



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)
s 47E(d), s 47G(1)(a)

Dear s 47F(1)

Commencement of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme

I am writing to advise that the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (the scheme) commenced on 10 December 2018. The scheme's intent is to capture the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and political processes to provide the public and government decision-makers with full visibility of this activity. I have enclosed a 'Fast Facts' information sheet for your reference and further detailed information is available at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

How the scheme operates

The scheme applies to persons who undertake certain activities in Australia on behalf of a 'foreign principal' for the purpose of political or governmental influence. A foreign principal includes a foreign government or political organisation or a foreign entity or individual that is accustomed or required to operate at the direction of a foreign government or political party.

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Attorney-General's Department's (AGD) website at www.ag.gov.au/transparency, for more details.

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Should you or your members have questions about the scheme, I encourage you to access the scheme's website at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Chidgey

Enc.

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 1 – Fast facts

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 8 – Exception for disseminating communications activity



Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

Deputy Secretary

Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

§ 47F(1)

2CR China Radio Network
Level 1592
594 Harris Street
ULTIMO NSW 2007

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

2OR Australian Oriental Radio
Level 1
271/398 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

3CW Chinese Radio
Suite 3 15-29 Bank St
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

Dear s 47F(1)

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

21st Century Chinese Newspaper
Level 5
260 Latrobe Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

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Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

Deputy Secretary

Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

The Newsdesk -
Asian Community News
Shop 7/565 Beenleigh Rd
SUNNYBANK HILLS QLD 4109

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
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18/4808-6

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s 47F(1)

Asian Multimedia
4/19 Ellingworth Parade
BOX HILL VIC 3128

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Australia China Connections
Level 3
Suite 23
25 Claremont Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

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PO Box K525
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

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The Newsdesk
Australian Chinese Times
PO Box 628
NORTH PERTH WA 6906

Dear The Newsdesk,

Commencement of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme

I am writing to advise that the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (the scheme) commenced on 10 December 2018. The scheme's intent is to capture the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and political processes to provide the public and government decision-makers with full visibility of this activity. I have enclosed a 'Fast Facts' information sheet for your reference and further detailed information is available at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

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Yours sincerely



Sarah Chidgey

Enc.

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 1 – Fast facts
Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 8 – Exception for disseminating communications activity



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

Australian New Express Daily
36a1 Fitzroy Street
MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

Cheers
Suite 603
220 Pacific Highway
CROWS NEST NSW 2065

Dear s 47F(1)

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

Chinese Melbourne Daily
300 Wellington Street
COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

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Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

Deputy Secretary

Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

Daily Chinese Herald
83-85 Foveaux Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Dear s 47F(1)

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

The Epoch Times (Chinese)
49A Treacy Street
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

Melbourne Chinese Post
15/23 Gipps Street
COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

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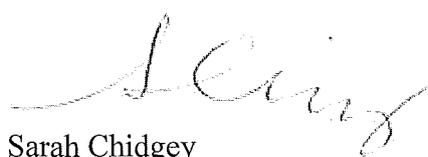
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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

Sing Tao Daily
Suite 1
Level 28
477 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

Deputy Secretary

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18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

Sydney Chinese Community News
83-85 Foveaux Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

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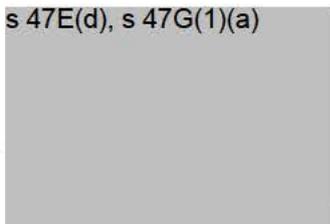


Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47E(d), s 47G(1)(a)



Dear s 47E(d), s 47G(1)(a)

Commencement of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme

I am writing to advise that the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (the scheme) commenced on 10 December 2018. The scheme's intent is to capture the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and political processes to provide the public and government decision-makers with full visibility of this activity. I have enclosed a 'Fast Facts' information sheet for your reference and further detailed information is available at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

How the scheme operates

The scheme applies to persons who undertake certain activities in Australia on behalf of a 'foreign principal' for the purpose of political or governmental influence. A foreign principal includes a foreign government or political organisation or a foreign entity or individual that is accustomed or required to operate at the direction of a foreign government or political party.

One of the key activities covered by the scheme is communications activity, which covers all circumstances in which information or material are disseminated, published, disbursed, shared or made available to the public. The information and material can be in any form including verbal, visual, graphic, written, electronic, digital and pictorial forms. A communications activity is registrable if the activity is undertaken on behalf of a foreign principal for the purpose of political or government influence, including for the purpose of influencing the views and opinions of people involved in political and government process such as a federal election.

As well as registering their activity, a person undertaking communications activity must make a disclosure in the communication which makes it clear that it is being made on behalf of a foreign principal. The specifics of the disclosure requirements vary for different types of communication activities. I encourage you to refer to the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (Disclosure in Communications Activity) Rules 2018*, which are available on the Attorney-General's Department's (AGD) website at www.ag.gov.au/transparency, for more details.

The scheme provides an exception for the dissemination of information and material that is entirely produced by someone else, providing the identity of the foreign principal is apparent or disclosed in the communication. I have also enclosed a factsheet which provides further information about this exception.

Other registrable activities include federal parliamentary lobbying, general political lobbying, and disbursement activity, done on behalf of a foreign principal for the purpose of political or governmental influence.

It is important to note that the scheme does not prohibit people or entities from undertaking these activities on behalf of a foreign principal. Rather, it acknowledges that it is in the public interest that these arrangements are transparent. As a general rule, any individual or entity undertaking relevant activities on behalf of a foreign principal, may need to register and should familiarise themselves with the operations, obligations and exemptions of the scheme.

Where an obligation does arise, registration must be completed within 14 days of either entering into a relationship with a foreign principal or undertaking a registrable activity. I note there is a three month grace period for arrangements that were in place prior to 10 December 2018. This will cease on 10 March 2019.

In all cases, it is the responsibility of the person undertaking the activities to determine whether they are required to register. Detailed information about the scheme, including how to register and the available exemptions is available in a series of fact sheets on the AGD website at www.ag.gov.au/transparency. If after reading the guidance material a person remains unsure of their individual obligations, they may wish to consider seeking legal advice. It is an offence not to register if required to do so and penalties apply.

Should you or your members have questions about the scheme, I encourage you to access the scheme's website at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Chidgey

Enc.

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 1 – Fast facts
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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

s 47F(1)

The Australian Chinese Age Weekly
300 Wellington Street
COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

Dear s 47F(1)

Commencement of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme

I am writing to advise that the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (the scheme) commenced on 10 December 2018. The scheme's intent is to capture the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and political processes to provide the public and government decision-makers with full visibility of this activity. I have enclosed a 'Fast Facts' information sheet for your reference and further detailed information is available at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

Sir/Madam
TVB Australia
Level 18
233 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Commencement of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme

I am writing to advise that the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (the scheme) commenced on 10 December 2018. The scheme's intent is to capture the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and political processes to provide the public and government decision-makers with full visibility of this activity. I have enclosed a 'Fast Facts' information sheet for your reference and further detailed information is available at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

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Sarah Chidgey

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Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

Deputy Secretary

Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

10 December 2018

Sir/Madam
Vision Times
Suite 106
379-383 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

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Sarah Chidgey

Enc.

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 1 – Fast facts

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 8 – Exception for disseminating communications activity



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-6

19 December 2018

s 47F(1)

Xinhua
1401-1405, Nan Fung Tower,
88 Connaught Road Central
Central Hong Kong

Dear s 47F(1)

Commencement of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme

I am writing to advise that the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (the scheme) commenced on 10 December 2018. The scheme's intent is to capture the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and political processes to provide the public and government decision-makers with full visibility of this activity. I have enclosed a 'Fast Facts' information sheet for your reference and further detailed information is available at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

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Yours sincerely



Sarah Chidgey

Enc.

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 1 – Fast facts

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Factsheet 8 – Exception for disseminating communications activity



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-3

s 47F(1)
s 47E(d), s 47G(1)(a)

Dear s 47F(1)

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme: Voting period commencement and changes to the definition of 'communications activity'

As you will be aware from my previous correspondence, the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (the scheme) commenced on 10 December 2018. The scheme is designed to provide the public and government decision-makers with visibility of the nature, level and extent of foreign influence on Australia's government and political processes.

I write to draw your attention to the additional obligations triggered by the federal election and to seek your continued consideration of the applicability of the scheme to your organisation. I also write to advise of recent amendments to the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018* (the Act).

Under the scheme, obligations to register arise in the following circumstances:

- a registrable activity is being undertaken, and
- the activity is undertaken on behalf of a foreign principal, and
- the purpose of the activity is for political or governmental influence, and
- no exemptions apply.

For the purposes of the scheme, registrable activities are parliamentary lobbying, general political lobbying, communications activity and disbursement activity.

Importantly, any communications activity must include a disclosure making clear that the information or material is produced, communicated or disseminated on behalf of a foreign principal and is a registrable activity under the Act. This obligation applies regardless of whether the person or entity undertaking the communications activity has already registered. Please see 'Fact Sheet 10 – Disclosures in communications activity' on the Attorney-General's Department's website (www.ag.gov.au/transparency) for further information.

I strongly encourage you to consider whether the scheme applies to your current circumstances as a matter of urgency, and to continue to monitor this issue as circumstances change. It is an offence not to register if you are required to do so and penalties apply.

Changes to registration and reporting timeframes in the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election

During a voting period more stringent obligations apply under the scheme. This is because, during this period, there will be increased activities aimed at influencing political processes (or influencing the public or sections of the public in relation to political processes). It is vital that there is transparency about the source of these activities for the Australian community.

From 12 April 2019 until the end of the Federal Election on 18 May 2019:

- Those who are not already registered in relation to a foreign principal have 14 days to register once an obligation arises. Following registration, all registrants must report additional registrable activities within seven days.
- Those who are already registered in relation to a foreign principal must report any additional registrable activities on behalf of that foreign principal within seven days of undertaking the activity.
- Disbursement activities must be registered within seven days of the value of disbursements reaching the electoral donations threshold of \$13,800, or a multiple of this threshold.

More detail about these obligations is available in 'Fact Sheet 9 – Registrant obligations during voting periods' on the Department's website.

Recent changes to the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018

There have recently been changes to the operation of the scheme through the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Amendment Act 2019* (the FITS Amendment Act).

Most relevantly to your organisation, the FITS Amendment Act amends the definition of 'communications activity' in section 13. A communications activity now includes the production of information or material on behalf of a foreign principal for the purpose of it being communicated or distributed to the public or a section of the public. This means that if:

- a person or entity produces information or material on behalf of a foreign principal (i.e. at the request of, in the service of, at the direction of, or under arrangement with a foreign principal), and
- the person or entity believes that the foreign principal intends the information or material to be communicated or distributed to the public or a section of the public,

then the person or entity will need to register under the scheme and include the relevant disclosure about the identity of the foreign principal in the information or material. This will be the case whether or not the person or entity also distributes or communicates the information or material on behalf of the foreign principal, and whether or not the information or material is actually distributed or communicated.

The FITS Amendment Act also creates an obligation for people engaging in communications activity to include the required disclosure about the foreign principal regardless of whether or not that person has already registered under the scheme (section 38).

More detail about these amendments is available in the **enclosed** fact sheets ('Fact Sheet 10 – Disclosures in Communications Activity' and 'Factsheet 11 – Exception for Disseminators'). I ask that you keep these changes and the more stringent obligations that the Act imposes in mind during the voting period, and bring them to the attention of any employees, colleagues or stakeholders who may be affected.

Where to get more information

Detailed information about the scheme, including about how to register, is available in a series of fact sheets on the Department's website at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

Should you, your staff, or stakeholders have further questions about the scheme, I encourage you to contact the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme team on (02) 6141 3222, Monday to Friday between 9am-12pm and 2pm-5pm, or by email at transparency@ag.gov.au. The team is able to provide general information about the operation of the scheme. You may also consider seeking independent legal advice specific to your circumstances.

Media enquiries should be directed through usual channels.

Yours sincerely

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Sarah Chidgey
7 May 2019



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-3

s 47F(1)

2CR China Radio Network
Level 1592
594 Harris Street
ULTIMO NSW 2007

Dear s 47F(1)

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme: Voting period commencement and changes to the definition of 'communications activity'

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From 12 April 2019 until the end of the Federal Election on 18 May 2019:

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Sarah Chidgey
7 May 2019



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-3

2OR Australian Oriental Radio
Level 1
271/398 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme: Voting period commencement and changes to the definition of 'communications activity'

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Sarah Chidgey
7 May 2019



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-3

s 47F(1)

21st Century Chinese Newspaper
Level 5
260 Latrobe Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear s 47F(1)

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme: Voting period commencement and changes to the definition of 'communications activity'

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Sarah Chidgey
7 May 2019



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
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18/4808-3

The Newsdesk -
Asian Community News
Shop 7/565 Beenleigh Rd
SUNNYBANK HILLS QLD 4109

Dear The Newsdesk -

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
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18/4808-3

s 47F(1)

Asian Multimedia
4/19 Ellingworth Parade
BOX HILL VIC 3128

Dear s 47F(1)

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Australian Government
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18/4808-3

s 47F(1)

Editor/Managing Director
Australia China Connections
PO Box 568 South Yarra VIC 3141
282 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear s 47F(1)

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Australian Government
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s 47F(1)

The Australian Chinese Age Weekly
300 Wellington Street
COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

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Australian Government
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s 47F(1)

Australian Chinese Daily
PO Box K525
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

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7 May 2019



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-3

The Newsdesk - Australian Chinese Times QLD
Newsdesk
Australian Chinese Times (A VAC publication) (Brisbane and Gold Coast)
PO Box 628
NORTH PERTH WA 6906

Dear The Australian Chinese Times QLD

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme: Voting period commencement and changes to the definition of 'communications activity'

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I write to draw your attention to the additional obligations triggered by the federal election and to seek your continued consideration of the applicability of the scheme to your organisation. I also write to advise of recent amendments to the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018* (the Act).

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Importantly, any communications activity must include a disclosure making clear that the information or material is produced, communicated or disseminated on behalf of a foreign principal and is a registrable activity under the Act. This obligation applies regardless of whether the person or entity undertaking the communications activity has already registered. Please see 'Fact Sheet 10 – Disclosures in communications activity' on the Attorney-General's Department's website (www.ag.gov.au/transparency) for further information.

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Sarah Chidgey
7 May 2019



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
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18/4808-3

Australian New Express Daily
36a1 Fitzroy Street
MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204

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Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-3

s 47F(1)

Cheers
Suite 603
220 Pacific Highway
CROWS NEST NSW 2065

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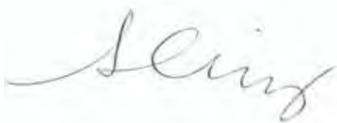
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18/4808-3

s 47F(1)

Chinese Melbourne Daily
300 Wellington Street
COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066

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s 47F(1)

Daily Chinese Herald
83-85 Foveaux Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

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s 47F(1)

The Epoch Times (Chinese)
49A Treacy Street
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Sarah Chidgey
7 May 2019



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-3

Sing Tao Daily
Suite 1
Level 28
477 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear

Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme: Voting period commencement and changes to the definition of 'communications activity'

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Sarah Chidgey
7 May 2019



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group

18/4808-3

s 47F(1)

Sydney Chinese Community News
83-85 Foveaux Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Dear s 47F(1)

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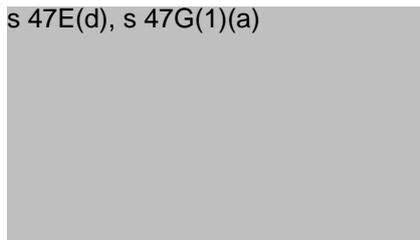
Sarah Chidgey
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Australian Government
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18/4808-3

s 47E(d), s 47G(1)(a)



Dear s 47E(d), s 47G(1)(a)

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Australian Government
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18/4808-3

Sir/Madam
TVB Australia
Level 18
233 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

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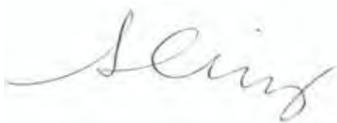
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s 47F(1)

Xinhua
1401-1405 Nan Fung Tower
88 Connaught Road Central
Central HONG KONG

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For the purposes of the scheme, registrable activities are parliamentary lobbying, general political lobbying, communications activity and disbursement activity.

Importantly, any communications activity must include a disclosure making clear that the information or material is produced, communicated or disseminated on behalf of a foreign principal and is a registrable activity under the Act. This obligation applies regardless of whether the person or entity undertaking the communications activity has already registered. Please see 'Fact Sheet 10 – Disclosures in communications activity' on the Attorney-General's Department's website (www.ag.gov.au/transparency) for further information.

I strongly encourage you to consider whether the scheme applies to your current circumstances as a matter of urgency, and to continue to monitor this issue as circumstances change. It is an offence not to register if you are required to do so and penalties apply.

Changes to registration and reporting timeframes in the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election

During a voting period more stringent obligations apply under the scheme. This is because, during this period, there will be increased activities aimed at influencing political processes (or influencing the public or sections of the public in relation to political processes). It is vital that there is transparency about the source of these activities for the Australian community.

From 12 April 2019 until the end of the Federal Election on 18 May 2019:

- Those who are not already registered in relation to a foreign principal have 14 days to register once an obligation arises. Following registration, all registrants must report additional registrable activities within seven days.
- Those who are already registered in relation to a foreign principal must report any additional registrable activities on behalf of that foreign principal within seven days of undertaking the activity.
- Disbursement activities must be registered within seven days of the value of disbursements reaching the electoral donations threshold of \$13,800, or a multiple of this threshold.

More detail about these obligations is available in 'Fact Sheet 9 – Registrant obligations during voting periods' on the Department's website.

Recent changes to the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act 2018

There have recently been changes to the operation of the scheme through the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Amendment Act 2019* (the FITS Amendment Act).

Most relevantly to your organisation, the FITS Amendment Act amends the definition of 'communications activity' in section 13. A communications activity now includes the production of information or material on behalf of a foreign principal for the purpose of it being communicated or distributed to the public or a section of the public. This means that if:

- a person or entity produces information or material on behalf of a foreign principal (i.e. at the request of, in the service of, at the direction of, or under arrangement with a foreign principal), and
- the person or entity believes that the foreign principal intends the information or material to be communicated or distributed to the public or a section of the public,

then the person or entity will need to register under the scheme and include the relevant disclosure about the identity of the foreign principal in the information or material. This will be the case whether or not the person or entity also distributes or communicates the information or material on behalf of the foreign principal, and whether or not the information or material is actually distributed or communicated.

The FITS Amendment Act also creates an obligation for people engaging in communications activity to include the required disclosure about the foreign principal regardless of whether or not that person has already registered under the scheme (section 38).

More detail about these amendments is available in the **enclosed** fact sheets ('Fact Sheet 10 – Disclosures in Communications Activity' and 'Factsheet 11 – Exception for Disseminators').

I ask that you keep these changes and the more stringent obligations that the Act imposes in mind during the voting period, and bring them to the attention of any employees, colleagues or stakeholders who may be affected.

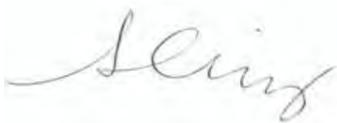
Where to get more information

Detailed information about the scheme, including about how to register, is available in a series of fact sheets on the Department's website at www.ag.gov.au/transparency.

Should you, your staff, or stakeholders have further questions about the scheme, I encourage you to contact the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme team on (02) 6141 3222, Monday to Friday between 9am-12pm and 2pm-5pm, or by email at transparency@ag.gov.au. The team is able to provide general information about the operation of the scheme. You may also consider seeking independent legal advice specific to your circumstances.

Media enquiries should be directed through usual channels.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'S Chidgey', is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Sarah Chidgey
7 May 2019

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Ms Sarah Chidgey
Deputy Secretary
Integrity and International Group
Attorney-General's Department
3-5 National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600

Dear Ms Chidgey,

Thank you for your kind letter in regards to registering for the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme. I am curious as to whether it was sent to us because most of our staff is of Chinese heritage, and the assumption was therefore we had connections with Chinese Communist Party authorities? Or was it sent to all media without differentiation?

Nevertheless, I am pleased that the Australian government has taken notice of an issue that has been brewing for many years, which is that of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) infiltration into the Australian Chinese community. We at The Epoch Times would like to express our full support for greater transparency around activities taken at the behest of foreign principles.

To provide some background, *The Epoch Times* came about at the start of this century in response to the media strategies the CCP had implemented – the filtering and lockdown of information within China, and the manipulation of news outside China. A group of like-minded young people decided, out of a sense of mission and obligation to society, to establish an independent Chinese newspaper that would report truthfully on current affairs and offer fresh perspectives. In August 2000, *The Epoch Times* and *The Epoch Times* website had their first publications in America. They subsequently reached Australia in 2001. Its independent fearless voice brought many supporters, and in 2003 the English version of *The Epoch Times* website went live. In August 2004, the English paper was first published in New York. By 2012, *The Epoch Times* is printed in 8 different languages from 35 different branch offices over the world, and its website is published in 23 languages.

The mission of *The Epoch Times* is to uphold integrity, independence and the right of people to know what is happening around them. Freedom of news, freedom of belief, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly are all human rights that *The Epoch Times* is determined to protect. For the sake of our readers, we vow to report on the truth, expose darkness and uphold justice, and to give a voice to those who are disadvantaged or oppressed.

committed to bridging the cultural gap between Chinese culture and that of other cultures, in order to bring about mutual understanding, respect and tolerance across different ethnicities.

Within Australia, there are very few independent Chinese language print media aside from *The Epoch Times*. Out of all Chinese language newspapers in Australia, *The Epoch Times* also has the highest and broadest distribution. Our newspaper is driven to communicate Australian core values to the Chinese community, to encourage better understanding of Australian society by Chinese immigrants, so that they may better integrate into the Australian community. Part of these efforts is the publication of a number of serialised editorials that uncover the sinister nature of the CCP. Editorials such as "The Nine Commentaries on the Chinese Communist Party", "The Ultimate Mission of Communism", and "The Spectre of Communism is Ruling Our World" systematically and thoroughly unmask the CCP's crimes. In retaliation, the CCP has employed various methods to interfere with our function.

The infiltration of the CCP into Australia has left almost no corner untouched, particularly in the Chinese community. Over the last 18 years, we have met with all forms of obstruction, such as our clients receiving threats from the CCP in the form of not being granted visas to visit China, or their business in China being affected.

Other examples include:

- Our staff, trying to visit dying family members in China, being refused visas by the Chinese consulate.
- For many years we were barred from participating in local council events as organisers have strong connections with the CCP.
- When we request holiday greetings from politicians for the Chinese community, we do not receive a reply due to their business connections in China or personal connections with certain people of Chinese background.
- In the most recent election, we were either not invited to the media conferences held by the two major political parties, or we were not allowed to ask questions during the conference. It would appear that some of the organisers of these media conferences are allied with the CCP.

In summary, as *The Epoch Times* is a media independent of any foreign entities, there was no need for us to register. We fully support any policy for greater transparency in regards to foreign influence, but this is only the first step in resisting further infiltration by the CCP. It is our hope that the Australian government will have more stringent laws, and a way to discipline and deter parties who are acting in line with foreign interests, but who remain unregistered.

Thank you once again for your time.

Yours sincerely,

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