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The Exclusive Brethren - Why we need the Electoral Fi Bill

Posted in: [Comment](#)

By Craig Young - 15th November 2007

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The Electoral Finance Bill is a necessit despite hyperbole and exaggeration fi the National Opposition, seemingly determined to protect possible furthe election funds from the Exclusive Bret

According to the *New Zealand Herald*, the Exclusive Brethren "Gang of Seven" sent c email to the Chief Electoral Officer about t intended expenditure on behalf of the Opposition.

This communication was from Ron Hickmott, self-described as a "Christian businessman." He had spoken to Mr Henry earlier in the day and request formal meeting to discuss the consequences of his group's proposed actio under the terms of Electoral Act 1993. Three other "Christian businessme would also attend a meeting with Mr Henry. They were Andrew Simmons , Phil Win from Auckland and Matt Goudie from Palmerston North.

Reproduced in the *New Zealand Herald*, the email read as follows:

"We represent a group of Christian businessmen concerned as to the cou and direction of the current [Labour-led government]. Accordingly we ha together an election programme with a budget of \$1.2 million with the gc 'getting party votes for National' as this is the only way change will come about.

"Our programme involves extensive publications throughout the country theme showing and demonstrating mistrust in the current Government at building trust in a Brash-led National Government.

"We write seeking clarification and direction re the election funding issue, **specifically that anything we do does not compromise National's funding position** [their emphasis].

"Typically,

1. Does it compromise National's position if we communicate to MPs and candidates our strategy?
2. Does it compromise National's position if we show them draft publicati before they are published?
3. Is there any legality prohibiting us printing 'Vote National,' 'Vote Brash including a photo of Dr Brash on [the advertising]? Can this be done with