

DISCLOSURE OF ELECTORAL EXPENDITURE

This fact sheet relates to candidates, groups of candidates, registered political parties, associated entities, third parties and donors who participate in local government elections and by-elections.

Candidates, group of candidates, registered political parties and associated entity that incur \$500 or more in electoral expenditure during their disclosure period for the election must give the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) a return about the expenditure. The ECQ is required to publish electoral expenditure disclosures under the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011* (LGEA).

Expenditure items are cumulative, meaning it does not matter whether the expenditure was incurred in small amounts, or all at once. Once the threshold of \$500 is met, all previous and future expenditure must be disclosed, regardless of value.

What is electoral expenditure?

The term 'electoral expenditure' has a specific meaning for local government election purposes.

Under section 123 of the LGEA, electoral expenditure is expenditure incurred (whether or not during the election period for the election) on, or a gift in kind given that consists of:

- broadcasting a political advertisement during the election period; or
- publishing a political advertisement in a journal during the election period; or
- publishing a political advertisement on the internet during the election period, even if the internet site on which the publication is made is located outside Queensland; or

- displaying a political advertisement at a theatre or other place of entertainment during the election period; or
- producing and distributing a political advertisement mentioned above; or
- producing and distributing other material used during the election period that:
 - advocates a vote for or against a candidate, group of candidates or registered political party; and
 - is required under section 177 to include the name and address of the author of the material or of the person authorising the material; or
- carrying out an opinion poll or other research relating to the election during the election period if the dominant purpose of the opinion poll or research is to, directly or indirectly:
 - promote or oppose the election of a candidate or group of candidates; or
 - promote or oppose a registered political party in relation to the election; or
 - otherwise influence voting at the election.

Electoral expenditure is incurred when the goods or services are provided. For example, expenditure on political advertising is incurred when the advertisement is broadcast, published or posted online and expenditure on election material is incurred when the material is distributed.

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.

Disclosure of electoral expenditure

Under Queensland's electoral legislation, candidates, groups of candidates, registered political parties, and associated entities must disclose electoral expenditure in real-time during their disclosure period and also in an election summary disclosure return within 15 weeks after the election.

How to lodge a return

Disclosures should be lodged in the ECQ's **Electronic Disclosure System** at <https://disclosures.ecq.qld.gov.au/>.

Each expenditure return requires:

- the name and address of the person who supplied the goods or services;
- a description of the goods or service;
- the amount of the electoral expenditure;
- when the expenditure was incurred; and
- the purpose of the expenditure.

Should it not be possible to lodge a return via the Electronic Disclosure System, a paper form can be downloaded from the ECQ website or can be requested by emailing fad@ecq.qld.gov.au.

Real-time disclosure

All candidates, groups of candidates, registered political parties and associated entities who incur electoral expenditure of \$500 or more during their disclosure period for the election must give the ECQ a return within seven business days of the expenditure being incurred. This is referred to as **real-time disclosure**.

If expenditure is incurred during the last seven business days before an election day, the expenditure must be disclosed within one day of the transaction.

Election summary disclosure return

In addition to real-time disclosure, all candidates and groups of candidates must lodge an election summary return **within 15 weeks after the election**, regardless if candidates were successfully elected or not or the amount of expenditure incurred. This return must state the total amount of electoral expenditure incurred during a candidate or group's disclosure period.

Registered political parties must also lodge this return if they endorse a candidate in an election, while associated entities must do so if they incurred \$500 or more in total.

Election summary disclosure returns should be lodged via the ECQ's **Electronic Disclosure System** at <https://disclosures.ecq.qld.gov.au/>.

What is the disclosure period for the election?

Disclosure periods differ according to a candidate's circumstances and whether they have previously contested a local government election or by-election.

For local government candidates who have contested the previous election or by-election (whether they were successfully elected or not), the disclosure period starts 30 days after the polling day for the previous quadrennial election or by-election in which they were a candidate. The disclosure period ends 30 days after polling day for the current election.

For local government candidates who have NOT contested an election within the past five years, the disclosure period starts on the day the candidate announces their intention to be a candidate for the election; or, nominates as a candidate for the election. The disclosure period ends 30 days after the polling day for the current election.