



Electoral Commission of South Australia
Election Funding – Policy Development Funding Guide

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Purpose

This guide assists registered political parties and their agents in understanding their entitlement to policy development funding under Part 13A of the [Electoral Act 1985](#) (the Act) and the relevant provisions of the [Electoral Regulations 2024](#) (Regulations).

The information provided in this guide is general in nature. While the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) can offer guidance on its administrative approach to Part 13A, it cannot provide legal advice.

Stakeholders should refer to the specific wording of the Act and Regulations and seek independent legal or professional advice for any matters requiring interpretation.

Note: This guide deals only with *policy development funding*. Separate guides are available for *administrative expenditure funding*, *advance funding* and *public funding*.

Summary

Policy development funding provides reimbursement to eligible registered political parties for expenditure incurred in developing party policies during a calendar year.

- Payments are made annually, based on actual expenditure.
- Eligible parties may receive up to **\$20,000 per year**, indexed from 2026.
- Funding must not be paid into a state campaign account and must not be used for political or electoral expenditure.

Overview

Introduction to policy development funding

Policy development funding supports registered political parties in undertaking activities that contribute to the formulation and communication of party policies. It is provided under Division 5A of the Act and paid annually.

Entitlement under the Act

Under Division 5A of the Act, policy development funding is established for:

- registered political parties that have been entitled for at least 12 months during the full calendar year of expenditure.
- parties that are **not** receiving administrative funding.

Note: Administrative expenditure funding is separately provided under Division 5 of the Act.

Types of funding available

There is one form of policy development funding:

- **Annual entitlement** – reimbursement of actual policy development expenditure, up to \$20,000 per year, indexed from 2026.

Permitted use

Funding may be used for legitimate policy development activities such as:

- Research and consultation.
- Drafting and reviewing policy documents.
- Communicating policy positions to members of the public.

Important note:

- Policy development funding must not be used for campaign or electoral expenditure.
- The Electoral Commissioner may require repayment of funds if expenditure is not consistent with Division 5A of the Act.

Eligibility

A party is eligible for annual payments if:

- it is an entitled registered political party for at least 12 months during the full calendar year of expenditure.
- it is not receiving administrative funding.

Note: A registered party is considered eligible if it has been registered for 12 months or more as of 1 January and remains registered for the entire calendar year.

Use of funds

Policy development funding must not be:

- paid into a state campaign account.
- used for political or electoral expenditure.

What qualifies as policy development expenditure

Expenditure may include:

- Hosting conferences, seminars, meetings, or similar functions where party policies are discussed.
- Providing information about party policies to members and supporters.
- Conducting research for the purpose of developing party policies.

How to apply

1. Complete the policy development funding application form. Application forms are available from the ECSA website.
2. Lodge the claim within 30 days after the end of the calendar year to which the expenditure relates.
3. Return the completed form by email to ecsa.fad@sa.gov.au.

Funding entitlement

- Eligible parties may receive up to \$20,000 per year, indexed from 2026.
- Payments are based on actual policy development expenditure incurred.

Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
Act	The <i>Electoral Act 1985</i> , which governs public funding, expenditure caps, and disclosure obligations.
Administrative expenditure funding	Funding provided under Division 5 of the Act to assist registered political parties and independent members with operational and compliance costs.
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	The measure used to index funding entitlements annually to reflect inflation.
Electoral Commissioner	The official responsible for administering funding entitlements, assessing claims, and requiring repayment where necessary.
Policy development expenditure	Costs incurred in hosting functions, providing information, or conducting research for the purpose of developing party policies.
Policy development funding	Funding provided under Division 5A of the Act to support the formulation and communication of party policies.
Registered political party	A party registered under the Act and eligible for public funding, administrative support, and policy development funding.
State campaign account	A dedicated bank account used to manage donations and electoral expenditure. Policy development funding must not be paid into this account.

Related guides

Separate guides are available for the following funding streams:

- Administrative Funding Guide – entitlement for operational and compliance costs.
- Advance Funding Guide – entitlement to receive funding prior to election expenditure.
- **Policy Development Funding Guide – entitlement to support the formulation of party policies.**
- Public Funding Guide – entitlement based on vote share and campaign expenditure.



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