

BROADCASTERS AND PUBLISHERS

Funding and disclosure overview

Unless otherwise stated, all references to legislation are to the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011* (the LGEA). The information in this fact sheet does not replace legislation. If you are concerned about your obligations, you should seek independent legal advice.

This fact sheet applies to any broadcaster or publisher who runs an election advertisement relating to a local government election during the election's capped expenditure period.

Who are broadcasters and publishers?

The LGEA defines a broadcaster for local government election purposes as:

- The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)
- The Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS)
- The holder of a licence under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth), or
- The provider of a broadcasting service under a class licence under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth).

A publisher is anyone who publishes a journal – meaning a newspaper, magazine or other periodical, whether published for sale or for distribution with no charge.

What do broadcasters and publishers need to do for a local election?

After each local government election, broadcasters and publishers are required to give the ECQ an **election summary return** of all election advertising that was broadcast or published on their platform with the authority of an election participant during the election's capped expenditure period.

An election participant could include a candidate, group of candidates, registered political party, or other third party participating in the election.

Note: A publisher is not required to give an election summary return if the total amount charged by the publisher for the publication of an advertisement (and any other advertisement relating to an election that took place on the same day) does not exceed \$1,000.

What is the capped expenditure period?

For future elections, the capped expenditure period will start on:

- for a by-election – the day the notice for the election is issued
- for the 2028 local government elections – 30 August 2027 (subject to change).

The capped expenditure period ends at 6pm on election day.

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More information

If you need more information relating to Funding, Disclosure and Compliance, please contact ECQ on 1300 881 665 or by emailing fad@ecq.qld.gov.au.



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When is the election summary return due?

The election summary return must be lodged with the ECQ within **8 weeks** after election day.

What is included in the election summary return?

All advertising related to the election should be included in the election summary return.

It is not restricted to advertising that advocates a vote for or against a particular candidate or party. Advertisements raising awareness of issues related to an election without directly advocating for or against a candidate or party are also considered election advertising.

It also does not matter whether the broadcaster or publisher was inside or outside Queensland when the advertisement was run.

For a **broadcaster**, the election summary return must state the following for each advertisement:

- the broadcasting service that aired the advertisement
- the person who requested the advertisement be broadcast
- the election participant who authorised the advertisement for broadcast
- the date and time periods when the advertisement aired, and
- whether or not the broadcaster charged for the advertisement on each occasion it aired, including –
 - the amount charged (GST inclusive)
 - whether the charge was at their normal commercial rate.

For a **publisher**, the election summary return must state the following for each advertisement:

- the journal that published the advertisement
- the person who requested the advertisement be published
- the election participant who authorised the advertisement for publication
- the publication date of the advertisement
- the journal's page number and space occupied by the advertisement, and
- whether or not the publisher charged for the advertisement on each occasion it appeared, including –
 - the amount charged (GST inclusive)
 - whether the charge was at their normal commercial rate.

Do I need to include advertisements run on digital platforms?

Election advertisements run on digital platforms (e.g. websites, streaming applications) must be included in the election summary return.

Due to the nature of digital advertising, the information required to be disclosed for online advertisements may be different to what is required for TV, radio or print advertisements.

For a **broadcaster**, the following information should be provided for digital advertisements:

- for the broadcasting service – the name of the digital platform on which the advertisement was broadcast
- for the broadcast date and time – the date and time the advertisement was first broadcast on the platform
- for the broadcast duration – the date the advertisement was last broadcast on the platform

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- for the amount – the total amount charged for the advertisement to be broadcast on the platform over the specified period (GST inclusive).

For a **publisher**, the following information should be provided for digital advertisements:

- for the journal – the name of the digital platform on which the advertisement was published
- for the publication date – the date the advertisement was first published on the platform
- for the journal page and space – a description of how the advertisement was displayed on the platform (e.g. size, position, frequency, etc.)
- for the amount – the total amount charged for the advertisement to be published on the platform over the specified period (GST inclusive).

How to lodge an election summary return

Returns are lodged online using the ECQ's Electronic Disclosure System (EDS) at disclosures.ecq.qld.gov.au/.

It is recommended that the ECQ's approved Excel spreadsheet is used for recording the information that is required to be disclosed in a return. A template for a bulk upload will be available in the [Help & Downloads](#) section of the EDS.

Record keeping requirements

Records must be kept and made available to the ECQ for inspection for a period of at least 5 years after the election. Broadcasters may have additional record keeping requirements under their relevant Commonwealth broadcasting legislation.

Compliance

The ECQ is responsible for administering and enforcing the LGEA, which includes penalties for election participants who breach their disclosure obligations.

The compliance framework is available on the [ECQ website](#).

For further information

This fact sheet mainly refers to Part 6, Division 4 Caps on electoral expenditure of the LGEA, including subdivisions 1, 2 and 6. The LGEA is available in full at legislation.qld.gov.au. Participants in the electoral process should ensure they understand their obligations under the LGEA.



RELATED FACT SHEETS

Fact sheet 8 – Record keeping requirements

Fact sheets are available on the [ECQ website](#).

More information

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