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## Records checked on sect's poll ads

- *Matthew Denholm*
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**FINANCIAL records held by the Liberal Party, its Tasmanian advertising agency and the Exclusive Brethren religious sect are to be subpoenaed to discover who designed and funded controversial election advertisements.**

The anti-Green ads, published in three Tasmanian newspapers during last year's state election campaign, are alleged to have incited hatred against sexual minorities.

Authorised by Brethren member Roger Unwin, they are the subject of complaints being investigated by the state's Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Sarah Bolt.

As revealed in The Australian yesterday, invoices from the three newspapers already obtained by Ms Bolt for her investigation show the cost of Mr Unwin's ads were charged to Liberal Party accounts.

However, the party says this occurred due to an administrative error. It denies designing, placing or paying for Mr Unwin's ads, or others authorised by two other Brethren members and apparently also billed to the Liberals' accounts.

Yesterday, Martine Delaney, the transsexual who has lodged Anti-Discrimination complaints against Mr Unwin and the Liberals, said her legal team would now ask Ms Bolt to subpoena a raft of financial records.

These would include financial records held by the Liberal Party's Tasmanian and federal branches, Master Advertising - the agency whose accounts held on behalf of the Liberals were billed for the Brethren ads - as well as Brethren organisations.

"My goal is to stop these kinds of attacks on gender and sexual minorities, and to do this the anti-discrimination authorities and the public must know exactly who designed, placed and paid for these ads," Ms Delaney said.

The ad authorised by Mr Unwin claimed the Greens' policies on improved rights for "transgender and intersex" people would "ruin our families and society".

Liberal state director Damien Mantach said he understood Ms Bolt had sought billing account information from Master Advertising, run by former a Liberal candidate Chris Guesdon.

Mr Guesdon has insisted bills for ads placed by Mr Unwin and fellow brethren members Trevor Christian and David Urquhart were ultimately paid by an organisation other than the Liberal Party, though he would not reveal its name for "privacy" reasons.

Mr Unwin said last night the ads were funded by himself, Mr Christian and Mr Urquhart. He would not say which organisation had paid the advertising bills but insisted they were not paid by the Liberals.

He said he had no contact with Liberal members ahead of drafting the ads, but that ideas may have been taken from other election material.

"We'd seen a few others (election ads)," Mr Unwin said.

Asked if he drew in part on Liberal Party material to draft the ads, he said: "Well, I would be talking about other ads, probably in other elections."

The Greens have drawn comparison between election material authorised by Brethren members and Liberal material.

Mr Mantach, who has confirmed discussing "tactics, themes and messages" with Brethren in the lead-up to the March 18 election, said last night he was confident Ms Bolt's investigation would clear the Liberal Party.

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