

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014**

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Outcome/Program:** General

**Topic:** Disclosure of volunteering

**Senator:** Abetz

**Question reference number:** F63

**Type of question:** Hansard, F&PA page 56, 30 May 2013

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday 12 July 2013

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

And if this volunteer, however, is promised free board and lodgings and food and other things, would that be considered purchasing? If you spent that amount of money on advertising, you would have to disclose it, so if you spent that amount of money on having somebody around that, say, goes doorknocking for a month, would that have to be disclosed?

**Answer:**

The definition of 'gift' in s.287(1) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Electoral Act) specifically excludes volunteer labour. Any donation of time or services by a person who is a member of a political party is considered to be volunteer labour and not required to be disclosed as a gift. A donation of time or services by a person who is not a member of the party is also considered volunteer labour so long as the services being provided are not ones for which the individual normally charges.

A person can take leave from their employment and provide their time to a political party as volunteer labour. However, if the employer provides an employee's paid time and services to a party, then that is a gift from the employer.

It is not possible, however, to provide blanket advice as to whether a disclosure obligation would arise in circumstances where a person or organisation may provide board and lodging to someone who is ostensibly providing volunteer labour to a political party. While s.305B(2) of the Electoral Act requires disclosure of gifts above the threshold given to a person with the intention of benefiting a political party, the AEC would need to assess on a case-by-case basis a comprehensive set of facts surrounding any such arrangements before it would be able to determine its view as to whether a disclosure obligation exists and who may have that obligation.