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FAD / FUNDING AND
DISCLOSURE
REFORM

Annual Returns Guideline

for Significant Third Parties

Future FAD scheme commencing 1 January 2027



AEC

Australian Electoral Commission

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Purpose

Significant third parties (STPs) are required to submit an annual return each calendar year. They are also required to provide a new registration return within 30 days of registration.

The *Annual Returns Guideline for Significant Third Parties* (the guideline) seeks to outline the return requirements for STPs. This including roles and responsibilities, deadlines, and the content of a return.

Important information

The guideline uses text boxes to highlight important information. Each text box is prefaced with a symbol. For example:



WARNING. A warning symbol indicates information about a legal obligation under the Electoral Act.



USEFUL TIP. An information symbol indicates a useful tip



DUE DATE. A clock symbol indicates a due date.

Legislation

Legislative provisions referenced in the guideline are from the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) as amended by the *Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Reform) Act 2025*.



These guidelines are for the funding and disclosure scheme that commences on 1 January 2027. For information on the current scheme see the [Financial Disclosure](#) page.

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918

Part XX	
Division 1	Preliminary
Division 1A	Registration of significant third parties, associated entities and nominated entities, and the Transparency Register
Division 2A	Use of federal accounts
Division 3	Election funding
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Disclaimer

The information in this publication is intended to provide general guidance only. It does not constitute legal, financial, or other professional advice. Persons and entities should seek their own professional advice to find out how the Electoral Act applies to their particular circumstances. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has made every reasonable effort to provide current and accurate information, but it does not make any guarantees regarding the accuracy, currency, or completeness of that information. Parties who wish to re-publish or otherwise use the information in this publication must check this information for currency and accuracy prior to publication.

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Introduction

The Commonwealth funding and disclosure scheme (the disclosure scheme) established under Part XX of the Electoral Act, deals with the public funding of federal election campaigns and the disclosure of detailed financial information.

The disclosure scheme was introduced to increase overall transparency and inform the public about the financial dealings of political parties, candidates and others involved in the electoral process.

The disclosure scheme requires registered political parties (RPPs), state branches of RPPs, unregistered State branches of RPPs, associated entities (AEs), nominated entities (NEs), STPs, Members of the House of Representatives, Senators, third parties and candidates to lodge annual returns with the AEC. Annual returns require information in respect of the previous calendar year which, broadly speaking, includes details of amounts received (including as gifts), amounts paid (including electoral expenditure incurred), amounts of outstanding debts and certain other matters.

The disclosure scheme also requires newly registered STPs and AEs to provide information in respect of the calendar year prior to registration upon registration (new registration return).

Return information is published on the Transparency Register.

The Electoral Act refers to both the AEC and the Electoral Commissioner (EC). For ease of reading, this document will refer to both as the AEC. Readers should refer to the Electoral Act in determining the specific nature of relevant provisions discussed, including to whom they relate.

Roles and responsibilities



This guideline does not apply to STPs that are also AEs.

STPs that are AEs, but not an NE, must submit an AE return.

STPs that are an AE and an NE should submit only an NE annual return (in circumstances where the exception under subsection 310D(5) is applicable). For more information, see 'Significant third parties that are associated entities' below.

For more information, see the **Annual Returns Guide for Associated Entities** and the **Annual Returns Guide for Nominated Entities**.

The **financial controller** for the STP is responsible for lodging the STP's annual return and the new registration return. If the STP is an individual, the individual may nominate themselves as the financial controller. If the STP is not a legal person, an individual acting on behalf of the STP must nominate the financial controller.

Financial controller details must be provided to the AEC when submitting an application for registration as an STP. For information on registration, see the **Registration Guideline for Significant Third Parties**.

Changes to financial controller details must be provided to the AEC **within 90 days** of the information ceasing to be correct or complete. A **Change to Transparency Register form** is available on the [AEC website](#).

Annual disclosure

Significant third parties that are associated entities



Under section 287(8A) of the Electoral Act, an entity that is both an AE and an STP is treated as if it is only an AE.

If an entity is registered as an STP and an AE, but not an NE, they must submit an AE return.

If an entity is registered as an STP, AE and an NE, they should submit only an NE annual return (in circumstances where the exception under subsection 310D(5) is applicable). The exception set out in s 310D(5) applies if a financial controller provides a return under s 310E (an NE return) that:

- includes all the information required in an AE return (under 310D)
- specifies the period for which the entity was an AE and not an NE
- makes clear which information relates to that period.



Section 287(6) of the Electoral Act deems related bodies corporate to be the same entity.

Section 287(8) of the Electoral Act provides that an STP that has branches is treated as a single STP.

Despite section 287(8), section 287(8D) provides that if an STP has a branch that is an AE, that branch is to be treated as a separate entity.

In determining return requirements, the financial controller should also consider that:

- if a branch of an STP is an AE, the branch must submit a separate AE annual return.
- if an STP has branches that are not AEs, it should lodge under its name a return consolidated across the entire group. For further information, see 'Related bodies corporate'.

For further information, see the **Annual Returns Guideline for Associated Entities** and the **Annual Returns Guideline for Nominated Entities**.

Reporting period

The annual return covers the calendar year from 1 January to 31 December. An annual return must be provided for the entire calendar year, regardless of whether an STP was registered only for a portion of that calendar year.

For new registration returns, the reporting period is the calendar year prior to the year in which the STP is registered.



Under section 309 of the Electoral Act, an STP must provide a return regardless of whether there are any amounts received, paid or expenditure incurred to report.

Disclosure threshold



The disclosure threshold for this calendar year is for amounts over \$5,000. This figure is indexed from 1 January after a federal election.

Due date for lodging returns

Annual returns



STPs must lodge an annual return, including nil return, by 25 February each year in the approved form.

The AEC has no legislative discretion to extend this deadline.

The AEC will publish annual return information on the Transparency Register no later than 11 March each calendar year.

Before the end of the calendar year to which the annual return relates, the AEC will advise financial controllers of STPs of their obligation to lodge an annual return. Financial controllers should ensure their contact details with the AEC are current. Failure by the AEC to notify financial controllers of their obligation to lodge an annual return does not relieve them of the responsibility to lodge an annual return under the Electoral Act.

Returns upon registration



Section 310G requires lodgement of a return by newly registered STPs.

Upon registration as an STP, a new registration return for the previous calendar year must be lodged within 30 days. For information about the requirement to register as an STP, see the **Registration Guideline for Significant Third Parties**.



An STP has 30 days to lodge a return for the previous calendar year from the date of registration.

The AEC has no legislative discretion to extend this deadline.

The AEC will publish annual return information on the Transparency Register no later than 10 weeks after the date of registration.

Lodging returns

Further information on the process for lodging annual returns is in the **Annual Returns Procedure** (publication forthcoming).

Disclosure obligations



Section 310C of the Electoral Act governs the lodgement of annual returns by STPs.

Generally speaking, sections 310C(3) and 310C(3A) of the Electoral Act set out the information that an STP's must provide in their annual return.



Section 310G provides for the lodgement of new registration returns by STPs .

Section 310G(4) of the Electoral Act sets out the information that an STP must provide in their new registration.



Further information as to the details that are required to be provided under sections 310C(3) and 310G(4) is set out in Sub-division D within Division 5 of Part XX of the Electoral Act

Significant third parties that are an individual



Section 310C(6) governs the annual return requirements of an STP that is an individual.

Where an STP is an individual, the annual return does not need to include:

- amounts received in a purely personal capacity
- amounts paid for a personal purpose and not solely or substantially for a purpose related to an election
- debts incurred in a purely personal capacity.

Significant third parties that are registered charities



Section 310C(7) of the Electoral Act states that certain amounts received by an STP that is also a registered charity are not required to be included in an annual return.

Where an STP is a registered charity under the *Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012*, the registered charity does not need to report amounts received if no part of the amounts received were used during the calendar year to:

- incur electoral expenditure; or
- create or communicate electoral matter; or
- reimburse the STP third party for incurring electoral expenditure or creating or communicating electoral matter

Related bodies corporate

The Electoral Act deems related bodies corporate to be the same entity. Related bodies corporate has the same meaning under the Electoral Act as defined in section 50 of the *Corporations Act 2001*.

The parent company of the group should lodge a consolidated return under its registered company name for the entire group and list the names of all related bodies corporate.

Total amount received



Section 310C(3)(a) of the Electoral Act requires an STP to disclose in an annual return the total amount received, by or on behalf of the STP, during the calendar year.

Section 310G(4)(a) of the Electoral Act requires an STP to disclose in a new registration return the total amount received, by or on behalf of the STP, during the previous calendar year.

The financial controller is required to disclose the total of all amounts received from external entities by or on behalf of the STP during the calendar year for an annual return and during the previous calendar year for a new registration return. The total amount received should be reported on a cash-received basis, inclusive of GST, rather than amounts invoiced or accrued.

Amounts relevant to calculating the total amount received might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- gifts of money
- gifts in- kind of services or goods
- membership subscriptions
- loan monies received
- returns on investments
- proceeds from the sale of assets
- public funding provided by the Commonwealth or a State or Territory
- discretionary benefits provided by the Commonwealth or a State or Territory.

Note: A gift in kind amount must reflect the fair value of the gift. That is, the normal commercial or sale value of the item or service based on arms-length transaction, comparative quotations or other expert assessment.

Examples of amounts that should be included in the total amount received include items such as:

- a donation of printing of stationery that if purchased commercially would have been priced at \$950
- interest on term deposit of \$2,755
- loan of \$7,000 cash received from an STP's member
- a cheque for \$600 relating to the sale of office furniture
- an amount of \$10,000 received from another entity
- two separate donations of \$3,500 and \$4,000 received from the same person on different days, both of which are included
- a discretionary grant of \$12,000 received from a State, Territory or the Commonwealth.

Details of certain amounts received



Section 310J of the Electoral Act outlines circumstances where further details are required to be provided in an annual return and new registration return in respect of particular amounts received.

The financial controller must disclose certain details of amounts received by or on behalf of the STP, if the total of amount received from a person or entity during the calendar year for an annual return, or in the previous calendar year for a new registration return, is greater than the disclosure threshold.

Examples of amounts which could trigger the requirement for further details to be included in a return include, but are not limited to:

- funds relating to a loan of \$50,000 received from a financial institution
- funds relating to a loan of \$20,000 received from a non-financial institution
- a distribution of \$18,000 from a trust, paid into the bank account
- a non-monetary gift valued at \$10,000 relating to commercial premises provided to the STP rent-free by an unincorporated association. The market rent for the commercial premises is valued at \$17,000 (the amount of \$10,000 is disclosed).

Generally speaking, once the disclosure threshold is exceeded, and unless subject to requirements set out below, the name and address details of the person or organisation from whom the amount was received must be included in the return.

The return should also include the amount received from that person or entity.

The return should also include whether the amount is a loan, gift, or a combination of these, with a description of the kind of loan or gift provided. These descriptions may include, but are not limited to:

- donation
- gift in kind
- other amount received.

Amounts received from unincorporated associations, trusts or foundations

Where an amount has been received from an unincorporated association (other than a registered industrial organisation), the financial controller must disclose:

- the name of the association
- names and addresses of its executive committee (however described) of the association
- the amount received.

Where an amount has been received from a trust fund or foundation, the financial controller must disclose:

- the name of the trust or foundation
- the title or other description of the trust or foundation
- the names and addresses of the trustees
- the amount received.

Amounts received under a loan from a financial institution

Specific record-keeping requirements apply for amounts received as a loan.

For loans received from a financial institution, the name of the financial institution along with the amount received is required.

Note: A financial institution is a bank, credit union, building society or a special service provider registered with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA). An up-to-date list is available from the APRA website.



Section 306A of the Electoral Act makes it unlawful for loans to be received from a person or entity other than a financial institution unless certain records are kept.

Loans received from a person or entity other than a financial institution

For an amount received as a loan from a person or entity other than a financial institution, further details are required to be included in a return which mirror those required to be kept under section 306A of the Electoral Act.

The details required in these circumstances include the terms and conditions of the loan (including, without limitation, the total amount of the loan, the term of the loan and the rate at which interest is payable) and the following particulars (as the case requires):

- for a loan from a registered industrial organisation (other than a financial institution), the:
 - name of the organisation
 - names and addresses of the members of the executive committee (however described) of the organisation
- for a loan from an unincorporated association, the:
 - name of the association
 - names and addresses of the executive committee (however described) of the association
- for a loan paid out of a trust fund or out of the funds of a foundation:
 - the names and addresses of the trustees of the fund or foundation
 - title, name or other description of the trust fund or foundation
- for any other loan, the name and address of the person or organisation that made the loan.

Total gifts for a federal purpose received



Sections 310C(3)(b) and 310G(4)(b) of the Electoral Act require an STP to disclose the total amount of gifts made for a federal purpose that were received during the relevant calendar year, together with the details outlined at Section 310K of the Electoral Act.

Section 310K of the Electoral Act sets out what details need to be provided regarding gifts made for a federal purpose.

The financial controller is required to disclose the total amount of gifts made for a federal purpose and received by an STP during the calendar year for an annual return and the previous calendar year for a new registration return.

A gift for a federal purpose is a gift for the purpose of incurring electoral expenditure creating or communicating electoral matter.

The return must state the total amount of gifts for a federal purpose. It must also include the:

- total amount of gifts for a federal purpose that were not required to be disclosed in a donation disclosure notice (DDN) under section 303A of the Electoral Act, that is, the total amount of gifts for a federal purpose received that were below the disclosure threshold,
- total amount of those gifts received during a by-election period for a by-election, and
- total amount of those gifts received during a Senate-only election period for a Senate-only election.

Total amount paid



Section 310C(3)(c) of the Electoral Act requires an STP to disclose in an annual return the total amount paid by, or on behalf of, the STP, during the calendar year.

Section 310G(4)(c) of the Electoral Act requires an STP to disclose in a new registration return the total amount paid by, or on behalf of, the STP, during the previous calendar year.

The financial controller must disclose the total gross amount paid by or on behalf of the STP to external entities during the calendar year for an annual return and the previous calendar year for a new registration return.

Note: The total amount paid should include GST. The total amount paid may not equal total expenses, as reported in a financial system, due to the inclusion of accruals and other non-cash accounting adjustments.

Amounts paid include, but are not limited to, the following:

- salaries
- administrative expenses
- purchase of assets
- electoral expenses
- loan repayments
- bank charges
- merchant service fees on credit/charge cards
- gifts given (within the ordinary meaning of the word 'gift')
- gifts received (within the ordinary meaning of the word 'gift') but subsequently returned or forfeited to the Commonwealth.

Examples of amounts to be included in the calculation of the total amount paid could be:

- loan repayments totalling \$32,000
- bank charges of \$145
- merchant service fees totalling \$3,400.

Total electoral expenditure



Sections 310C(3)(d) of the Electoral Act requires the total electoral expenditure incurred by, or on behalf of, STPs to be disclosed in an annual return.

Section 310G(4)(d) of the Electoral Act requires the total electoral expenditure incurred by, or on behalf of, STPs to be disclosed in a new registration return.

Section 310M of the Electoral Act outlines the details of relevant electoral expenditure required to be disclosed.

The financial controller is required to include within a return the total electoral expenditure incurred by or on behalf of the STP during the calendar year for an annual return and the previous calendar year for a new registration return.

The financial controller is also required to provide certain additional details of electoral expenditure that counts towards the:

- capped entity cap
- capped entity Senate caps (for each State and Territory)
- capped entity Divisional caps
- capped entity by-election and Senate-only election caps.

This includes total expenditure under these caps and other details (such the names of relevant Divisions, State or Territory).

For detailed information on expenditure caps and targeted expenditure, see the **Electoral Expenditure Guide for Capped Expenditure Entities**.

Total outstanding amount of debts



Section 310C(3)(e) of the Electoral Act requires an STP to disclose the total outstanding amount, as at the end of a calendar year, of all debts incurred by or on behalf of the STP.

Section 310G(4)(e) of the Electoral Act requires an STP to disclose the total outstanding amount, as at the end of the previous calendar year, of all debts incurred by or on behalf of the STP.

The financial controller is required to disclose the total of all outstanding amounts of debts incurred by or on behalf of the STP at the end of the calendar year for an annual return and the previous calendar year for a new registration return.

Note: The total outstanding amount should include GST.

Outstanding amounts include, but are not limited to the following:

- loans
- overdrafts
- unpaid accounts.

Note: Employee provisions (for example, provision for annual leave) are **not outstanding amounts** for the purposes of a return.

Examples of outstanding amounts are:

- a loan from financial institution with an outstanding balance of \$36,000
- a loan from another entity obtained in a previous calendar year with an outstanding balance of \$8,000
- invoices received, but not paid, from a supplier totalling \$4,500
- superannuation payable
- GST and PAYG debt to the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

Details of outstanding amounts



Section 310N of the Electoral Act outlines the details required to be included in a return in relation to certain outstanding amounts (debts).

Where the sum of debts owed to a person or entity at the end of the calendar year for an annual return, or the previous calendar year for a new registration return, are greater than the disclosure threshold, the financial controller is required to provide certain details of these debts.

Examples of outstanding amounts where details are required include:

- 2 outstanding invoices payable to the same entity for \$2,000 and \$4,000, a total of \$6,000 should be disclosed
- a debt of \$20,000 owed to an STP member, comprising 2 loans of \$10,000
- a debt of \$17,000 owed to another entity which was obtained in a previous calendar year
- a bank overdraft account balance of \$8,500
- an individual amount owing on a credit card totalling \$20,750
- outstanding invoices received from a supplier totalling \$17,400
- a loan from a financial institution with an outstanding balance of \$45,000
- GST and PAYG debt to the ATO which total more than \$5,000.

The return requires the following information related to the loan, dependant on the lender type:

- for a loan from an unincorporated association (other than a registered industrial organisation) – the name of the association, and the names and addresses of each member of the executive committee (however described), or
- for a loan paid out of a trust fund or the funds of a foundation – the title or other description of the trust fund or the name of the foundation, and the names and addresses of the trustees of the fund or foundation, or
- for any other loan, the name and address of the person or organisation that made the loan.

The return should also state whether the debt is to a financial institution or non-financial institution.

Details of discretionary benefits



Sections 310C(3)(f) and 310G(4)(f) of the Electoral Act require the details of Commonwealth discretionary benefits received by STPs to be disclosed.

The financial controller must provide the details of any discretionary benefits (however described) received by or on behalf of the STP from the Commonwealth during the calendar year for an annual return or the previous calendar year for a new registration return.

Discretionary benefits include, but are not limited to:

- grants
- contracts
- other benefits requiring the exercise of discretion by the Commonwealth.

The return should include:

- the name of the Commonwealth entity from whom the discretionary benefit was received
- the date the discretionary benefit was received
- the value or amount of the discretionary benefit.

Note: Discretionary benefits are different to statutory entitlements, which are provided if specified criteria are met. For example, election funding.

Other details

Federal administrative accounts



Section 310C(3A) of the Electoral Act requires STPs to disclose the details of any federal administrative accounts kept at any time in the calendar year.

If the STP has kept any federal administrative accounts at any time in the calendar year, they must include the details of those accounts in an annual return.

The details that should be included are:

- the account name
- the BSB and account number
- the dates of operation, if not in use for the whole of the calendar year.

These details are required for each federal administrative account, if more than one is held during the calendar year.

If the STP has not held any federal administrative accounts in the calendar year, they should include a statement to that effect.

Information provided in another return



Section 310C(8) of the Electoral Act provides that an STP is not required to provide an annual return in circumstances where they provide a return as an AE or NE for that calendar year, and in that AE or NE return they:

- state the person or entity was also an STP in the year
- set out the information required under section 310C with respect to the person or entity for the year.

This exception is not relevant to STPs that are also AEs at the point of lodging an annual return, as they are considered to be only an AE for the purposes of Part XX of the Electoral Act (per section 287(8A)).

Rather, this exception relates to STPs that were an AE at some point in the calendar year but are not registered as an AE at the time of lodging the annual return.

Disclosure principles

Disclosure of gross amounts

The return must include total **gross** amounts for the purpose of calculating relevant amounts, inclusive of GST and merchant fees. In calculating the total amount received, for instance, amounts received must be reported **separately** to amounts paid in relation to the same item.

For examples, see the following scenarios:

Scenario	Amount received for return calculations	Amount paid for return calculations	Notes
Fundraiser: Took \$20,000, costs \$13,750, net profit \$6,250	\$20,000	\$13,750	Amount received and amount paid must be counted separately and not netted.
American Express transaction: \$18,600 charged, \$17,864 deposited after \$736 merchant fee	\$18,600	\$736	Merchant fee recorded as an amount paid.
Deposit into third-party merchant account (e.g., PayPal/Eway): \$200 received, \$2.50 fee deducted	\$200	\$2.50	The deposit is recorded as an amount received, and the merchant fee is recorded as an amount paid. If funds are later transferred to the STPs bank account, that transfer is eliminated as an internal transfer.
Refunded amount received: \$20,000 received then refunded.	\$20,000	\$20,000	Refund should be calculated as a separate amount paid, not netted against the receipt.

Amounts not to be reported

Internal transactions must not be reported as they result in double counting of amounts received. Examples of internal transactions include:

- transactions between the STP and its branches
- transactions between branches within a State or Territory
- transfers between an STP's bank accounts, for example:
 - a transfer from the STP's bank account to a branch's bank account
 - a transfer between bank accounts both held by the STP
 - a transfer from a transaction account to an investment account, such as a term deposit account.

Other transactions that are not to be reported in the return include commercial discounts received in the normal course of business

Incomplete returns



Section 318 of the Electoral Act provides for when a person who is required to furnish a return is unable to do so.

The person responsible for furnishing a return under Division 5 of the Electoral Act (relevant person) must make reasonable efforts to obtain the information required to complete the return.

Where the relevant person is unable to obtain all the information required to provide a complete return, the relevant person must prepare the return to the extent that they are able to do so. They may also give the AEC notice in writing by lodging a Notice of Incomplete Return together with the incomplete return.

Note: Lodgement of a Notice of Incomplete Return does not relieve the relevant person of the responsibility of making reasonable efforts to obtain the information required to complete the return. The AEC may assess whether the lodgement of a Notice of Incomplete Return was used by the relevant person to avoid their responsibilities under the Electoral Act, and may exercise its powers accordingly.

The Notice of Incomplete Return has three parts that comprise the following:

- full details of the information believed to be missing from the return
- reason why the information was unable to be obtained, and details of all attempts made to obtain the missing information
- full name/s and address details of the person/s believed to possess the missing particulars, and reasons why the relevant person believes this person/s can provide the required information.

Amending returns



Section 319A of the Electoral Act provides for amendments to returns in certain circumstances.

If a return has been lodged and subsequently found to contain an error or defect, the relevant person, or another person in certain circumstances, may submit a written request to the AEC to amend the return.

The amendment request must be by notice in writing and signed by the person making the request and be lodged with the AEC.

The AEC will approve the amendment request if it is satisfied there is an error or defect. On approval, the return will be amended and published on the Transparency Register.

Note: Under section 306B, a company liquidator can recover the amount of value of a gift from made to an STP if the gift exceeds the disclosure threshold and the company is wound up within one year of giving it. This may require an amendment to be made to a return.

Administration and compliance

Compliance reviews

The AEC conducts compliance reviews of returns lodged to check the accuracy and completeness of disclosures.

As part of this process, the AEC may issue a notice to a person to require them to do a particular thing, for instance providing specified documentation or attending an interview with the AEC.

The AEC may provide a report outlining its findings, this report may include a recommendation to amend a particular return.



Division 5AC, Part XX of the Electoral Act provides an authorised officer a variety of powers to undertake a review of a person or entity's compliance with Part XX of the Electoral Act, including returns.

Penalties

The Electoral Act imposes civil penalties, and in some cases, criminal penalties if a person or entity contravenes certain requirements of the Electoral Act. The AEC provides information, including this guide, to assist STPs to comply with their disclosure obligations.

The AEC deals with non-compliance as appropriate to the circumstances, including possible referral to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.

To review a list of civil and criminal penalties that may apply to STPs under the Electoral Act, see [Penalties – financial disclosure](#) (publication forthcoming).

Foreign donations

The Electoral Act restricts the making and receiving of donations from a [foreign donor](#). Persons or entities under these restrictions must ensure they are aware of these restrictions and exceptions to maintain compliance.

The [Fact sheet on Foreign Donations](#) contains further information (publication forthcoming).



Sections 302D and 302F of the Electoral Act set out the restrictions on receiving gifts from foreign donors.

Section 287AA of the Electoral Act details the meaning of a foreign donor.

Publishing



Section 320 of the Electoral Act provides for the publishing of certain return information on the Transparency Register.

The AEC is required to publish and make available to the public certain return information on the Transparency Register.

This does not include addresses or details of federal administrative accounts provided in a lodged return.

The Electoral Commissioner may also redact or remove personal information (within the meaning of the *Privacy Act 1988*) from published return information.

Annual return information will be available for public inspection on the Transparency Register within 10 weeks of the end of the calendar year. Whereas a return provided by a newly registered STP or AE will be available for public inspection on the Transparency Register before the end of 10 weeks after the day a new STP or AE is registered.

The information in the return is collected under Division 5 of the Electoral Act, and in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Record-keeping

Persons required to furnish a return should have adequate financial recording systems and procedures to enable the return, which will be publicly available, to be properly completed.

The Electoral Act makes the person responsible for furnishing a return to the AEC responsible for keeping recordings pertaining to that return.

All transactions should be supported by source documents recording the details of individual transactions. Examples of source documents include, but are not limited to:

- receipts
- tax invoices
- loan documents
- wages records
- bank deposit books and cheque butts
- bank account statements
- credit card statements
- contract and grant agreements.

Source documents should contain information required to complete the return, such as the:

- date of the transaction
- name of the person or organisation from whom a receipt was received
- name of the person or organisation to whom a payment was made
- name and address of the organisation that has provided a loan to the party
- total payment made or amount received
- amount of GST
- merchant fees.

Retention of records



Section 317 of the Electoral Act governs the record keeping requirements in relation to financial disclosure.

Relevant records must be retained for a minimum of 5 years in certain circumstances.

A record must also be kept in accordance with any other requirements as determined by the Electoral Commissioner.

Persons or entities who fail to comply with these requirements are subject to civil penalties.