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## Exclusive Brethren: Bad Timing in Tasmania?

Posted in: [Comment](#)  
 By Craig Young - 22nd November 2007

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**Only days away from the Australian federal election, the Exclusive Brethren have launched an ill-timed anti-Green attack against Senator Bob Brown, an openly gay man, in his native Tasmania.**

As usual, it was the *Melbourne Age* newspaper's Michael Bachelard that reported this latest development across the Tasman. One wonders at the Exclusive Brethren's sense of timing, though, as this rather plays into the hands of those who regard New Zealand's Electoral Finance Bill as a necessity, primarily designed to stop exactly these shenanigans.

This latest pamphlet is a significant departure, however, as it clearly identifies forty eight men and three women as members of the right-wing sect, currently under fire on both sides of the Tasman for its anonymous contributions to Howard's Liberals and the Brash-era National Party here. Brown is attacked repeatedly lobbying for a federal Senate investigation into Exclusive Brethren activities, while the federal Greens are lambasted for an apparent belief in bestiality, inciting Aboriginal riots after a death in police custody on Queensland's Palm Island (2004), and urging "infiltration" of the sect.

Tasmanian Green MP Christine Milne suggested that there might well be connections between the sect, the Liberal Party and logging interests in that state, where native forest preservation is a key issue, while Bob Brown suggested that this was the latest in a long line of Exclusive Brethren attacks to buy elections for the Howard administration.

Meanwhile, anti-reform groups held a march in Auckland last week to oppose the Electoral Finance Bill.

On TVNZ's One Network News, the so-called "March for Democracy" was led by the usual suspects. One of the organisers, John Boscawen, is a former New Zealand treasurer, while the Christian Right's Family First and the Sentencing Trust were the other culprits. I'm sorry, but it's sheer laziness to describe most of this lot as "Middle New Zealand" as it did.

Family First is a Christian Right pressure group. Its founder, Bob McCroskey, is a media host on the fundamentalist Sky Digital "Shine" television channel,

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