

# State Campaign Accounts

This information sheet provides a summary of the key legal requirements relating to state campaign bank accounts for registered political parties, endorsed and independent candidates and groups, associated entities, and third parties participating in South Australian state elections and by-elections. It is designed to help electoral participants understand their obligations in clear, plain language.

**Disclaimer:** This information sheet is for general guidance only. It does not replace or override the *Electoral Act 1985* (The Act). For specific advice you should seek independent legal counsel.

## What is a state campaign account?



A state campaign account is a bank account used exclusively to manage an electoral participant's electoral expenditure for a state election.

Its purpose is to ensure that electoral funds remain separate from other monies such as:

- Administrative or operational funds
- Funds for federal election campaigns
- Funds for local government or other activities.

## Key requirements

All electoral participants must:

- Establish a state campaign bank account with an *Authorised Deposit-taking Institution* (ADI).

A list of ADIs is available on the APRA Register of Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions website.

## When to open the account

Participants must open the state campaign bank account before:

- Paying any electoral expenditure
- Accepting any political donations
- Receiving any electoral funding.

Participants who contest elections regularly may continue using the same account for future state elections; however,

- All disclosure, reporting and audit requirements apply separately for each election
- The account must not be used for federal or local government elections.

## Notifying the Electoral Commission

All state campaign accounts must be registered with the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) by the participant's appointed agent.

A *State Campaign Account Notification* form is available on the ECSA website and must be completed as part of the registration process.

Notification must occur before:

- Any political donations are received
- Any public funding is received
- Any electoral expenditure is paid.

If the account details change, the agent must notify ECSA as soon as practicable.

## Register of state campaign accounts



The Electoral Commissioner maintains a register of state campaign accounts.

Your account must appear on the register before it can be used.

**Agents must provide:**

- Account name and account number
- Agent's full name and contact details
- Confirmation of the agent's appointment
- Any additional details required by the Electoral Commissioner.

## Permitted deposits

The following can be deposited into a state campaign account:

- Public funding payments
- Donations received (unless unlawful, non-electoral, or excluded by regulation)
- Funds for political expenditure or reimbursement.

**Mixed-purpose payments:** Only the portion intended for political expenditure must be deposited.

## Prohibited deposits

The following cannot be deposited:

- Administrative or policy development payments
- Transfers from federal campaign accounts under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

**Note:** If money is deposited by mistake, it is not an offence provided the agent takes reasonable steps to withdraw it immediately upon becoming aware.

## Permitted payments from the account



The state campaign bank account may only be used for:

- All electoral expenditure incurred by the participant
- Repayment of any loans that were deposited into the state campaign account.



## After the election

Participants must maintain the state campaign account until all obligations for the election have been fully discharged, including:

- Completion of all reporting obligations, including any required disclosure returns.
- Reconciliation and verification of all political donations.
- Finalisation of all electoral expenditure obligations, including outstanding payments or invoices.
- Repayment of any loans received into the state campaign account.

Participants may continue to use the same account for future state elections; however:

- Each election cycle requires separate, complete disclosure, reporting, and auditing.
- The account must not be used for local government or federal election campaigns.

Maintaining the account after an election ensures that all transactions remain transparent and traceable, allowing ECSA to verify compliance with the Act. This reduces the risk of errors during the audit process and supports accountability across the full election cycle.

## Compliance and penalties

Failure to comply with state campaign account requirements can result in significant legal penalties under:

- Section 130ZZE of the *Electoral Act 1985*.
- Regulation 40 of the *Electoral Regulations 2024*.

Offences include:

- Failing to establish or maintain a campaign account.
- Failing to lodge required returns or disclosures.
- Failing to appoint an agent where required.
- Failing to provide prescribed details or information to ECSA.



These offences reflect the seriousness of financial accountability in the electoral process. Maintaining accurate records, ensuring timely lodgement of returns, and fulfilling all obligations helps prevent compliance breaches and supports the integrity of South Australian elections.

## Further information

- This information sheet mainly refers to Part 13A Division 3 of the *Electoral Act 1985* (SA)
- The Act is available in full at: [legislation.sa.gov.au](https://legislation.sa.gov.au)
- All participants should ensure they fully understand their obligations under the Act