



MEDIA RELEASE

LINDSAY TANNER MP SHADOW MINISTER FOR FINANCE

MINCHIN DEFENDS RORTED CHARTER

Today at the National Press Club Senator Minchin attempted to defend the Government's rorted Charter of Budget Honesty.

The Charter gives Government year-round access to 133,500 officials to cost their policies. Until the election is called the Opposition gets nothing and is routinely denied even basic information on Government spending through Senate Estimates. The Charter then allows the Government to use 'secret' and 'un-published information' to cost Opposition policies.

Notwithstanding this extreme bias, the Government does not even comply with the Charter. It kept the massive cost blowout in the Medicare Safety Net secret, only revealing part of the blowout the day before the 2004 election.

Labor has committed to ensure that the Charter meets international best practice by introducing reforms in Parliament that would allow confidential costing of Opposition policies by Treasury and Finance up to 12 months before an election.

Consistent with Labor's proposed reforms to the Charter of Budget Honesty, Labor lodged its policy to reverse the Government's extension of tax deductibility for political donations from \$100 to \$1,500 for costing with the Secretaries of Treasury and Finance on 24 November 2006. This request was rejected by Senator Minchin almost 6 months later on 14 May 2007.

During the 2004 election the Government submitted its Future Fund policy, but did not respond to Department of Finance requests for further information. Numerous other Government policies were submitted but not costed for the same reason.

The full corruption of the process was shown by Senator Minchin's ludicrous claim on 17 April 2007 that Labor's spending added to \$20 billion.

To invent this ludicrous figure, Senator Minchin made up figures and Labor commitments. It was a work of pure fiction and put the final nail in the coffin of the Charter of Budget Honesty.

Senator Minchin cannot be trusted with any costing process to behave in a fair and transparent manner.

For further information contact Lindsay Tanner on 0419881282