

Top 10 lies
husbands
tell their
wives

How a
hospital
became
a killer

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Labor reaps riches from developers

Jeff Sommerfeld

PROPERTY developers have overtaken trade unions as the major source of donations to the Labor Party in Queensland, according to returns released by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Some prominent property developers have used several associated or subsidiary companies to provide donations that appear to conceal the full extent of financial relationships.

These involved companies associated with the QLD Group, Consolidated Properties, Springfield Land Corp and Pradella Developments.

Many of these developers were involved in lobbying and sensitive negotiations with state and local governments over building projects.

Often the projects require rezonings, legal changes to enable them to proceed, or infrastructure to be provided by governments.

Although political donations during 2003-04 have been declared as required by the AEC, the full extent of financial contributions only became evident after extensive research this week.

Although all sides of politics benefit from donations from developers, in Queensland the ALP receives more than 85 per cent of the donations - worth \$1.4 million during 2003-04.



Hidden donors,
Page 8

Labor in Queensland and for the first time exceeded the annual contribution provided by trade unions - \$1.3 million for 2003-04.

In the same period, Queensland Liberals received \$146,000 from developers and Queensland Nationals \$52,000.

Developers yesterday defended the practice of donating to political parties through shell companies, saying the money was still declared in accordance with the law.

Urban Development Institute of Australia (Qld) chief Brian Stewart said there was "nothing at all unusual" about payments being made from a number of subsidiaries.

"There are a variety of reasons why company structures are put in place for special projects," he said.

Paul Williams said business and political parties had always enjoyed a mutually inclusive relationship, but that association had usually been with the Liberal and National parties.

In recent years, Labor had built up its economic credentials and started to be seen by business as a party that could manage money well.

"In Queensland, business often has good relations with state governments as they have more to do with development approvals," Dr Williams said.

However, he said there was a reluctance by some people in business to appear to be favouring Labor.

"There is some slight stigma there," Mr Williams said. "The real dilemma for the business community is having to deal with them (Labor) at the state level but being ideologically opposed, particularly in relation to industrial relations."

Politicians from all political persuasion have expressed concerns in the past about donations from developers.

Gold Coast and Logan City councillors have most recently spoken out about cosy relationships between sections of the councils and developers.

Just south of the border in NSW, the Independent Commission Against Corruption is conducting an inquiry into the relationship between developers and Tweed Shire councillors.

The Queensland ALP was

Life as a



HOME-grown housewives ... Emma, Ki

Natalie Gregg

THEY don't have adulterous sex on marble tabletops with the teenage gardener or accidentally burn down a neighbour's house while snooping.

