

## ALL ELECTION PARTICIPANTS

## Authorisation of election material

Unless otherwise stated, all references to legislation are to the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011* (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 relates to any person intending to print, publish, distribute or broadcast election material during a local government election or by-election period.

Election material is subject to a range of regulations which carry penalties for non-compliance.

## How-to-vote cards

How-to-vote cards have specific regulations covering their design, authorisation and distribution. Please refer to [Fact sheet 5 – How-to-vote cards](#) for that information.

## What is election material?

Election material means anything that can or is intended to:

- influence an elector about voting at the election
- or
- affect the result of an election.

It includes, but is not limited to, advertising via:

- radio
- television
- cinema
- social media
- internet
- email
- text message
- signs
- newspapers
- magazines
- billboards
- corflutes
- pamphlets
- flyers
- letters
- opinion polls or research.

## Does the author of election material have to be named?

Any person who prints, publishes, distributes, or broadcasts election material **during an election period** must ensure an authorisation is stated on the material. This includes third parties such as non-profits or local organisations participating in the election as well as candidates and registered political parties.

Material can be authorised by any person.

The authorisation must show the name and address of the person authorising the material. The address can be the person's own residential or business address, or a post office box. The authoriser must be contactable at the address listed.

Version: March 2026

## 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](mailto:fad@ecq.qld.gov.au).



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## When is the election period?

The election period begins on the day the notice of election is published and ends when the polls close on election day.

The ECQ does not regulate authorisation of election material outside of the election period.

## Examples of correct authorisations:

- On **written** material, an authorisation stating: '*Authorised by Bob Smith, 1 Queen Street, Brisbane*'.
  - The text must be of sufficient size to be clearly legible by a voter who wishes to read the authorisation in a way the material is intended to ordinarily be read, and must not be obstructed by other objects such as screws or stickers.
  - On a double-sided, printed item like a flyer, the authorisation only needs to be printed on one side.
- On a **television** advertisement, a visual and spoken authorisation stating the authoriser's name and address at the end of the advertisement.
- On a **radio** advertisement, a spoken authorisation stating the authoriser's name and address at the end of the advertisement.
- On a **social media** profile or page, an authorisation should be placed in a prominent position on the page. For example, for a Facebook page set up for an election campaign, the authorisation should be stated clearly in the top banner, the 'About' section (or public profile information) or by adding an impressum to the page.
- On a **social media post, digital advertisement or digital banner**, every post does not need to be authorised, but it is important to ensure that election material that can be shared, forwarded or reposted carries an authorisation.
  - An authorisation should be embedded in an image or video so that any subsequent viewer can identify the authoriser.
  - If the full text of the authorisation does not fit in a post or advertisement, a link to a website that clearly identifies the authoriser is acceptable.
- On a **website** or **app**, an authorisation should be placed on each webpage on a campaign-specific website. For a general website, the authorisation would only need to be placed on webpages containing election matter.
- In a **robocall** (unsolicited, automated telephone messaging), a spoken authorisation at the end of the call.
- In an **email**, the authorisation should be in the signature block.
- In a **text message**, if an authorisation cannot be included in the text message itself, it should clearly refer to another document or notice (so they can properly be considered one message) and contain a link to that second part of the message so it is easily accessible to the recipient. The second part of the message must contain the authorisation information.
- In a **media response** or **article** provided to a publisher or broadcaster, an authorisation should be placed at the end of the response or article.

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 **CASE STUDY**

During the 2024 local government elections, multiple pieces of election material were anonymously printed and distributed in several local government areas.

Using our Authorised Officer powers, the ECQ investigated and identified the authors of these anonymous flyers and mailings. The authors were fined for failing to include correct authorisations.

## Misleading electors

Publishing or distributing any material during an election period that is likely to mislead an elector about the ways of voting is an offence. Breaking this rule carries penalties for non-compliance. Please see [Fact sheet 7 – Offences relating to electoral advertising](#) for further information.

## Election signage during the election period

Regulations apply to the display of election signage next to local and state-controlled roads. Candidates should check these requirements prior to displaying any signage near roads.

Information on election signage and state-controlled roads can be obtained from the Department of Transport and Main Roads: [qld.gov.au/transport/safety/signs/election-signs](http://qld.gov.au/transport/safety/signs/election-signs).

Local councils determine the rules that apply to election signage and advertising devices (such as corflutes) next to local roads, private property and on some state-controlled roads in their area. Before displaying any election signage, candidates should confirm their council's regulations on quantity, placement and display timeframe.

## Disclosure of election material

Most election material will meet the definition of electoral expenditure. Electoral expenditure must be disclosed in real-time once the total amount reaches \$500.

For more information, please refer to:

- [Fact sheet 12 – Definition of electoral expenditure](#)
- [Fact sheet 18 – Real-time disclosure of electoral expenditure by candidates, groups of candidates and registered political parties](#)
- [Fact sheet 34 – Real-time disclosure of electoral expenditure by registered third parties.](#)

## Reporting non-compliance

If a person is concerned about the distribution of unauthorised material, they should make sure the material is being distributed during an election period before reporting the matter to the ECQ. Any reports of non-compliance should include evidence such as photographs or links to relevant material, if possible.

The ECQ does not manage all election related complaints. Please review [Fact sheet 7 – Offences relating to electoral advertising](#) for more details about how complaints are handled.

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## For further information

This fact sheet mainly refers to part 9 of the LGEA. The Act is available in full at [legislation.qld.gov.au](http://legislation.qld.gov.au). Participants in the electoral process should ensure they understand their obligations under the LGEA.



### RELATED FACT SHEETS

Fact sheet 5 – How-to-vote cards

Fact sheet 6 – Offences and penalties for candidates

Fact sheet 7 – Offences related to electoral advertising

Fact sheet 12 – Definition of electoral expenditure

Fact sheet 18 – Real-time disclosure of electoral expenditure by candidates, groups of candidates and registered political parties

Fact sheet 34 – Real-time disclosure of electoral expenditure by registered third parties

Facts sheets can be found on the [ECQ's website](#).

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