

Committee:..... EPSC
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Tabled By:..... Dept. Chief Minister
Signed:..... JF

Registered Political Parties

Definition

A registered party means a political party registered under Part 9 of the *Electoral Act 2004* (the Act). The amendments proposed in the Electoral Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2019 (the Bill) will not change the definition and registration processes for registered political parties under Part 9.

Current reporting requirements

Registered parties must currently provide a financial year annual return, within 16 weeks after the end of the financial year (s205). Annual returns are published by NTEC by March in the next year (s224).

Proposed new obligations

Electoral expenditure cap

Section 203B of the Bill introduces an expenditure cap of \$40 000 on electoral expenditure per individual candidate, with a maximum pooled cap of \$1 million for parties with 25 candidates (shared with its associated entities). Consistent with the pooled party cap, a party will provide an expenditure report covering the party, their endorsed candidates and associated entities.

Reporting timetable

Increased donation disclosures during election periods are proposed in sections 191 and 192 of the Bill to maximise the availability of up-to-date donation information that can be accessed by the public before and during the voting period.

Routine reporting will continue during election years, with the annual return and an additional return detailing gifts received required every year.

REPORT	PERIOD	DUE*	PUBLISHED**	DISCLOSURE THRESHOLD
<u>ELECTION YEAR</u>				
EXPENDITURE				
Expenditure report	1 Jan – 30 days after election day	30 days	As soon as practicable	N/A
DONATIONS				
Six month report	1 July – 31 Dec in year prior to election	30 days	As soon as practicable	Details for total donations above \$1500 in gift aggregation period (s192D). Gift aggregation period is 1 July in year prior to election to 30 days after election day (or if first return – commences 31 days after previous election day (s192E)).
2 x quarterly reports	1 Jan – 30 Jun	10 days	As soon as practicable	
Report prior to early voting	1 July to day writ issued	5 days	3 days	
Report prior to election day	Day after writ issued – 17 days after writ	5 days	2 days	
Post-election report	18 days after writ – 30 days after election day	10 days	As soon as practicable	
<u>ROUTINE</u>				
Annual return	Financial year	60 days	As soon as practicable	N/A
Annual return - gifts	Financial year	30 days	As soon as practicable	\$1500

*report due X days after end of reporting period

**published on NTEC website

Territory campaign account

The Bill introduces a new requirement for registered parties to keep a separate Territory campaign account for Territory electoral purposes (s213A-E). All donations and electoral expenditure in relation to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly elections must be processed through this account.

Registered parties can keep one account to cover the party and its endorsed candidates.

Commonwealth returns separate

Proposed amendments remove existing section 195 of the Act, meaning that a registered party can no longer use the same donation disclosure report to meet both Commonwealth and Territory obligations. This is due to changing obligations in both sets of legislation which now require separate returns.

Transitional arrangements for 2020 election

All provisions in the Bill will commence 1 January 2020.

Currently, under section 205 of the Act, a registered party must provide their annual return to NTEC within 16 weeks of the financial year and this will apply for the 2018-19 annual return.

Under the proposed amendments, the 2019-20 annual return will be due within 60 days of the end of the financial year.