

Endorsed candidates

Financial disclosure factsheet – Legislative Assembly

Disclaimer: This factsheet is a general overview provided by the Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) and should not substitute legal advice. Unless specified otherwise, all references are to the Electoral Act 2004 (NT), effective from 1 July 2021. Please consult the legislation and seek independent legal advice as necessary.

Why are there financial disclosure requirements

Financial disclosure requirements are designed to:¹

- establish a transparent electoral expenditure and disclosure regime
- increase the transparency of election campaigns
- reduce undue influence in the electoral process
- promote the accountability of, and compliance by, registered parties, elected members, candidates, associated entities, third party campaigners, and donors.

Definition of an endorsed candidate

An endorsed candidate is a person who has been endorsed by a party to be a candidate in an election.² Endorsed candidates must fulfil financial disclosure reporting requirements through their party's reporting agent. Candidates should communicate with their party for guidance on how to fulfil their obligations.

Territory Campaign Account (TCA)

Parties must keep a separate bank account with an Authorised Deposit-taking Institution (ADI) for electoral purposes.³ A party must have only one TCA.

If an endorsed candidate directly accepts a donation, instead of the donation being made to the party, the donation must be deposited to the TCA as soon as practicable and reported as a donation to the candidate by the party (details disclosable at a lower threshold - \$200).

All election expenditure must be paid from the Territory Campaign Account (TCA), and any gifts intended for electoral purposes must be transferred into the TCA as soon as practicable.⁴ See factsheet 8 for further information.

Financial disclosure returns due

Reporting agents and/or registered officers of registered parties must submit electoral and annual gift returns on behalf of their endorsed candidates.

¹ See section 175S

² See section 176

³ See section 213A. For the list of ADIs, see <https://www.apra.gov.au/register-of-authorised-deposit-taking-institutions>

⁴ See sections 213B – 213D

Gifts (donations)

A gift is when a person or entity gives money, services, expertise, or something else belonging to them to another without expecting equal value in return. Gifts include monetary transactions and non-monetary transactions, known as gifts in kind. It's important to note that the terms 'gift' and 'donation' are used interchangeably and carry the same meaning within this context.

- Factsheet 9 defines gifts, volunteer labour, the gift aggregation period, and record-keeping requirements.
- The *Gifts and Electoral Expenditure Guidelines* provide further guidance.
- Parties must inform donors who provide over \$1,500 in writing about their requirement to submit a donor return. Factsheet 7 outlines donor requirements.

Loans

Parties can enter into loans with an Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions (ADI).⁵ Parties must only receive a loan of \$1,500 or more from a person or entity (other than an ADI) if certain details are recorded.⁶ Parties must disclose loans of endorsed candidates. Factsheet 11 outlines loan requirements.

Electoral expenditure

The cap on electoral expenditure applies during the capped expenditure period. This period commences from 1 January of the year in which the election is held and ends 30 days after election day (for general elections) OR commences from and including the day of the issue of the writ and ends 30 days after election day (by-elections).

- **Independent candidates** must submit an electoral expenditure return. The cap is 40,000 monetary units per division.
- **Endorsed candidates** must provide electoral expenditure details to their party's reporting agent, who submits an electoral expenditure return and an annual (expenditure) return. The electoral expenditure cap for parties is multiplied by the number of divisions where the party endorses a candidate.

Note: the value of a monetary unit is calculated in line with changes to Darwin's Consumer Price Index and is updated every financial year.

Record-keeping requirements

Financial records relating to elections must be retained for 4 years starting on election day, and records relating to annual returns must be retained for 4 years beginning on the day after the last day when the return must be given to the Commission.⁷ For further details see Factsheet 15.

⁵ For the list of ADIs, see <https://www.apra.gov.au/register-of-authorized-deposit-taking-institutions>

⁶ See section 190

⁷ See section 220

Offences and penalties

The NTEC applies a constructive compliance approach to its regulatory activities, providing electoral participants with resources and information to support compliance with their obligations. Where education does not address non-compliance or where the NTEC believes an offence has been committed, the NTEC can undertake a range of actions to ensure and enforce compliance. For further details see factsheet 16.

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
2.1	12 February 2026	Adam Wilson, Financial Disclosure and Compliance Manager	Updated for 2026 Nightcliff By-election