

National Opposes Campaign Finance Reform

Scoop Independent News

Press Release: New Zealand Labor Party

September 6, 2006

National opposes campaign finance reform

The National Party has gone to ground as they prepare to oppose comprehensive campaign finance reform in a bid to return to two-party politics, Labour strategist Pete Hodgson said today.

National leader Don Brash pulled out of a television interview this morning and his office refused to allow other MPs to front amid a widening of the debate around election financing.

"National's 2005 election campaign represented a sea change in New Zealand politics," Pete Hodgson said. "From the Exclusive Brethren to their use of secret trusts to conceal the source of 90 per cent of their donations, National in 2005 moved closer to the North American model of big money politics than we've ever seen in this country.

"National have been desperate to demonise the public funding of campaigns to deflect attention from the unethical and illegal financing of their own election efforts.

"Momentum is now building around comprehensive campaign finance reform and National is running scared. Don Brash pulled out of an interview on TVNZ this morning – after having been happy to debate me yesterday on Radio New Zealand – and his office refused to allow other MPs to front.

"Today's newspapers are rife with unanswered allegations about the conduct of National's 2005 campaign. National must front up with answers.

"National's inability to work with small parties under MMP is well known. In recent months National has been quietly calling for the scrapping of MMP and is now desperate to oppose any move to more transparent state funding of parties as they know it will give small parties and Labour a fair footing.

"National wants to replicate 2005's flood of anonymous donations and the Brethren's \$1.2 million of un-attributable spending, which was a cut and paste of the 2004 US election swift boat attack on Democrat John Kerry.

"National's fight isn't about the 2005 election – they're getting ready for 2008 and more covert funding. National must be forced to confront the unanswered accusations about their 2005 campaign and must come clean on their opposition to campaign finance reform.

"Meantime Labour will be working with other parties on sweeping campaign finance reforms which ensure that National cannot rot future elections," Pete Hodgson said.