
— [Rear Window](#)

Vaping details? They're lost in the cloud

The source of Legalise Vaping Australia director Brian Marlow's \$44,000 donation to the Liberals wasn't the only thing he forgot.

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Aug 2, 2022 - 4.44pm

Among health problems attributed to e-cigarettes, one of the more troubling side effects may be memory loss, particularly in respect to paperwork. Just ask **Senator Hollie Hughes'** dear friend, the head of Legalise Vaping Australia, **Brian Marlow**.

When Marlow paid \$44,000 to the NSW Liberal Party in June last year, both he and the Liberal Party told the Australian Electoral Commission it was Marlow's personal donation.



Legalise Vaping Australia director Brian Marlow: when it comes to paperwork, some of the details are lost in the cloud. **Edwina Pickles**

It's easy to forget stuff like that. As Marlow told *Four Corners* two months ago, the money actually came from LVA's \$98,000 Fighting Fund, which was set up in 2020, originally as a partnership with Australian Retail Vaping Industry Australia (which was secretly funded by tobacco giant Philip Morris).

It's been lean times for the LGA, which is an arm of Australian Taxpayers Alliance, set up in 2011 by Americans for Tax Reform staffer **Tim Andrews**

[<https://www.afr.com/rear-window/koch-brothers-new-australian-friends-20190528->

p51rx3] and his mum. The appeals for funding have been quite plaintive [<https://www.afr.com/rear-window/aussie-sos-to-the-koch-brothers-20200520-p54upu>], with a number of staff leaving last year – which makes the donation for the Libs all the more heartfelt.

It must be another memory lapse, that 18 months after Marlow told *The Australian Financial Review* [<https://www.afr.com/policy/health-and-education/more-vaping-lobbyists-linked-to-big-tobacco-20210220-p574al>] that company documents that linked him to two failed real estate companies were forged, and that he would be contacting ASIC for corrections, so far there's been no change to the filings.

A decade ago Marlow worked for Pittwater Estate Agents (PEA) in Newport on Sydney's northern beaches. It was owned by **Michael Raoul Edwards**, who was jailed in 2017 for misappropriating more than \$400,000 of client funds.

When contacted by the *Financial Review* last year Marlow was surprised and indignant over ASIC filings which showed he became sole director and shareholder of PEA in October 2013 and of a related company, Newport Peak, in September 2014, at a time when Edwards was under investigation by the Office of Fair Trading which led to his 2017 conviction for misuse of trust funds.

These must have been forged, he said.

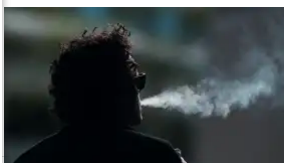
“Mr Edwards is a convicted fraudster who stole funds from countless individuals on numerous occasions . . . he even stole \$100,000 from an elderly woman. If it were up to me, he would still be in prison.”

No love lost then. “I made the grave mistake of working for a fraud and a thief,” Marlow concluded.

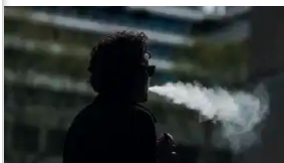
The puzzling aspect (and perhaps here is the memory loss issue again) is that nowhere in this diatribe did Marlow mention that Edwards is his step-brother. as former clients have confirmed. But some families are modest like

that. It certainly explains why Edwards, who is 12 years older than Brian, went on to start new businesses with their mother, **Maureen Marlow**.

The brothers went their different ways. By the time Edwards ran into legal problems in 2015 Brian had distanced himself from his brother as he moved into political circles, beginning with the Liberal Democrats. As Jane Austen put it, in such cases a good memory is unpardonable.

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