

Financial Disclosure Guide for Third Parties Incurring Electoral Expenditure

2021-22 financial year



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Introduction

The Commonwealth funding and disclosure scheme (the disclosure scheme) established under Part XX of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (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 political parties, associated entities, significant third parties, Members of the House of Representatives, Senators, third parties, candidates, Senate groups and donors to lodge financial disclosure returns with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The disclosure returns are published on the [Transparency Register](#).

The Guide

This version of the Financial Disclosure Guide for Third Parties (the guide) applies to returns for the 2021-22 financial year. While the guide is intended to assist third parties with meeting their disclosure requirements, it does not address the whole of the Electoral Act. Users should familiarise themselves with the relevant part of the Electoral Act and seek independent legal advice where necessary.

The Electoral Act and all guides published by the AEC are available at www.aec.gov.au. Financial disclosure returns are available for viewing on the [Transparency Register](#) after the public release date.

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

	A warning symbol indicates information relating to a legal obligation under the Electoral Act.
	An information symbol indicates a useful tip.
	A timing symbol indicates a due date.

Definition of a third party

A person or entity is a third party for the purposes of the financial disclosure requirements of the Electoral Act if:

during the financial year electoral expenditure incurred by or with the authority of the person or entity is more than the disclosure threshold; **and**

- a) the person or entity is not:
- a political entity (i.e. a registered political party, a state branch of a registered political party, a candidate or member of a group);
 - a member of the House of Representatives or the Senate; or
 - required to be registered as a Significant Third Party under section 287F of the Electoral Act.

If a third party has branches, the branches are treated as a single third party.

Third parties are not required to register with the AEC. Third parties will be automatically included on the [Transparency Register](#) if they lodge a financial disclosure return for the current, or any of the previous three financial years. Third parties will remain on the Transparency Register for three years following a financial year for which they report.



Subsection [4\(1\)](#) of the Electoral Act provides the meaning of a political entity.

Section [287\(1\)](#) of the Electoral Act provides the meaning of a third party and significant third party.

Section [287F](#) of the Electoral Act provides for when a person or entity must register as a significant third party.

The difference between a third party and a significant third party

Under section 287F of the Electoral Act, a person or entity (except a political entity, a member of the House of Representatives or a Senator) must be registered for a financial year as a significant third party if:

- the amount of electoral expenditure incurred by or with the authority of the person or entity during that or any one of the previous 3 financial years is \$250,000 or more; or
- the amount of electoral expenditure incurred by or with the authority of the person or entity:
 - during that financial year is at least equal to the disclosure threshold; and
 - during the previous financial year was at least one-third of the revenue of the person or entity for that year; or
- during that financial year the person or entity operates for the dominant purpose of fundraising amounts:

- the aggregate of which is at least equal to the disclosure threshold; and
- that are for the purpose of incurring electoral expenditure or that are to be gifted to another person or entity for the purpose of incurring electoral expenditure.

Electoral matter and electoral expenditure

Electoral expenditure is expenditure incurred for the dominant purpose of creating or communicating electoral matter. Electoral matter is matter communicated or intended to be communicated for the dominant purpose of influencing the way electors vote in a federal election (see also discussion at [Part 1](#)). A factsheet on [Electoral Matter and Electoral Expenditure](#) is available on the AEC website.



Section [287AB](#) of the Electoral Act provides the meaning of electoral expenditure, and section [4AA](#) of the Electoral Act provides the meaning of electoral matter.

Annual disclosure

Responsibility for lodging the return

A person or entity that incurs electoral expenditure over the disclosure threshold must lodge a third party disclosure return (the return). If the third party is an entity the return should be lodged by a person with the authority to do so. In the case of a company this may be the Chief Executive Officer, company secretary or financial controller. In the case of a trust it would be the trustee.

A third party return is not required to be lodged by a:

- registered political party
- registered significant third party
- member of the House of Representatives or Senator
- candidate in a House of Representatives or Senate election.

Nil Third Party Returns not required to be lodged

A third party that receives an obligation letter from the AEC to lodge a Third Party Return but has not incurred electoral expenditure above the disclosure threshold is **not required to lodge a Third Party Return with the AEC.**



If a third party receives an obligation letter but has not incurred electoral expenditure above the disclosure threshold for the financial year, it should advise the AEC in writing at fad@aec.gov.au.

Reporting period

The return covers the **financial year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022**. For a person or entity that becomes or ceases to be a third party during the financial year, the return must be provided in relation to the whole financial year.

Disclosure threshold



The disclosure threshold for the 2021-22 financial year is for amounts of more than **\$14,500**. This figure is indexed annually.

Due date for lodging returns

The AEC will advise third parties of their obligation to lodge a return (or to advise the AEC in writing that it has not incurred electoral expenditure above the disclosure threshold) following the conclusion of the financial year.

Third parties should ensure their contact details with the AEC are current. Failure by the AEC to notify third parties of their obligation to lodge a return does not relieve them of the responsibility to lodge a return under the Electoral Act.



Completed returns must reach the AEC no later than 20 weeks after the end of the financial year.

For the 2021-22 financial year, the due date is 17 November 2022.

The AEC has no legislative discretion to extend this deadline.

Lodging your return

Third parties can prepare and lodge their returns online via the eReturns portal. The eReturns portal can be accessed from <https://ereturns.aec.gov.au>. The easiest way to lodge your return accurately and on time is to use the eReturns portal; it is quick, secure and allows importing/exporting of files which eliminates transcription errors. To assist with completing a return online, the [eReturns Third Party Quick Reference Guide](#), a step-by-step guide is available. See [Appendix 2](#) for more information.

Publications of returns

Returns are published on the [Transparency Register](#) from the first working day of February. Returns for the 2021-22 financial year will be published on **1 February 2023**.

Penalties

The Electoral Act imposes civil penalties and in some cases criminal penalties if a person or entity contravenes the requirements of the Electoral Act. The AEC provides support, including this guide, to assist third parties 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 third parties under the Electoral Act see [Penalties relating to funding and disclosure regulations](#) on the AEC website.

For further information on compliance and enforcement see [Compliance and Enforcement](#) on the AEC website.

Important information

Definition of a donation

A donation has the same meaning as a gift under the Electoral Act. A gift is defined as any disposition of property made by a person to another person, being a disposition made without consideration in money or money's worth or with inadequate consideration, and includes the provision of a service (other than volunteer labour) for no consideration or for inadequate consideration, but does not include:

- (a) a payment under Division 3; or
- (b) an annual subscription paid to a political party, to a State branch of a political party or to a division of a State branch of a political party by a person in respect of the person's membership of the party, branch or division; or
- (c) any visit, experience or activity provided for the purposes of a political exchange program.

A gift also includes a 'gift-in-kind' such as the provision of a service (other than volunteer labour) for no consideration.

	Section 287(1) of the Electoral Act provides the meaning of a gift.
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Foreign donations

Third parties are restricted:

- from receiving donations of \$100 or more if:
 - the third party knows the donor is a foreign donor; and
 - the third party knows that the foreign donor intends the gift to be used to incur [electoral expenditure](#), or for the dominant purpose of creating or communicating [electoral matter](#); or
 - the gift is accepted with the intent of using it to incur electoral expenditure, or for the dominant purpose of creating or communicating electoral matter.
- from receiving donations at least equal to the disclosure threshold from a foreign donor, if the donation is used for:
 - incurring electoral expenditure; or
 - for the dominant purpose of creating or communicating electoral matter.

If a third party receives a donation from a foreign donor in contravention of the restrictions in the Electoral Act, the Electoral Act provides six weeks from the gift being made for it, or an equivalent amount, to be returned to the donor or transferred to the Commonwealth.

A foreign donor is a person or entity who does not have a connection with Australia, such as a person who is not an Australian citizen or an entity that does not have a significant business presence in Australia.

The [Factsheet on Foreign Donations](#) available on the AEC website contains further information.

	<p>Section 287AA of the Electoral Act provides the meaning of a foreign donor.</p> <p>Sections 302E and 302F of the Electoral Act restrict third parties from receiving gifts from foreign donors for electoral expenditure.</p>
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Anti-avoidance provisions

The Electoral Act prohibits schemes to avoid foreign donations restrictions. The anti-avoidance provisions prohibit schemes for channelling foreign donations via a relevant person or entity to:

- members of the House of Representatives
- Senators
- political entities
- significant third parties
- associated entities; or
- third parties.

It is an offence under section 302H of the Electoral Act to establish arrangements to avoid the foreign donations restrictions. The Electoral Commissioner can issue a written notice if:

- a relevant person or entity (alone or with others) enters into, begins to carry out or carries out a scheme;
- there are reasonable grounds to conclude the relevant person did so for the sole or dominant purpose of avoiding foreign donations restrictions; and
- the scheme involved donation splitting, conduit corporations or any other unspecified avoidance scheme; and
- the scheme avoids the application of foreign donations restrictions.

A person or entity who commits an offence may be subject to civil or criminal penalties.

	<p>Section 302H of the Electoral Act prohibits schemes to avoid foreign donations restrictions.</p>
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Federal accounts

The Electoral Act provides immunities from state and territory electoral laws for donors, gift recipients and the agents of gift recipients in relation to the offering, seeking, giving, receipt, retention and use of gifts expressly for federal purposes.

A federal purpose means the purpose of incurring electoral expenditure, or creating or communicating electoral matter.

Immunities from state and territory electoral disclosure laws are also provided for donors, gift recipients and the agents of gift recipients in relation to the amounts and expenditure.

It is the responsibility of regulated entities to establish and maintain federal accounts for the purpose of dealing with gifts of money that are expressly for federal purposes.

A federal account means an account where:

- (a) The only amounts deposited into the account are amounts to be used only for a federal purpose; and
- (b) The only amounts withdrawn or transferred from the account are amounts:
 - (i) withdrawn or transferred for a federal purpose; or
 - (ii) transferred to another federal account.

Gifts from donors which are expressly given for state or territory electoral purposes, or unconditional gifts that the recipient intends to allocate to state or territory electoral purposes, must not be placed into a federal account.

Refer to the [AEC website](#) for further information.

	Sections 302CA and 314B of the Electoral Act provide immunities for gifts received for federal purposes.
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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 under its name a return consolidated across the entire group and list in this part of the return the names of all related bodies corporate.

	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 a third party that has branches is treated as a single third party.
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The return

A third party must disclose the following information in the return:

- total electoral expenditure—see [Part 1](#)
- details of donations totalling more than the disclosure threshold used for electoral expenditure—see [Part 2](#)



Sections [314AEB](#) and [314AEC](#) of the Electoral Act govern the lodgement of annual returns by third parties.

The third party must also sign the certification on the return. The certification is a statement of compliance with section 302E of the Electoral Act, which relates to foreign donations.

Part 1: Total electoral expenditure for financial year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

Part 1 of the return requires disclosure of the total amount of [electoral expenditure](#) incurred by or with the authority of the third party.

Note: Communications that have the dominant purpose of educating their audience, raising awareness of, or encouraging debate on a public policy or issue are not considered electoral matter.



Section [314AEB\(2\)\(a\)](#) of the Electoral Act requires a third party to disclose the total amount of electoral expenditure incurred by or with the authority of the third party.

Below are examples of electoral matter and electoral expenditure:

- A local progress association is formed by a group of local businesses to champion proposals for the urban renewal of the town centre and surrounds. The association decides to campaign in the federal election to call for the handover of former Defence land, to allow for construction of a business park. They hire a campaign manager, open a campaign shop front, coordinate volunteers, rent phone lines and issue a voting guide indicating preferred candidates. Although the election campaign is a short-term activity and the association has wider purposes, the dominant purpose of these campaign-related expenses make these electoral expenditure. The dominant purpose of the association (urban renewal) does not determine the dominant purpose of the expenditure.

- A bilingual education company is campaigning for increased Commonwealth investment in school language programs. Their campaign strategy is to support candidates who pledge to increase funding for school language programs. The company buys campaign software, public relations training for staff and general creative content for the campaign, such as image libraries.

Subsection [287AB\(2\)](#) of the Electoral Act clarifies that the purchase of the software, training and creative content is electoral expenditure. The purchase is made to create and communicate electoral matter generally, rather than being intended or used exclusively for a specific communication of electoral matter.

- A public health advocacy group designs a pamphlet assessing the policies of different parties, regarding subsidies of expensive medicines. The pamphlet summarises how much money each party has committed to spend on drugs and summarises each party's policies on limits to patent periods to indicate how closely aligned each party is to the priorities of the group. The pamphlet includes a smiley face next to some parties and a frowning face next to other parties. The symbols represent support for some parties and opposition towards others, makes this an implicit comment promoting or opposing political parties. Hence this is more likely to be electoral matter.
- A business peak body releases a video online criticising the economic policies of a major political party contesting an upcoming election through the framework of commonly taught economic theory. Given the dominant purpose of the peak body's other communications, it is reasonable to conclude the peak body's dominant purpose is political, rather than educative. Any costs associated with the production and release of the video would be electoral expenditure.

Below are examples of what is not considered electoral matter and electoral expenditure:

- Kerrie is the Chief Executive Officer of a not-for-profit organisation that encourages healthy eating. The organisation occasionally issues material to influence how electors vote, but Kerrie's primary role involves organising the delivery of healthy eating programs in schools and workplaces. As the dominant purpose of employing Kerrie is not for her to create or communicate electoral matter, her salary is not electoral expenditure.
- A novel public policy issue emerges. To assist it in forming a policy position, an industry association commissions a think tank to conduct research and write a report on the issue. As the dominant purpose of the industry association in commissioning the report is not to influence the way electors vote in an election, the research report is not electoral matter and therefore the association's expenditure on commissioning the report is not electoral expenditure.

Further information and examples can be found in the [Factsheet on Electoral Matter and Electoral Expenditure](#) available on the AEC website.

The above guidance should not be used as a substitute for specific legal advice on what does or does not constitute electoral expenditure for the purpose of the Electoral Act. Users of this guide are urged to seek their own independent advice where necessary.

Part 2: Gifts received for the purpose of incurring electoral expenditure for financial year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

Part 2 of the return requires a person or entity that was required to complete Part 1 of the return to disclose details of any gifts received (whether within the 2021-22 financial year or not) totalling more than the threshold that were used, either wholly or partly, to incur electoral expenditure reported in Part 1.

Where a gift or gifts totalling more than \$14,500 was received and used, in whole or in part, to incur electoral expenditure or reimburse such expenditure the following details must be disclosed:

- full name and address details of the person or organisation from whom the gift/donation was received
- the date each gift/donation was received
- the value or amount of each gift/donation received.

	Section <u>314AEC</u> of the Electoral Act provides for the disclosure of the gifts received and their details where the gift is used to incur electoral expenditure.
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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 name of the association and the names and addresses of all members of the executive committee of the association must be disclosed.

Where an amount has been received from a trust fund or foundation fund, the name and description of the trust or foundation and the names and addresses of all trustees must be disclosed.

If no gifts/donations for electoral expenditure were received, Part 2 of the return should be marked 'nil'.

Period covered

Unlike the disclosure of electoral expenditure, which is limited to the 2021-22 financial year, gifts/donations used to fund that expenditure must be disclosed even where they were received **prior to 1 July 2021**.

The following example may assist in clarifying the disclosure requirements when electoral expenditure is made in the 2021-22 financial year using gifts/donations that have been received in prior years.

A third party received a gift of \$15,000 in the 2020-21 financial year:

- in the 2021-22 financial year the third party incurred electoral expenditure of \$50,000 which is required to be disclosed in Part 1 of the return; and
- as part of the \$50,000 of electoral expenditure incurred in the 2021-22 financial year, the third party used \$3,000 of the \$15,000 gift received in the 2020-21 financial year;
- as the third party used part of a gift received in the previous financial year to incur electoral expenditure and the gift received (\$15,000) was more than the 2021-22 threshold (\$14,500) the third party is required to disclose the total amount of the gift in Part 2 of the return.

If in a subsequent financial year to the 2021-22 financial year:

- the third party used the remaining \$12,000 of the \$15,000 gift received in the 2020-21 financial year to incur electoral expenditure; and
- the electoral expenditure is greater than the disclosure threshold for that financial year; then
- the third party will be required to disclose the \$15,000 as a gift received in the subsequent financial year's return.

In this situation, the third party should include an explanatory note on the subsequent financial year's return that the gift has been disclosed previously.

Incomplete returns

Where the person responsible for lodging the return is unable to obtain all the information required to fully complete the return, a Notice of Incomplete Return must be completed and lodged with the incomplete return.

Where it is necessary to submit a Notice of Incomplete Return:

- complete the Third Party Return of Electoral Expenditure as fully as possible
- complete the Notice of Incomplete Return
- lodge the Notice of Incomplete Return and the incomplete Third Party Return of Electoral Expenditure with the AEC at the same time.

Note: lodgement of a Notice of Incomplete Return does not relieve the 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 person to avoid their responsibilities under the Electoral Act.

The Notice of Incomplete Return contains three parts:

Part 1 – requires the full details of the information believed to be missing from the return.

Part 2 – requires the:

- reason the particulars listed in Part 1 were unable to be obtained
- details of all attempts made to obtain the missing information.

Part 3 – requires:

- full name/s and address details of the person/s believed to possess the missing particulars
- reasons why it is believed this person/s possesses the required information.



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

Amending returns

A request may be made to, or by the AEC seeking amendment of a return that has been lodged and subsequently found to be incomplete or incorrect.

Amendments to the return require previously submitted amounts to be provided together with the amended amounts. Amendments are processed through eReturns.



Section [319A](#) of the Electoral Act provides for the amendment of returns.

Administration

Date for public inspection of annual returns

Annual returns are made available for public inspection on the first working day of February each year. For 2021-22 annual returns, that date is 1 February 2023.

Returns are available for inspection on the [Transparency Register](#).

Record keeping

Third Parties like all other entities and organisations should keep adequate records.

Financial recording systems and procedures must be sufficient to enable the return, which will be publicly available, to be properly completed.

All transactions should be supported by source documents recording the details of individual transactions. Examples of source documents are:

- receipts
- tax invoices
- bank deposit books and cheque butts
- bank account statements
- credit card statements.

Retention of records

Relevant records, whether formal or informal, must be retained for a minimum of 5 years following the end of the reporting period.

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.

	Section 317 of the Electoral Act provides for the retention of records.
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Compliance reviews

The AEC conducts compliance reviews of annual returns lodged by third parties to verify the accuracy and completeness of disclosures.

Compliance reviews are undertaken 'off-site' however officers of the AEC may still attend third party premises to inspect original documentation and to hold an exit interview to discuss the review.

A written report is issued detailing findings. This may include advice to amend the third party's return.

For further information on compliance and enforcement see [Compliance and Enforcement](#) on the AEC website.



Section [316\(2A\)](#) of the Electoral Act provides for the conduct of compliance reviews.

Appendix 1 – Glossary of terms

AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
Anti-avoidance scheme	<p>Can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Donation splitting: a foreign donor avoiding a disclosure threshold by giving multiple gifts below the disclosure threshold.■ Conduit corporations: a foreign donor forming or participating in the formation of a body corporate in Australia in order to channel gifts through an allowable donor.■ Unspecified avoidance scheme: facilitates a foreign donor making a prohibited gift, that is not donation splitting or a conduit corporation.
Disclosure threshold	Disclosure of electoral expenditure in the 2021-22 financial year totalling more than \$14,500. This threshold is indexed annually.
Disclosure period	Annual returns cover a financial year, that is the period from 1 July to 30 June.
Donation / gift	<p>Any disposition of property made by a person to another person, being a disposition made without consideration in money or money's worth or with inadequate consideration, and includes the provision of a service (other than volunteer labour) for no consideration or for inadequate consideration but does not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ a payment under Division 3 of Part XX of the Electoral Act;■ an annual subscription paid to a political party, to a State branch of a political party or to a division of a State branch of a political party by a person in respect of the person's membership of the party, branch or division; or■ any visit, experience or activity provided for the purposes of a political exchange program.
Electoral Act	<i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>
Electoral expenditure	<p>Expenditure incurred for the dominant purpose of creating or communicating electoral matter.</p> <p>The Factsheet on Electoral Matter and Electoral Expenditure on the AEC website contains further information.</p>
Electoral matter	<p>Matter communicated or intended to be communicated for the dominant purpose of influencing the way electors vote in a federal election.</p> <p>The Factsheet on Electoral Matter and Electoral Expenditure on the AEC website contains further information.</p>

Foreign donation	<p>A donation or gift to a political entity, associated entity, significant third party, third party, member of the House of Representatives or Senator from a foreign donor.</p> <p>The Factsheet on Foreign Donations available on the AEC website contains further information.</p>
Foreign donor	<p>A person who does not have a connection with Australia, such as a person who is not an Australian citizen or an entity that does not have significant business presence in Australia.</p> <p>The Factsheet on Foreign Donations available on the AEC website contains further information</p>
Gifts-in-kind	<p>Non-cash donations. For example, receipt of an asset or service, discounts other than in the normal course of business and non-commercial or excessive payment for goods or services (including membership). Gifts-in-kind must be disclosed for an amount that reflects the fair value, that is, normally the commercial or sale value of the item or service.</p> <p>Examples of gifts-in-kind could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the donation of legal advice by a solicitor ■ the donation of the use of premises to conduct campaign activities.
Indexation	<p>The disclosure threshold is indexed to the All Groups Consumer Price Index. The disclosure threshold is available on the AEC website.</p>
Penalty Unit	<p>In accordance with subsection 4AA(1A) of the <i>Crimes Act 1914</i> a penalty unit is indexed annually.</p>
Significant third party	<p>A person or entity that is registered with the AEC as a significant third party.</p> <p>A person or entity is required to register as a significant third party when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the amount of electoral expenditure incurred by or with the authority of the person or entity during that or any one of the previous 3 financial years is \$250,000 or more; or ■ the amount of electoral expenditure incurred by or with the authority of the person or entity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ during that financial year is at least equal to the disclosure threshold; and ○ during the previous financial year was at least one-third of the revenue of the person or entity for that year; or ■ during that financial year the person or entity operates for the dominant purpose of fundraising amounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the aggregate of which is at least equal to the disclosure threshold; and ○ that are for the purpose of incurring electoral expenditure or that are to be gifted to another person or entity for the purpose of incurring electoral expenditure. <p>A significant third party that has branches is treated as a single significant third party.</p>

Public inspection	Disclosure returns are available for inspection on the Transparency Register . Annual returns are made available from the first working day in February each year.
Related body corporate	<p>Section 50 of the <i>Corporations Act 2001</i> provides that where a body corporate is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a holding company of another body corporate ■ a subsidiary of another body corporate or ■ a subsidiary of a holding company of another body corporate ■ the first-mentioned body and the other body are 'related' to each other. <p>Transactions of related bodies corporate should be consolidated when determining whether the disclosure threshold has been reached.</p>
Third Party	A person or entity (except a political entity or a member of the House of Representatives or the Senate) that incurs electoral expenditure above the disclosure threshold in a financial year, but is not required to be, and is not, registered as a significant third party.
Transparency Register	A register established and maintained by the AEC that contains information about registered political parties, associated entities, significant third parties, third parties, members of the House of Representatives, Senators, candidates, Senate groups and donors.

Appendix 2 – eReturns

The [eReturns portal](#) allows third parties and other entities to fulfil their obligations under Part XX of the Electoral Act. By preparing and lodging disclosure returns electronically the need to re-key data is eliminated and it ensures that information is accurately reported on the Transparency Register.

To use the eReturns portal you need an account with a unique username and password. Obligation letters provided to new third parties contain a username and password to access eReturns. Third parties can register online before they receive an obligation letter.

For more information about lodging a return online using eReturns, please refer to the [eReturns Third Parties Quick Reference Guide](#), available on the AEC website.