

# VEC Annual return user guide

Independent candidates and independent  
elected members



## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We pay respect to Victoria's traditional owners and their elders past and present who have been custodians of this country for many thousands of years. We acknowledge their living culture and their role in the life of Victoria.

## Disclaimer

The information in this user guide is specific to Victorian funding and disclosure laws and does not consider the laws of other Australian jurisdictions. Victoria's funding and disclosure laws are set out in the *Electoral Act 2002* (Electoral Act).

This information is general in nature and does not consider your individual circumstances. If you are unsure about how the laws apply to you, seek professional advice.

## Contact us

The Funding, Disclosure and Parties team is here to support you with your funding and disclosure obligations. Please get in touch with us if you have questions or concerns.

Phone: 03 8620 1100 or 131 832

Email: [disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au)

You can also contact us at [rppregistration@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:rppregistration@vec.vic.gov.au) with any questions about independent candidate or independent elected member and their agents.

## Version control

Version	Date Effective	Approved by	Amendment
1.0	11/10/2019	Director, Electoral Integrity and Regulation	N/A
2.0	30/06/2020	Program Manager, Funding and Disclosure	Financial year values; system enhancements
3.0	30/06/2021	Director, Electoral Integrity and Regulation	Financial year values; system enhancements
3.1	14/06/2022	Communication Project Officer	Copy edit, formatting
3.2	25/08/2022	Manager, Funding, Disclosure and Parties	Updated to reflect system enhancements

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# Definitions

For an explanation of terms used in this user guide, please visit the [Funding glossary](#) on our website.

## More information

Please visit our [website](#) for more information on funding and disclosure obligations, or to view the following VEC Disclosures user guides:

- [Political donations | Victorian Electoral Commission \(vec.vic.gov.au\)](#)
- [Annual returns | Victorian Electoral Commission \(vec.vic.gov.au\)](#)
- [VEC Disclosures – Portal guide](#)
- [VEC Disclosures – Associated entities and third-party campaigners functions guide](#)
- [VEC Disclosures – Registered political party functions guide](#)

# Annual return for an independent candidate or independent elected member

This guide is to help you, as an independent candidate or independent elected member (or their registered agent), complete an annual return using VEC Disclosures. This is required under Part 12 of the Electoral Act.

The reporting period for the annual return is from 1 July to 30 June.

**Important:** If you didn't receive any political donations (from any single person or entity) that, when aggregated, are equal to or greater than the [disclosure threshold](#) within the financial year, you are not required to submit an annual return.

If you are not required to submit an annual return, you must email a declaration confirming you did not receive any political donations exceeding the disclosure threshold during the financial year. Email this declaration to [disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au).

## VEC Disclosures

[VEC Disclosures](#) is our purpose-built portal that allows users to disclose political donations and submit required annual returns. Political donations are money, services (including paid labour), loans, guarantees or property (including a loan of assets).

This guide explains how to complete an annual return using VEC Disclosures.

## Web browser capability

VEC Disclosures works on multiple web browsers. You can access VEC Disclosures on a mobile device, however, the best user experience is on your desktop or laptop computer.

## Entity details

It is your responsibility to make sure your entity details are correct. To update your details click 'manage entity' on your dashboard.

## Audit certificate

There is no mandatory audit documentation required for an annual return for an independent candidate or independent elected member, according to sections 209 and 217M of the Electoral Act.

If you do provide an audit certificate, we suggest this comes from an independent auditor, who has audited in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards as specified in section 334(1) of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

As outlined in section 209(3) of the Electoral Act, the audit certificate must state the auditor:

- a. was given full and free access, at all reasonable times, to all accounts, records, documents and papers relating directly or indirectly to any matter required to be specified in the statement
- b. examined the material referred to in paragraph (a) for the purpose of giving the certificate
- c. received all information and explanations that the auditor requested in respect of any matter required to be specified in the statement
- d. has no reason to believe that any matter stated in the statement is not correct.

Download the [VEC audit certificate template](#).

## Due date

The financial year annual return can be submitted from 1 July each year and is due by **11.59 pm 20 October**. You must submit your return using VEC Disclosures each year.

We are required to publish annual returns on VEC Disclosures by 31 December each year.

## Offences

Offences include (but are not limited to):

- failing to submit on time (200 penalty units)
- providing false or misleading information (300 penalty units and/or 2 years imprisonment).

A full list of fees and penalties can be found on the Department of Treasury and Finance website: [Indexation of fees and penalties | Department of Treasury and Finance Victoria \(dtf.vic.gov.au\)](#)

## More information

For more information about annual returns and your legislative obligations, refer to [our website](#) or [Determination No. 2 of 2019](#) under the Electoral Act.

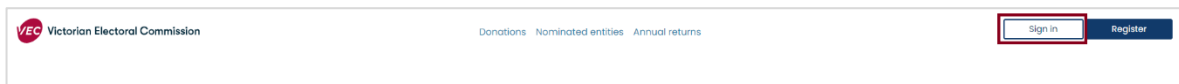
# Annual return process

Annual returns can be completed over more than one session in [VEC Disclosures](#). The portal allows you to save your progress and return to complete it later.

Make sure you click 'Save and continue' if you wish to exit and return later. For more information.

## Lodge annual return

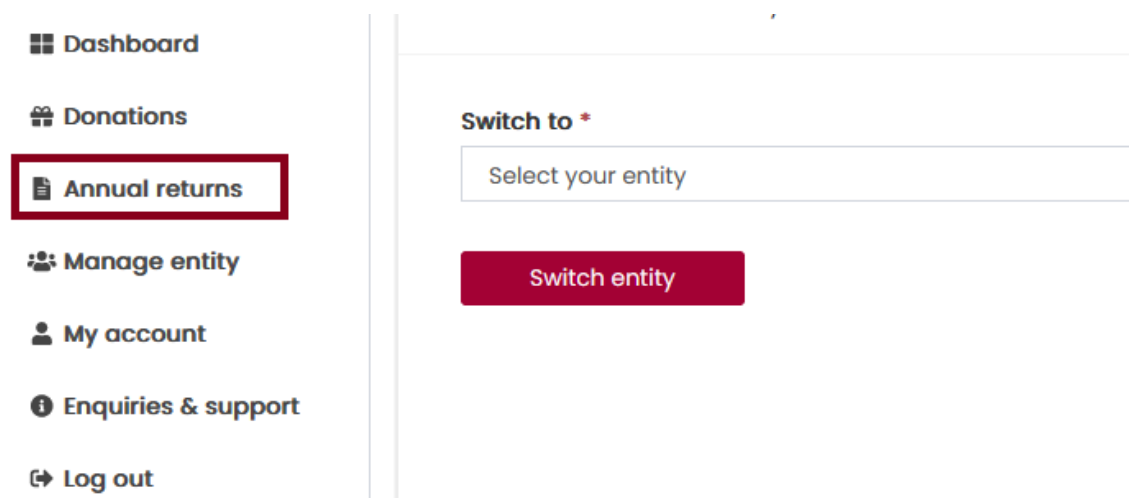
1. On the [VEC Disclosures home page](#), click 'Sign in' from the top menu.



2. Sign in with your email and password.

A screenshot of the 'Sign in to VEC Disclosures' page. At the top, there are links for 'Donations', 'Nominated entities', and 'Annual returns'. The main heading is 'Sign in to VEC Disclosures'. Below this are two input fields: 'Email' and 'Password \*', both highlighted with red boxes. Under the password field is a 'Sign in' button. Below the button is a link 'Forgot your password?'. At the bottom, there is a link 'Not registered?' and two buttons: 'Register' and 'Learn more'.

3. On the dashboard, select 'Annual returns' from the left-hand menu.





4. Select 'Lodge annual return'. Each entity can have **one** active annual return per financial year only.

Annual Returns

Home / Annual Returns

Lodge Annual Return

Recipient	Annual Return Type	Date Lodged ↓	Submission Type	Status	Financial Year
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There are no records to display.

## Enter key information

5. Make sure you read and understand the key information at the top of this page before you progress through the annual return form.

Lodge Annual Return

Home / Annual Returns / Lodge Annual Return

Details Financial Details Transaction Details Upload Documents

When preparing the annual return, it is important to note the following:

- The Registered agent of a candidate or elected member is not required to provide an annual return under 217M of the *Electorate Act 2002*, subsection (1) in respect of a financial year if the return would not include any particulars referred to in subsection (1)(b).
- Annual returns must be completed by the Agent or Deputy Agent of the independent candidate or elected member. This is either the appointed Registered Agent or Deputy Agent, or in the absence of a Registered Agent, the independent candidate or elected member themselves.
- Annual Returns should not include a list of memberships or addresses of silent electors.
- Annual returns will be published on the VEC online disclosure system by 31 December as per section 217P of the *Electorate Act 2002*.

**Note:** 'Financial year' details are for the current financial reporting period only and you cannot edit them.

<b>Financial Year</b>	
2021 - 2022	
<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
01/07/2021	30/06/2022

6. Select the recipient entity from the dropdown menu.

- The independent candidate or independent elected member and agent details will auto-populate and cannot be edited.

## Recipient

Recipient \*

ExampleIC

### Personal Details

Personal name

Prefilled name

Personal address

Prefilled street name

Prefilled suburb

Prefilled state

Prefilled postcode

- The 'Agent details' section will auto-populate. You cannot edit these details.

### Registered Agent details

Registered Agent name

ExampleIC RA

Contact phone 1

4555555555

Contact phone 2

Email

ExampleEmail@gmail.com

- If any of the entity or officer details are incorrect please refer to the [VEC Disclosures – portal guide](#) - sections Edit user details – all users/Edit organisation entity details for instructions on how to update these.
- The 'Submitted by' section will auto-populate with your details, as the current system user logged in. These details cannot be edited.

### Submitted By

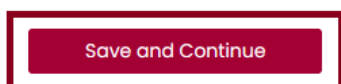
Name

ExampleIC RA

Role title

Registered Agent

- Click 'Save and continue' to move to the next screen.



## Enter income for financial year

- The 'Total income (inc. GST)' field will auto-populate for this financial year. This figure is the total amount you have received this financial year. You cannot edit this field – it is automatically calculated based on the data you enter in the later fields.

**Total income (inc. GST) \***

This amount is automatically populated as a summation of your Total Disclosed Political Donations, Total Undisclosed Political Donations and Total Amounts Received Other Than Political Donations. You cannot directly edit this amount.

\$

- The 'Total disclosed political donations (inc. GST)' field will auto-populate for the financial year specified and cannot be edited. This figure is the total disclosed political donations for the financial year specified, as previously disclosed in VEC Disclosures.

**Total disclosed political donations (inc. GST) \***

Please refer to Table 1 – disclosed political donations in State campaign account for a detailed list of political donations disclosed within this financial year.

\$

0.00

**Note:** This figure will also appear as a line item in '[Table 1 – disclosed political donations](#)' at the bottom of the screen. **Wherever you can enter a value, you must include a number even if it is zero.**

- Enter the 'Total undisclosed political donations' received for the financial year specified.

This will include any donations received under the \$1,050 disclosure threshold that were not previously disclosed in VEC Disclosures.

**Total undisclosed political donations (inc. GST) \***

Enter the combined total of all political donations received that were under the Disclosure Threshold (of \$1,050.00 per donor during the 2021 - 2022 financial year).

\$

- Enter the total 'Number of donors for undisclosed political donations' that have contributed for the financial year. This means all political donations received that did not exceed the disclosure threshold.

#### Number of donors for undisclosed political donations \*

#

## Complete Table 1 – Disclosed political donations in state campaign account

1. Review the pre-populated 'Table 1 – Disclosed political donations in state campaign account'.

Table 1 – disclosed political donations in State campaign account

The below table includes all donations disclosed on the Victorian Electoral Commission online disclosure system for this financial year. Should you see any discrepancies between this record and your own records please contact the VEC on 131 832.

Date Received ↓	Amount Received	Type of Donation	Name of Donor	Address of Donor
27/02/2022	\$1,050.00	Money	EM	Rd Heidelberg West Victoria 3081 Australia
27/12/2021	\$1,050.00	Money	unregisord	coburg, Victoria 3057

- If there are any discrepancies between this record and your own records, email [disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au).
- If accurate, select 'Save and continue'. This will save a draft version of the annual return.

**Note:** All fields marked with a red asterisk (\*) must be populated even if the amount is zero (except auto-populated fields).

Table 1 – disclosed political donations in State campaign account

The below table includes all donations disclosed on the Victorian Electoral Commission online disclosure system for this financial year. Should you see any discrepancies between this record and your own records please contact the VEC on 131 832.

Date Received ↓	Amount Received	Type of Donation	Name of Donor	Address of Donor
27/02/2022	\$1,050.00	Money	EM	Rd Heidelberg West Victoria 3081 Australia
27/12/2021	\$1,050.00	Money	unregisord	coburg, Victoria 3057

Back Save and Continue

**Note:** You can navigate away from or log out of VEC Disclosures and come back to it later.

## Upload documents

1. If you are an independent candidate or independent elected member, there are no mandatory annual return audit documents to upload.

If you wish, you may upload an audit certificate from an independent auditor advising that the annual return has been audited in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards as specified in section 334(1) of the Corporations Act.

Download the [VEC independent auditor template](#) or access it through VEC Disclosures.

- To delete an uploaded document, or modify the document type, select the document name below.
- To make changes to an uploaded document, please delete and re-upload your modified document.

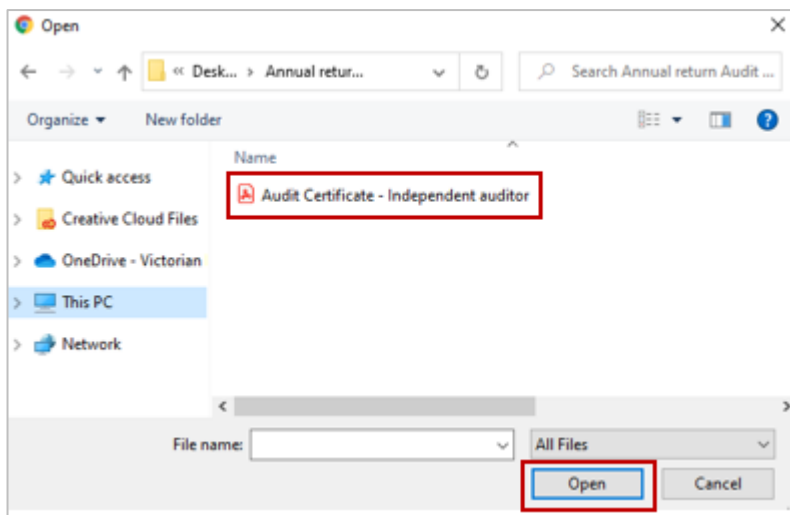
- To delete an uploaded document, or modify the document type, select the document name below.
- To make changes to an uploaded document, please delete and re-upload your modified document.

[Upload New Document](#)

4. Click 'Browse...'

**Attach a file \***  
 No file selected.

5. In the pop-up window, navigate to your document. Select your document and click 'Open'.



**Note:** The pop-up window may vary depending on your computer's operating system.

The name of the file you chose will appear next to the 'Browse' button.

6. Once you have confirmed the file name is correct, click 'Upload'.

### Upload new document



**Document Type \***

Audit certificate

**Description**

**Attach a file \***

Audit Certificate.pdf

The document will appear as a line item. Any documents that appear here are saved to your annual return and will not be lost if you navigate away from this page.

Upload New Document

Document Name	Document Type	Description	Created On ↓
Audit Certificate.pdf	Audit certificate		24/05/2022 11:01 AM

7. To delete or modify a document in this list, click on the document name and click ‘Delete’.

Document ×

Document Type \*

Audit certificate

Description

about a minute ago

Audit Certificate.pdf (387.01 KB)

Ok

Delete

8. Review the acknowledgements and select the ‘I confirm’ checkbox before submitting your annual return.

Your uploaded documents may be amended to remove confidential information as described by Section 221A of the *Electorate Act 2002*.

☒ I Confirm \*

- The information provided in this return and any attachments is true and complete;
- I am logged into VEC Disclosures with my own user account;
- I can confirm my identity matches the name and position as shown in my user account; and
- I have the authority as either the default agent, registered agent, deputy registered agent, registered officer or deputy registered officer to submit an annual return for the entity of which I act on their behalf.

I acknowledge that pursuant to section 218A of the *Electorate Act 2002* penalties of up to 300 penalty units and 2 years imprisonment can be applied if any information contained within this annual return is false or misleading.

I acknowledge that by submitting this return all information submitted in this annual return may be made publicly available on the VEC Disclosures website as required by section 217P of the *Electorate Act 2002*.

**Note:** If you have any questions about the acknowledgments, email the Funding, Disclosure and Parties Team at [disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au).

Submit annual return

1. When you have completed your annual return, review and tick to confirm you have read the acknowledgements, then click ‘Submit’.

Your uploaded documents may be amended to remove confidential information as described by Section 221A of the *Electorate Act 2002*.

☒ I Confirm \*

- The information provided in this return and any attachments is true and complete;
- I am logged into VEC Disclosures with my own user account;
- I can confirm my identity matches the name and position as shown in my user account; and
- I have the authority as either the default agent, registered agent, deputy registered agent, registered officer or deputy registered officer to submit an annual return for the entity of which I act on their behalf.

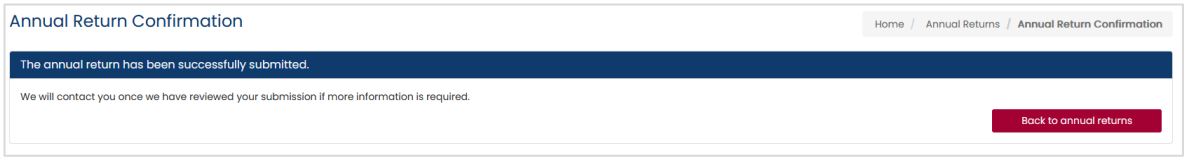
I acknowledge that pursuant to section 218A of the *Electorate Act 2002* penalties of up to 300 penalty units and 2 years imprisonment can be applied if any information contained within this annual return is false or misleading.

I acknowledge that by submitting this return all information submitted in this annual return may be made publicly available on the VEC Disclosures website as required by section 217P of the *Electorate Act 2002*.

Back

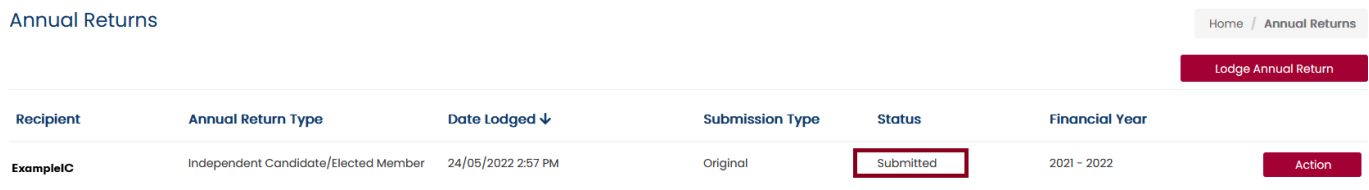
Submit

A submission confirmation screen will appear. We will review your annual return and contact you if we need any more information.



The annual return will appear as ‘Submitted’ on the Annual returns page.

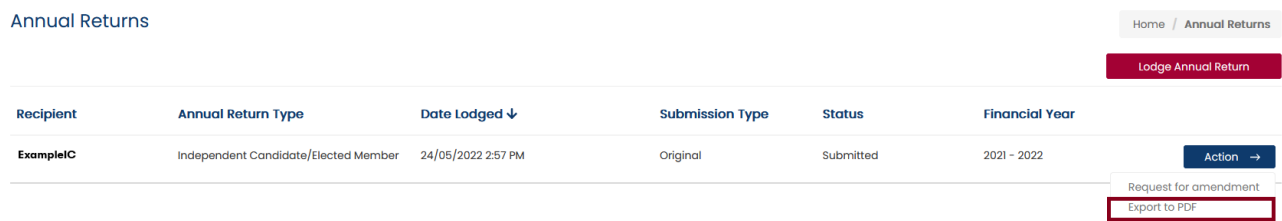
**Important:** If you need to amend an annual return after you’ve submitted it, refer to [Request an amendment](#) or email [disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:disclosures@vec.vic.gov.au).



## View and export an annual return

After you have submitted your return, you can view and export a copy of it.

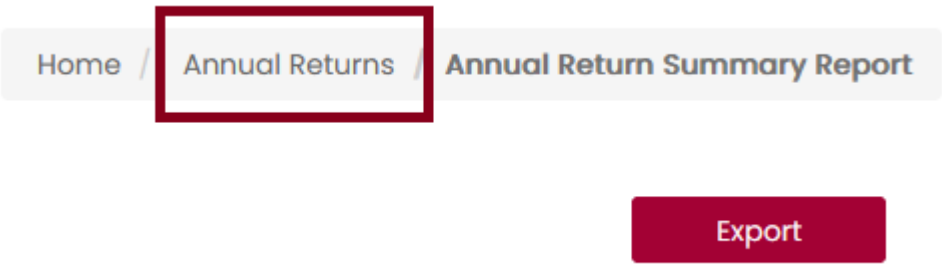
1. Click ‘Action’ and select ‘Export to pdf’.



2. Click ‘Export’. This will download a PDF version of the annual return.



3. To go back to the Annual returns page, click ‘Annual returns’ in the breadcrumb.





# Request an amendment to your annual return

If you need to amend your annual return after submitting it, you can request an amendment through VEC Disclosures.

- 4. On the Annual returns page, click ‘Action’ and select ‘Request for amendment’.

Annual Returns

Home / Annual Returns

Lodge Annual Return

Recipient	Annual Return Type	Date Lodged ↓	Submission Type	Status	Financial Year	
ExampleIC	Independent Candidate/Elected Member	24/05/2022 2:57 PM	Original	Submitted	2021 - 2022	<div>Action → Request for amendment Export to PDF</div>

- 5. Enter the details of your amendment in the ‘Amendment reason’ field, then click ‘Submit’.

**Important:** The details provided in the fields below will be published on VEC Disclosures. Please do not include any personal information.

Request for amendment

Annual Return \*

ARXXXXX

Submitted by \*

ExampleIC RA

Amendment Reason \*

Submit

Your amendment request will be considered in accordance with section 221 of the Electoral Act. We will contact you if we need more information.

