

Roy Morgan Research: Stakeholder Survey 2025

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) commissioned the Funding and Disclosure Stakeholder Survey 2025 to inform implementation planning for the new federal political Funding and Disclosure (FAD) scheme ahead of its commencement.

This document provides a snapshot of the survey conducted in late 2025. It describes the composition of the stakeholder cohort that was surveyed, the insights they provided and their preferences for engagement with the AEC.

Research objectives

The research provides an evidence base on awareness, understanding, confidence and anticipated challenges ahead of commencement. Research objectives were to:

- assess awareness and understanding of the reforms
- understand preparedness and anticipated challenges
- identify communication, education and system support needs
- inform future AEC implementation planning.

Methodology


The research was conducted in late 2025 and was structured around three stakeholder groups that interact with the funding and disclosure scheme. Separate surveys were conducted for each group, reflecting their different roles, responsibilities and levels of interaction with the scheme.

Fieldwork was conducted using an online survey.


Group A (political participants)

Political actors who have direct and ongoing responsibility for meeting funding and disclosure obligations; including:

- political parties
- members of the House of Representatives and Senators
- third parties
- significant third parties
- associated entities
- candidates


 1,685 invited

 144 completed the survey


 20 minutes median time spent

Group B (donors)

Donors whose interaction with the scheme is typically less frequent and more episodic, but still subject to specific thresholds, triggers and reporting requirements.


 1,888 invited

 123 completed the survey


 18.5 minutes median time spent

Group C (general public)

Members of the general public, whose interaction with the scheme is indirect and shaped primarily by the visibility, clarity and accessibility of published information.

 6,026 invited

 527 completed the survey

 6 minutes median time spent

Awareness of the reforms

Awareness of the reforms is incomplete across obligated stakeholders

Observation

Around two-thirds of respondents across regulated political participants and donors had heard of the reforms, with awareness higher among political participants than donors. Existing donors and respondents from smaller or self-represented entities were less likely to be aware.

Metrics

66% heard of reforms (combined political participants and donors)

85% heard of reforms (political parties, third parties, significant third parties and associated entities)

53% heard of reforms (existing donors)

Impact

Early awareness-raising allows later communications to focus on meeting obligations.

Familiarity with the reforms is generally low, even among those aware of the changes

Observation

Most respondents reported only slight or moderate familiarity. Understanding is concentrated on a small number of headline changes, particularly reduced disclosure thresholds, donation caps and real-time disclosure requirements. Familiarity concentrated on headline changes.

Metrics

65% at least moderately familiar (aware respondents)

35% low or no familiarity

26% most frequently identify reduced disclosure thresholds

Impact

Many stakeholders are still at an early stage of understanding the reforms. Familiarity is concentrated on a small number of headline changes, indicating the need for broader applied guidance.

Preparedness is lower among smaller organisations and single-staff entities

Observation

Organisation size matters. Larger organisations report higher levels of readiness ahead of commencement. Smaller entities have fewer internal compliance resources. Preparedness reflects capacity and prior experience

Metrics

54% of single-staff organisations report being not prepared

38% of political participants report being not prepared

Less than 25% of respondents report being well or fully prepared

Impact

Targeted practical support is likely to have the greatest impact among smaller and less resourced entities.

Confidence is higher for meeting obligations than for understanding the requirements

Observation

All groups indicated higher confidence in meeting obligations than in understanding the requirements. Candidates and agents report the lowest confidence levels, while donors' confidence is closer to larger political entities.

Metrics

34% of donors were confident meeting obligations

22% of candidates, agents and members were confident in meeting obligations

13% of donors were confident they are well informed about the new requirements

Impact

Stakeholders may feel able to comply even where understanding is limited. Confidence at decision points may depend on clarity of support and guidance.

Increased effort is expected and operational changes are planned

Observation

Most stakeholders expect increased time and effort required for compliance, particularly those aware of the reforms. Anticipated actions focus on training, systems and recordkeeping rather than workforce expansion.

Metrics

78% expect compliance effort to increase (among respondents aware of the reforms)

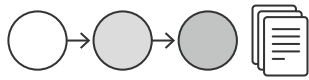
62% expect to upgrade systems or recordkeeping (political participants aware of the reforms)

26% expect to hire additional staff (political participants aware of the reforms)

Impact

Clear operational guidance is likely to moderate perceived burden.

Engagement preferences



Clear, written and step-by-step guidance is strongly preferred

Observation

Fact sheets or written guidance are the most preferred format, with a step-by-step instructional style the dominant presentation preference. Webinars, social media and highly visual formats should supplement rather than lead communication.

Metrics

58% of political participants prefer written guidance

46% of donors prefer written guidance

More than 53% of respondents prefer step-by-step instructional style

Impact

Written materials should form the foundation of communication. Step-by-step sequencing is more valued than visual or legal detail.



Guidance is most valued before and at the start of reporting periods

Observation

The strongest preference is for guidance before an election period begins, with consistent support for communication at the start of disclosure reporting periods and ongoing reminders throughout the year. Donors differ, favouring the start of reporting periods over pre-election communication.

Metrics

42% prefer receiving guidance before election period begins

37% prefer guidance at the start of the disclosure reporting period

36% value ongoing reminders or updates throughout the year

Impact

Communications should be front-loaded ahead of election periods. Start-of-period reminders are critical reinforcement points.



Clear step-by-step prompts and on-screen guidance are the primary usability needs

Observation

Among users of the existing funding and disclosure system, step-by-step prompts or checklists are the most identified improvement, followed by clearer on-screen instructions. Stakeholders prioritise structured guidance over new functionality.

Metrics

40% political participants request prompts/checklists

35% donors request prompts/checklists

More than 25% of respondents request clearer on-screen instructions

Impact

Key steps should be reinforced consistently across all materials. System prompts should align with external written guidance and confirmation messages should reinforce task completion.