

Classification: OFFICIAL:SENSITIVE

FAD / **FUNDING AND
DISCLOSURE
REFORM**

Administrative Assistance Funding Guideline

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Purpose

The *Administrative Assistance Funding Guideline* (the guideline) provides clear and consistent direction to registered political parties (with a current member of the Federal Parliament), independent members of the House of Representatives and Senators on their access to and the payment and use of administrative assistance funding.

It aims to outline how administrative assistance funding is distributed in accordance with the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) by outlining entitlement and eligibility, and processes for accessing funding. It will also provide the process by which administrative assistance funding can be recovered by the AEC.

The intended audience of this guideline is:

- registered political parties with a current member of the Federal Parliament that is a member of the political party,
- independent members of the Federal Parliament, and
- staff employed by registered political parties and members of the Federal Parliament responsible for managing, allocating, and reporting on administrative assistance funding and administrative expenditure.

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 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 3AA	Administrative Assistance Funding
Division 5	Annual disclosure of donations and electoral expenditure etc.
Subdivision B	Annual disclosure obligations
Division 5C	Compliance and enforcement powers
Division 6	Miscellaneous
Section 321AC	Indexation of administrative assistance funding amount

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 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.

Please refer to www.aec.gov.au to access the AEC’s current publications.

Introduction

Division 3AA of Part XX of the Electoral Act provides for the payment of administrative assistance funding to support the administrative requirements of registered political parties and independent parliamentarians.

Administrative assistance funding is available to:

- registered political parties with a current member of the Federal Parliament that is a member of the registered political party
- independent members of the House of Representatives
- independent Senators.

Funding is paid quarterly, with the amount based on the number and type of members of the Federal Parliament in the previous quarter.



For administrative assistance funding purposes, 'quarter' is defined as a three-month period beginning on 1 January, 1 April, 1 July, or 1 October.

Roles and responsibilities

Registered political parties and independent members

- **Compliance with funding conditions:** ensure that administrative assistance funding is used exclusively for permitted administrative expenditure, in accordance with the Electoral Act.
- **Record-keeping and reporting:** maintain accurate records of all transactions, and provide required statements and returns within specified timeframes, in accordance with the Electoral Act.
- **Notification obligations:** notify the AEC promptly of any changes that may affect eligibility or entitlement under the Electoral Act, such as deregistration or changes in account details.
- **Audit requirements:** obtain and submit audit certifications from a registered company auditor as required under the Electoral Act.

Staff of registered political parties and independent members

- **Financial management:** manage and allocate funds in line with the guideline and the Electoral Act.
- **Procedural compliance:** follow all steps set out in the guideline and related procedures, and the Electoral Act, including maintaining supporting documentation.

Administrative assistance funding

Eligibility and entitlement

Registered political parties

For a registered political party to be eligible for administrative assistance funding, the party must:

- have been registered under Part XI of the Electoral Act for all or part of the immediately preceding quarter, and
- have had at least one member that was a member of the House of Representatives or a Senator for all or part of the immediately preceding quarter.

For each member of the House of Representatives, the registered political party is entitled to \$7,500 per quarter, while for each Senator the party receives \$3,750 per quarter. If a member serves in the Federal Parliament, or is a member of the party, for only part of a quarter, the payment is adjusted on a pro-rata basis (see 'Pro-rata payments' below). The funding amounts are indexed annually on 1 July.

State branches of federal registered political parties do not have their own separate entitlement to administrative assistance funding. In circumstances where a member of the Federal Parliament is only a member of a registered political party's State branch, the member is taken to be a member of the federal party for the purposes of administrative assistance funding.

Where an individual belongs to more than one registered political party, only one registered political party can receive the administrative assistance funding payable for that individual. In such cases, the individual member must nominate which registered political party will receive the funding on their behalf.

Independent members of the House of Representatives and Senators

For an independent member of the House of Representatives or a Senator to be eligible for administrative assistance funding, the member must have been an independent member of the House of Representatives or a Senator for all or part of the immediately preceding quarter

An independent member of the House of Representatives is entitled to \$7,500 per quarter, while an independent Senator is entitled to \$3,750 per quarter. If a member serves in the Federal Parliament or is an independent member of Federal Parliament for only part of a quarter, the payment is adjusted on a pro-rata basis (see 'Pro-rata payments' below). The funding amounts are indexed annually on 1 July.

Pro-rata payments

Pro-rata payments apply when eligibility changes during a quarter. This includes situations where a party or member becomes eligible or ceases to be eligible partway through the quarter, or when there is a change in status. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a member switches from one registered political party to another
- a member leaves their registered political party and becomes an independent member
- a member's political party is no longer registered.

Example 1 – Senator becomes an independent

At the beginning of 1 October, Caroline is a Senator and a member of the registered political party called the Politics Party. On 12 November, Caroline leaves the Politics Party to become an independent Senator.

For the new quarter commencing 1 January, the Politics Party's entitlement to administrative assistance funding because of Caroline is as follows (assuming no indexation):

$$\frac{\$3,750 * x}{y}$$

where x = the number of days in the immediately preceding quarter that were 'Senate qualifying days' for Caroline and the Politics Party = 43 (1 October to 12 November)

where y = the number of days in the immediately preceding quarter = 92 (1 October to 31 December)

This calculation results in \$1,752.72. Therefore, with rounding, the Politics Party is entitled to be paid \$1,753 in administrative assistance funding on or before 7 January in relation to Caroline's time as a party Senator. The agent of the Politics Party will be responsible for the spending of the amount under new section 302AG, and the amount could potentially be recovered from the Politics Party under new sections 302AI–302AJ.

For that same new January quarter, Caroline's entitlement to administrative assistance funding as an independent member is calculated as below (assuming no indexation):

$$\frac{\$3,750 * x}{y}$$

where x = the number of days Caroline was an independent member in the immediately preceding quarter = 49 (13 November to 31 December)

where y = the number of days in the immediately preceding quarter = 92 (1 October to 31 December)

This calculation results in \$1,997.28. Therefore, with rounding, Caroline is entitled to be paid \$1,997 in administrative assistance funding on or before 7 January as an independent member. Caroline will be responsible for the spending of the amount under new section 302AG, and the amount could potentially be recovered from Caroline under new sections 302AI and 302AJ.

Payment of funds

Payment process

For **registered political parties**, payments are made to an account nominated by the party. This account must be maintained by the registered political party, kept in Australia and held with an Australian Authorised Deposit-taking Institution (ADI), such as a bank or credit union. While the nominated account may be a federal administrative account, it cannot be a federal account used for electoral expenditure. These account types have a specific meaning under the Electoral Act, see section 287 for further guidance.

For **independent members of the House of Representatives and Senators**, payments are made to an account nominated by the individual. This account must be maintained by the individual kept in Australia and be held with an Australian ADI. Similar to registered political parties, the account may be a federal administrative account but must not be a federal account used for electoral expenditure.

Payment is made to the account that was nominated by the registered political party or independent member of Federal Parliament before the end of the 7th day in the quarter in which they are eligible for the payment. The AEC will continue to pay the entitlement into the account that it has previously made administrative funding assistance payments into, unless the registered political party or independent member of Federal Parliament nominates a new account or ceases to be eligible.



The AEC requires updated bank details no later than 5 working days before the end of the quarter.

If a party ceases to be registered

If a party is deregistered before a payment is completed, the funds will be paid directly to the eligible member(s) of that party who remain in the Federal Parliament. However, if no members of that party remain in the Federal Parliament, no payment will be issued.

Permitted use of funding



The definition of ‘administrative expenditure’ in section 287AAA of the Electoral Act establishes the categories of payments for which administrative assistance funding can be used.

Examples

Examples of administrative expenditure include, but are not limited to:

- **general administration and management:** costs for running the day-to-day operations of the party or independent member’s office (e.g. office supplies, accounting services, and administrative staff salaries)
- **policy meetings and events:** expenses for conferences, seminars, or meetings where party or member policies are discussed or developed (e.g. venue hire for a policy workshop)
- **auditing and compliance:** costs for auditing financial accounts or audits related to claims and disclosures under Part XX of the Electoral Act (e.g. fees paid to a registered company auditor for annual compliance checks)
- **compliance with Electoral Act obligations:** expenditure incurred to meet obligations under the Electoral Act (e.g. costs for preparing and lodging annual returns)

The following examples may also be administrative expenditure if the expenditure is sufficiently related to the first of three categories above (e.g. remuneration of staff engaged in general administration and management):

- **staff remuneration and training:** salaries for staff engaged in administrative tasks, plus training costs for those staff (e.g. paying an office manager and funding training on compliance obligations)
- **equipment and vehicles:** purchase or lease of IT equipment, office furniture, or vehicles used for administrative purposes (e.g. buying laptops for staff or leasing a car for administrative travel)
- **office accommodation:** rent and utilities for office space and equipment used by staff for an administrative purpose (e.g. monthly rent for the party’s administrative headquarters)
- **interest on loans:** interest payments on loans taken out to cover administrative costs (e.g. interest on a loan used to pay for office renovations)



Entities will need to assess the level of connection to the main categories of administrative expenditure and whether they are electoral expenditure or another category of expenditure (i.e. capital investment).

Careful consideration should be given to the categories outlined in section 287AAA of the Electoral Act. Where expenditure is categorised across more than one category of expenditure it will need to be apportioned.

Administrative assistance funding **cannot** be used for purposes including, but not limited to, creating or communicating electoral matter (such as campaigning), for State or Territory electoral purposes, or application to any expenditure that is reimbursed by the Commonwealth under other provisions.

Compliance

All recipients of administrative assistance funding must comply with the requirements set out in the Electoral Act. Compliance ensures that funding is used appropriately and that transparency and accountability are maintained.

Key obligations

- **record-keeping:** accurate records must be maintained (these records should clearly show how funds were spent and must be retained for the period specified in the Electoral Act)
- **reporting requirements:** recipients must submit annual returns and provide any required supporting documentation, including audit certificates, within the prescribed timeframes (see the [Annual Returns Guideline for Registered Political Parties](#) for further information on reporting requirements)
- **audit and verification:** funding recipients must obtain an audit certificate from a registered company auditor and provide it to the AEC as required alongside their annual return.

The AEC may conduct compliance checks or request additional information at any time.

Recovery

The AEC can seek to recover administrative assistance funding that has been paid in the following situations:

- **ineligible payments:** if the recipient receives funding they weren't entitled to, the AEC can recover the amount by reducing future payments or treating it as a debt due to the Commonwealth
- **spending less than the funding provided:** if the recipient's actual administrative expenditure is less than the funding they received, the AEC can recover the excess amount by reducing future payments or treating it as a debt due to the Commonwealth
- **failure to provide required information:** if the recipient doesn't provide the required documents, such as audit certificates or details in annual returns, the AEC can recover the full amount paid for that calendar year.

Indexation

All dollar amounts (funding rates) are indexed annually on 1 July, based on the Consumer Price Index. These amounts are published on the AEC website at www.aec.gov.au.