.5% of money disclosed to the AEC since 1998 by sector or industry.

The public can now search all payments to political parties since 1998 over the declarable threshold using filters for AEC receipt type (i.e. donation or subscription), year, party and category filters.

The Greens' Democracy for Sale has uploaded a total of 56,673 payments to political parties, and categorised 49,035 of those payments. The total amount of reported receipts between 1998 and 2015 is \$994,822,181.

Democracy for Sale expects the grand total of reported payments made to political parties since 1998 will reach \$1 billion in the 2015-2016 year.

Key industry payment totals since 1998:

- Property industry: The most generous for-profit sector with \$64,099,161 (amount excludes other receipts, which are most likely loans and bank transfers).
- Resource companies: The second most generous for-profit sector with \$50,824,732.
- Financial/Insurance: \$37,078,539 (amount excludes other receipts, which are most likely loans and bank transfers).
- Alcohol: \$2,996,153. These payments peaked in 2000 and again in 2013-14.
- Pharmaceutical/Health: \$12,625,078. These contributions have been rising steadily since 2008.

Ten top donors:

1. Labor Holdings Pty Ltd: \$40,995,000.
2. Cormack Foundation Pty Ltd: \$39,193,000.
3. Queensland Nickel Pty Ltd: \$21,664,196.
4. John Curtin House Ltd: \$16,108,830.
5. Mineralogy Pty Ltd: \$14,692,636.
6. The Free Enterprise Foundation: \$8,856,612.
7. Progressive Business Association: \$6,830,304.
8. Canberra Labor Club Ltd: \$6,177,191.
9. Village Roadshow Limited: \$5,022,263.
10. Pratt Holdings Pty Ltd: \$4,609,733.

Note: The AEC website has published data for payments to political parties online since 1998. In 2005 the Howard government changed the law and raised the disclosure threshold to \$10,000 (linked to the CPI). For financial year 2015-16 the disclosure threshold was \$13,000. The Democracy for Sale website categorises AEC disclosures over that threshold.

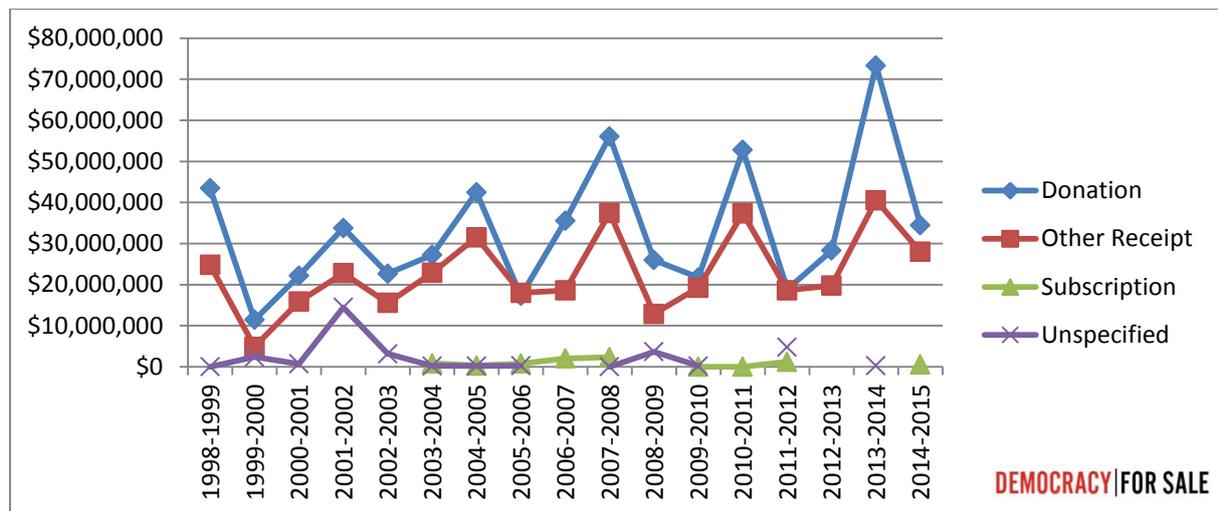
KEY FINDINGS

Yearly totals for each receipt type

Year	Donation	Other Receipt	Subscription	Unspecified	Total
1998-1999	\$43,468,332	\$24,795,531		\$2,174	\$68,266,037
1999-2000	\$11,454,880	\$4,855,370		\$2,404,215	\$18,714,464
2000-2001	\$22,151,600	\$15,880,043		\$728,239	\$38,759,882
2001-2002	\$33,792,878	\$22,785,719		\$14,452,227	\$71,030,825
2002-2003	\$22,650,622	\$15,563,153		\$3,163,334	\$41,377,109
2003-2004	\$27,224,278	\$22,854,085	\$818,391	\$192,695	\$51,089,449
2004-2005	\$42,504,271	\$31,531,678	\$304,274	\$201,243	\$74,541,466
2005-2006	\$17,284,066	\$18,024,500	\$796,351	\$262,201	\$36,367,118
2006-2007	\$35,534,905	\$18,584,271	\$2,026,164		\$56,145,340
2007-2008	\$56,069,670	\$37,452,310	\$2,341,800	\$32,500	\$95,896,281
2008-2009	\$25,982,704	\$12,872,725		\$3,677,155	\$42,532,584
2009-2010	\$21,743,267	\$19,261,888	\$165	\$217,000	\$41,222,320
2010-2011	\$52,790,422	\$37,347,049	\$14,176		\$90,151,647
2011-2012	\$18,842,950	\$18,642,394	\$1,202,192	\$4,800,000	\$43,487,536
2012-2013	\$28,296,522	\$19,761,857			\$48,058,379
2013-2014	\$73,322,514	\$40,527,515		\$292,327	\$114,142,356
2014-2015	\$34,481,687	\$27,974,052	\$583,650		\$63,039,389
Grand Total	\$567,595,568	\$388,714,140	\$8,087,163	\$30,425,310	\$994,822,181

** n.b. 'Unspecified' money refers to receipts which have not been classified by the recipient in their return.

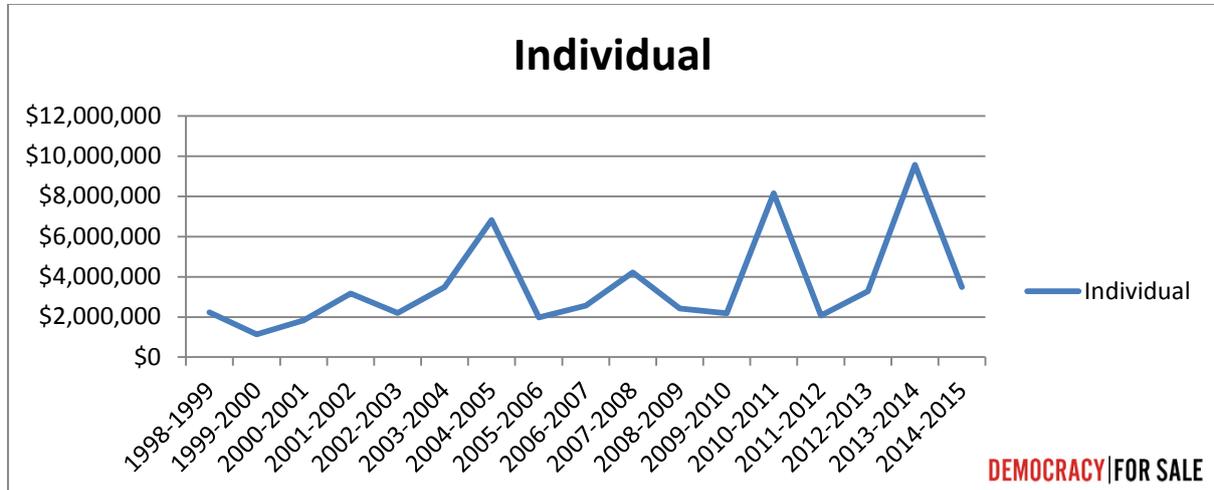
Donations made to political parties spike in election years



Individual donations

Political donations from individuals which exceeded the disclosure threshold have favoured the Coalition during election campaigns. The dip in 2007-08 occurred during the 2007 election when Labor was heavily favoured to win.

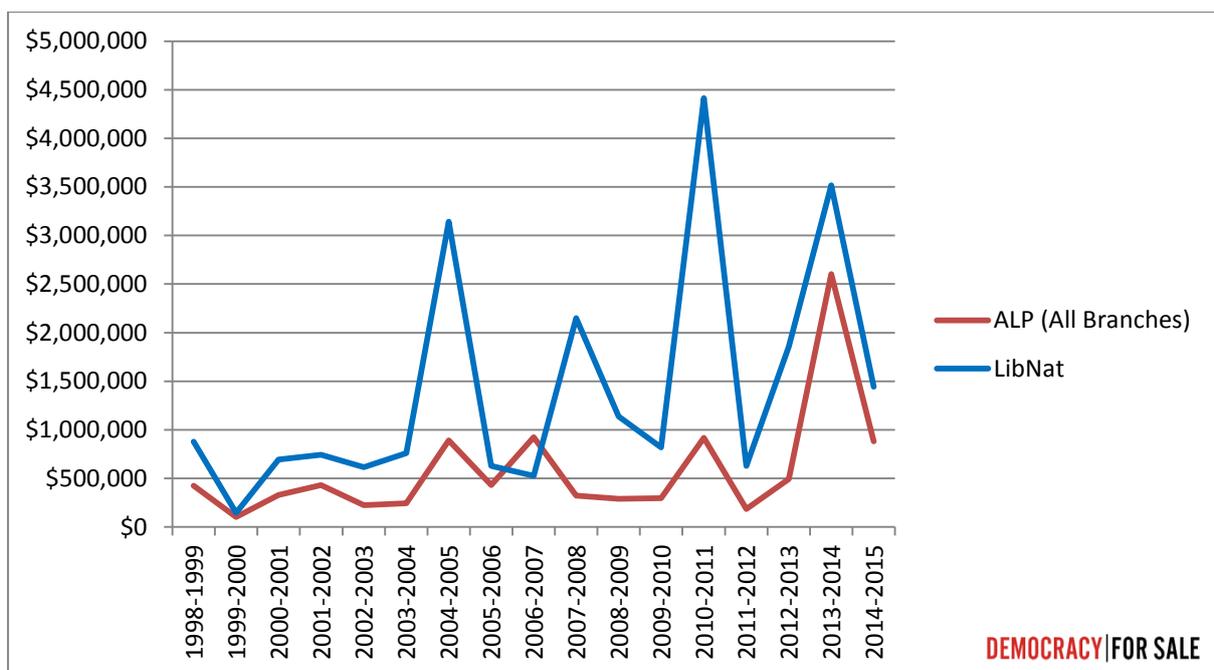
Grand total: \$60,842,538.



Individual donations to the major two political parties tend to favour the Coalition by more than 2-1.

Grand total - Labor: \$12,844,314.

Grand total - Coalition: \$30,345,447.



SECTOR ANALYSIS

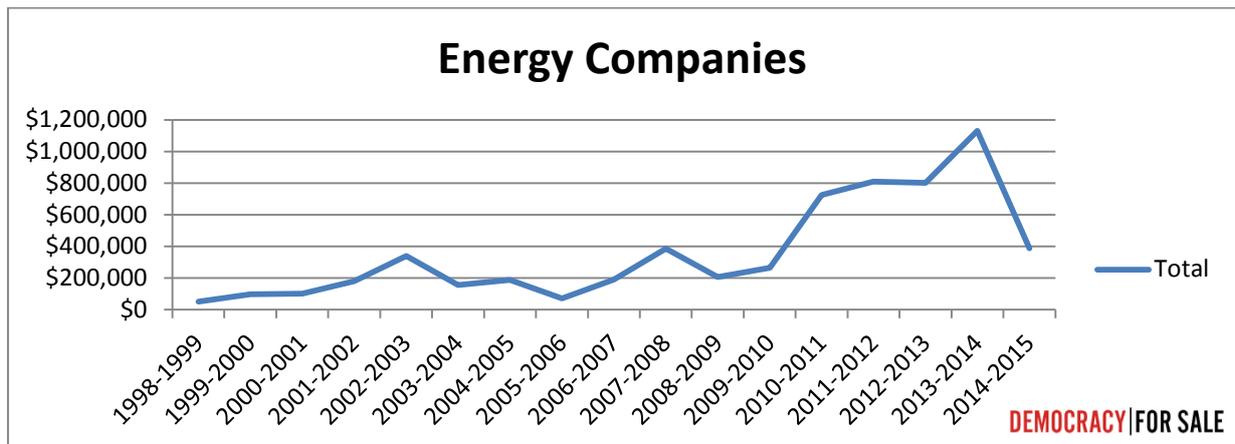
The Greens' Democracy for Sale has calculated the total amounts paid by key industries between 1998 and 2015. Key industry totals include:

- **Property industry:** The most generous for-profit sector with \$64,099,161.
- **Resource companies:** The second most generous for-profit sector with \$50,824,732.
- **Financial/Insurance:** \$37,078,539 (amount excludes other receipts, which are most likely loans and bank transfers).
- **Alcohol:** \$2,996,153. These payments peaked in 2000 and again in 2013-14.
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Energy sector

In the years leading up to the 2014 release of the federal government's pro-privatisation Energy White Paper political donations increased.

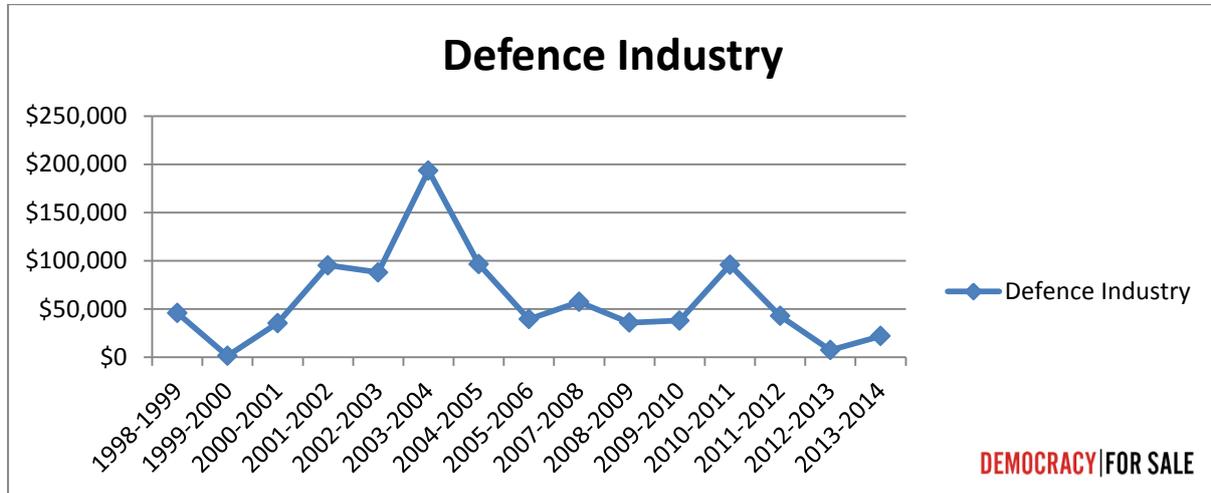
Grand total: \$5,723,989.



Defence Industry

As in the US, Australia also saw increased donation activity from the defence industry after the September 11 attacks. Donations peaked in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq.

Grand total: \$896,212.

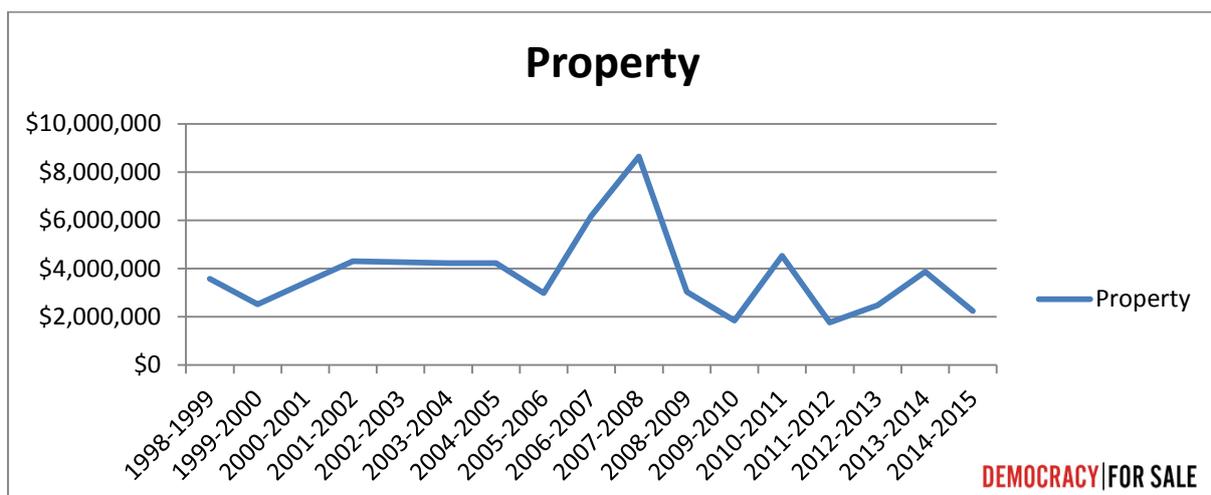


Property

This is the most generous for-profit sector.

The spike in 2007/08 coincides with the Wollongong corruption scandal and new laws forcing developers to declare donations when lodging planning applications. It also coincides with the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the US.

Grand total: \$64,099,161*.



*n.b. For this total we excluded all 'other receipts/ subscriptions/ unspecified' payments because unlike in other categories, many of the payments listed as 'other receipts/ subscriptions/ unspecified' would have been money that was not intended to be a gift and that does not meet the legislative definition of 'gift'.

MORE INFORMATION

We make every effort to ensure the integrity of the data through checks. If you have any enquiries about the project, have a correction to the data or have information that can help us categorise a company, feel free to contact us at 02 9211 9523. All data is accurate as at November 5 2016.

Collection

All data in the Greens' [Democracy for Sale database](#) comes from the Australian Electoral Commission's [Periodic Disclosure Locator Service](#). The data from each financial year is made publicly available on the AEC website on the first working day in February of the following year.

Financial Disclosure data from the Australian Electoral Commission has been collected, aggregated and uploaded to Democracy for Sale for every financial year since 1998, when the AEC started making the data available on their website.

Categorisation

We gather information about the principal activity of a company from a number of sources. These sources include Australian Corporate Information, the websites of various professional groups such as Advertising Agencies Online, Australian Stock Exchange, John Fairfax archives, the Australian Business Register, the Bloomberg database and the Australian Securities and Investment Commission website. When information about a company could not be identified, we contacted companies directly for further information.

On 'donations' and 'other receipts'

Parties classify incoming payments as either "donations" or "other receipts". "Donations" are defined narrowly by the AEC as simple gifts, whereas "other receipts" generally include all other money received by the party – interest from bank accounts, insurance claims paid to the party, sponsorship of party functions and organisations, money received from fund-raising dinners, raffle tickets sold at fundraising events, and so on.

The Greens believe this is a major loophole in the current legislation. There is no legal requirement for political parties to accurately classify the money that they receive each year. Analysis of the donation data shows that just relying on what is declared to be a "donation" will more than likely underestimate the amount of money actually given as a 'gift' to a political party. Parties and candidates can declare money they receive and then spend on their election campaign as an "other receipt". According to AEC guidelines, money received at fundraisers is to be classified by parties as "other receipts".

Given this, we have chosen to upload "other receipt" payments and give the user of this website the option to search for them. We have excluded payments from the AEC, ATO and money identified as MPs' tithes. Where a donor has declared an amount but the recipient has declared the amount as another receipt, we have relied on the accuracy of the recipient's return and classified the amount as an other receipt. Where a donor has declared an amount, but the recipient has not declared it at all, we have classified that as a donation.

In cases where both a donor and a recipient (that is a party) have lodged a disclosure form an entry is only made once. If the two entries are not the same, the larger of the two amounts is entered in the database.