





## BACKGROUND

### Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media

On 17 July 2023, Senator Paterson released a media statement noting that Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media had sent WeChat a series of 53 questions after it failed to appear before the committee to give evidence, giving WeChat until Friday 21 July 2023 to provide a response.

On 5 December 2019, the Senate resolved to establish a Select Committee on Foreign Interference through social media to inquire into and report on the risk posed to Australia's democracy by foreign interference through social media.

The Select Committee with particular reference to:

- the use of social media for purposes that undermine Australia's democracy and values, including the spread of misinformation;
- responses to mitigate the risk posed to Australia's democracy and values, including by the Australian Government and social media platforms;
- international policy responses to cyber-enabled foreign interference and misinformation;
- the extent of compliance with Australian laws; and
- any related matters.

The committee tabled an interim report on 17 December 2021 and a progress report on 21 April 2022. Due to the calling of the 2022 Federal Election, the Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media was dissolved with the committee was unable to complete its inquiry and final report as intended. The committee recommended the Senate consider whether to re-establish the committee in the following Parliament, with provision to access the documents and evidence of this committee, to enable the inquiry to be completed.

A new Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media was established in the 47th Parliament on 24 November 2022.

The submissions closing date was 17 February 2023.

The committee is scheduled to present its final report by 1 August 2023.

### Data and national security risks posed by TikTok

On 26 March 60 Minutes reported on the data protection and national security risks posed by TikTok. Senator James Paterson appeared on the program, and was quoted in the associated Nine article saying he was “genuinely mystified why it is taking the Albanese government so long to take the first and most basic step to address the serious national security risks posed by TikTok. Banning it from government devices – as all of our closest allies have done – is the lowest hanging fruit’.

On 25 March the Australian Financial Review reported that analysis of Tik Tok code reveals the app collects GPS location data of users which TikTok had previously told the AFR it did not collect. In a submission to the Senate’s Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media, John Garnaut (a former journalist at The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald) said the Chinese Communist Party could use TikTok to influence public discourse, in addition to the application’s controversial data-gathering technology.

Garnaut’s submission draws on analysis of Chinese-language sources and archived internet material and states that “TikTok provides Beijing with the latent capability to weaponise the platform by suppressing, amplifying and otherwise calibrating narratives in ways that microtarget political constituencies abroad.” Senator James Paterson, Chair of the Select Committee, said the Garnaut submission “shatters the myth this is somehow a private company operating on a normal commercial basis... [and] makes a mockery of TikTok’s lame defence that they would refuse to co-operate with Chinese intelligence agencies if asked.”

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) | A/g AS | East Asia Economic Branch | E: s 22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au | T: s 22(1)(a)(ii) M: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
 Sent: Tuesday, 18 July 2023 2:35 PM  
 To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
 Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
 Subject: s 33(a)(iii) [REDACTED]

Thanks, s 22(1)(a)(ii) these points are all really useful s 33(a)(iii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
 China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division  
 T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
 Sent: Tuesday, 18 July 2023 2:32 PM  
 To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
 Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
 Subject: s 33(a)(iii) [REDACTED]

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Attached s 22(1)(a)(ii) identify about the Committee.

what I've been able to

I'll let you know when cleared, however thought the background on the committee may be useful for you now.

Kind Regards  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Director | Cyber Policy  
Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology Branch | International Security Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
P s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

[dfat.gov.au](http://dfat.gov.au) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 18 July 2023 2:16 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** s 33(a)(iii) [REDACTED]

Great, thanks s 22(1)(a)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 18 July 2023 2:14 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** s 33(a)(iii) [REDACTED]

Hello s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
Select Committee for you.

I'm also pulling together some background on the

Also this statement was released by Senator Paterson yesterday [The Questions WeChat must answer \(senatorpaterson.com.au\)](#)

Thanks  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Director | Cyber Policy  
Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology Branch | International Security Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
P s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

[dfat.gov.au](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 18 July 2023 12:03 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>  
**Subject:** s 33(a)(iii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for speaking with me about this earlier and agreeing to provide some TPs with the support of Home Affairs to assist EAD s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii), s 47C(1)

Cheers

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)



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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 18 July 2023 4:57 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Thanks a lot, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s 22(1)(a)(ii) | A/g AS | East Asia Economic Branch | E: s 22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au | T: s 22(1)(a)(ii) M: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 18 July 2023 4:56 PM  
**To:** foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Good afternoon s 47F(1)

Thanks for speaking with me earlier and confirming that the Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media is unable to compel foreign entities to participate in a hearing, nor answer questions in writing.

One additional detail that would helpful to know is how best to characterise a decision by a foreign company not to participate in a hearing. We have seen suggestions that declining to participate in a hearing would 'demonstrate contempt' for Parliament and would welcome confirmation of if this is accurate.

Thanks for your help on this. If it's at all possible to please have a response by tomorrow, that would help me a lot.

Regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au

---

**From:** s 47F(1) @aph.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 18 July 2023 5:18 PM  
**To:** Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN); s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

s 47F(1) – I've had a chat s 22(1)(a)(ii) on the phone as s 22(1)(a)(ii) has left for the day – I'll fill you in.

s 47F(1) | Committee Secretary

Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600  
 Telephone s 47F(1)

*Standing Order 37 prevents the disclosure of committee documents or their contents unless authorised by the committee.*

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**From:** Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 5:18 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 47F(1) @aph.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear s 22(1)(a)(ii)

To assist us in preparing a response, it would help to know what is the forum in which you will be using this information, and what has prompted the material being prepared.

Kind regards  
 s 47F(1)

Principal Research Officer

Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media | Department of the Senate  
 Additional Committee Support | Department of the Senate  
 Phone s 47F(1) | Fax 02 6277 5794

[www.aph.gov.au/senate](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate)



*Standing Order 37 prevents the disclosure of committee documents or their contents unless authorised by the committee. For further information, please contact the secretariat.*

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 4:56 PM  
**To:** Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <[foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au)>

Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>

Subject: DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

Good afternoon s 47F(1)

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One additional detail that would be helpful to know is how best to characterise a decision by a foreign company not to participate in a hearing. We have seen suggestions that declining to participate in a hearing would 'demonstrate contempt' for Parliament and would welcome confirmation of if this is accurate.

Thanks for your help on this. If it's at all possible to please have a response by tomorrow, that would help me a lot.

Regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 19 July 2023 2:44 PM  
**To:** Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN)  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii); s 47F(1)  
**Subject:** RE: Response to DFAT [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Thanks very much for this, s 47F(1) Appreciate the quick and helpful turnaround.

Cheers

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s 22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)

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**From:** Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 19 July 2023 1:44 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 47F(1) @aph.gov.au>; s 47F(1) @aph.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Response to DFAT

Dear <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>

**DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media**

In response to your email from yesterday, I provide the following information:

- The paragraphs titled 'Foreigners as Witnesses' and 'Evidence from Overseas' in [Chapter 17 of Odgers' Australian Senate Practice](#).
- The power to call for witnesses, and information about contempt (in the formal sense), is available [in this Senate Brief](#) and also [here](#) (esp. Privilege Resolution 3).

Generally, any particular concerns held by anyone in relation to the conduct of the Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference in Social Media inquiry should be raised by the person concerned directly with the committee, in writing.

Please feel free to call me on s 47F(1) if you would like to discuss.

Regards

s 47F(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Committee Secretary

Additional Committee Support  
Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media  
Senate Select Committee on the Perth Mint and Commonwealth regulatory compliance  
Telephone s 47F(1) | s 47F(1)  
Suite S1.61 | Parliament House | PO Box 6100 | Canberra 2600 ACT | [www.aph.gov.au/senate](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate)

*Standing Order 37 prevents the disclosure of committee documents or their contents unless authorised by the committee.*

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 4:56 PM  
**To:** Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <[foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)  
**Subject:** DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Thanks for your help on this. If it's at all possible to please have a response by tomorrow, that would help me a lot.

Regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)













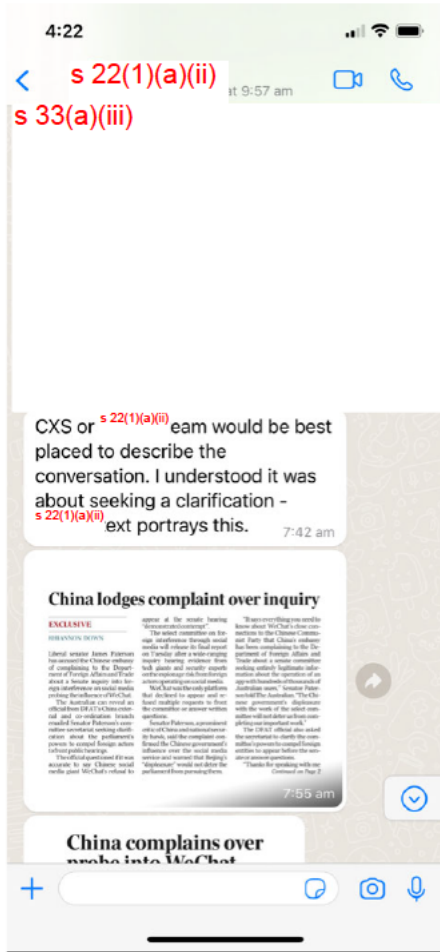
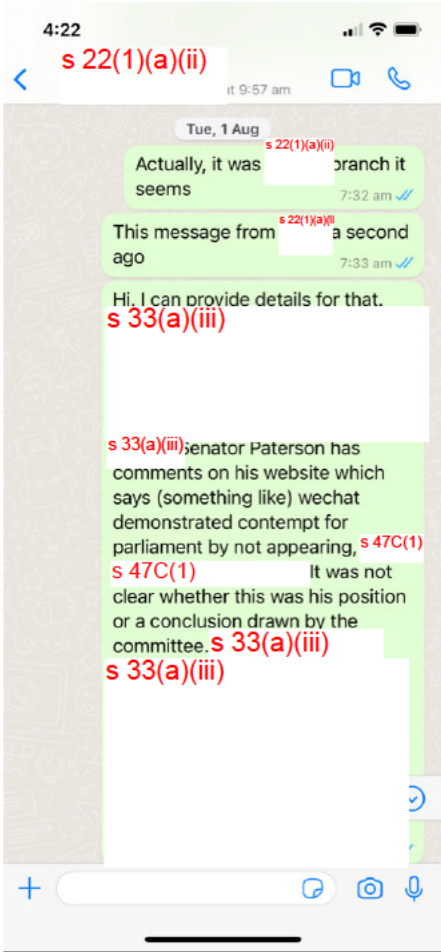




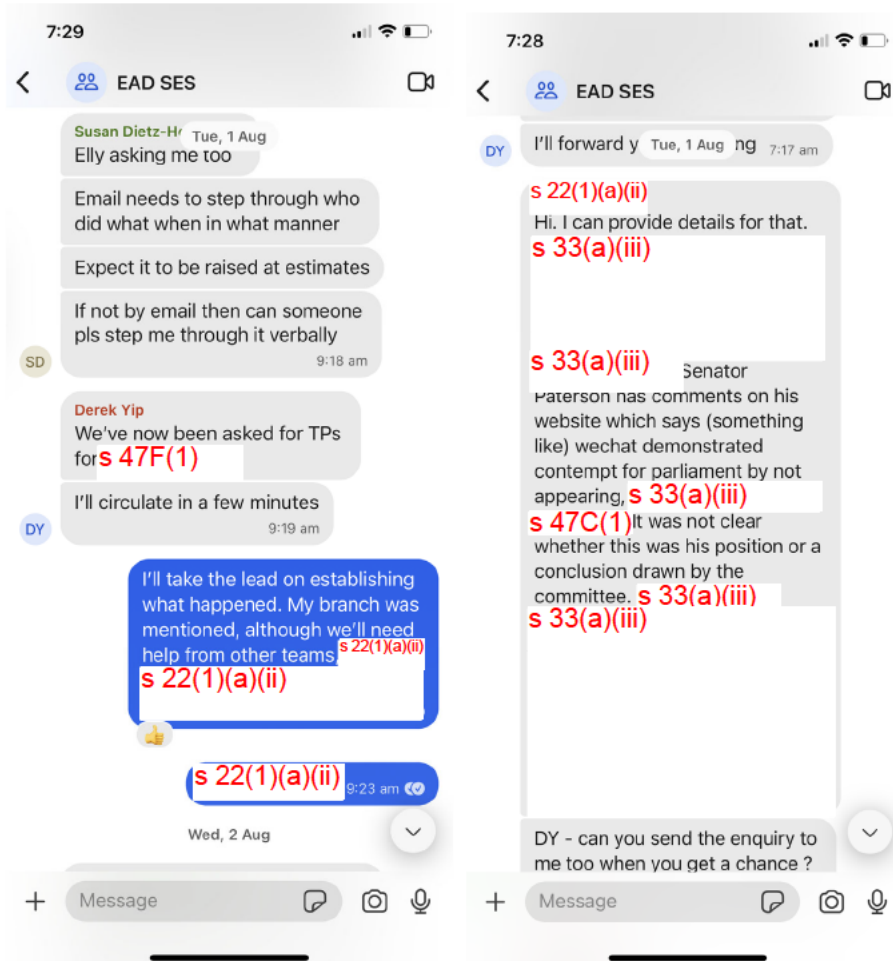
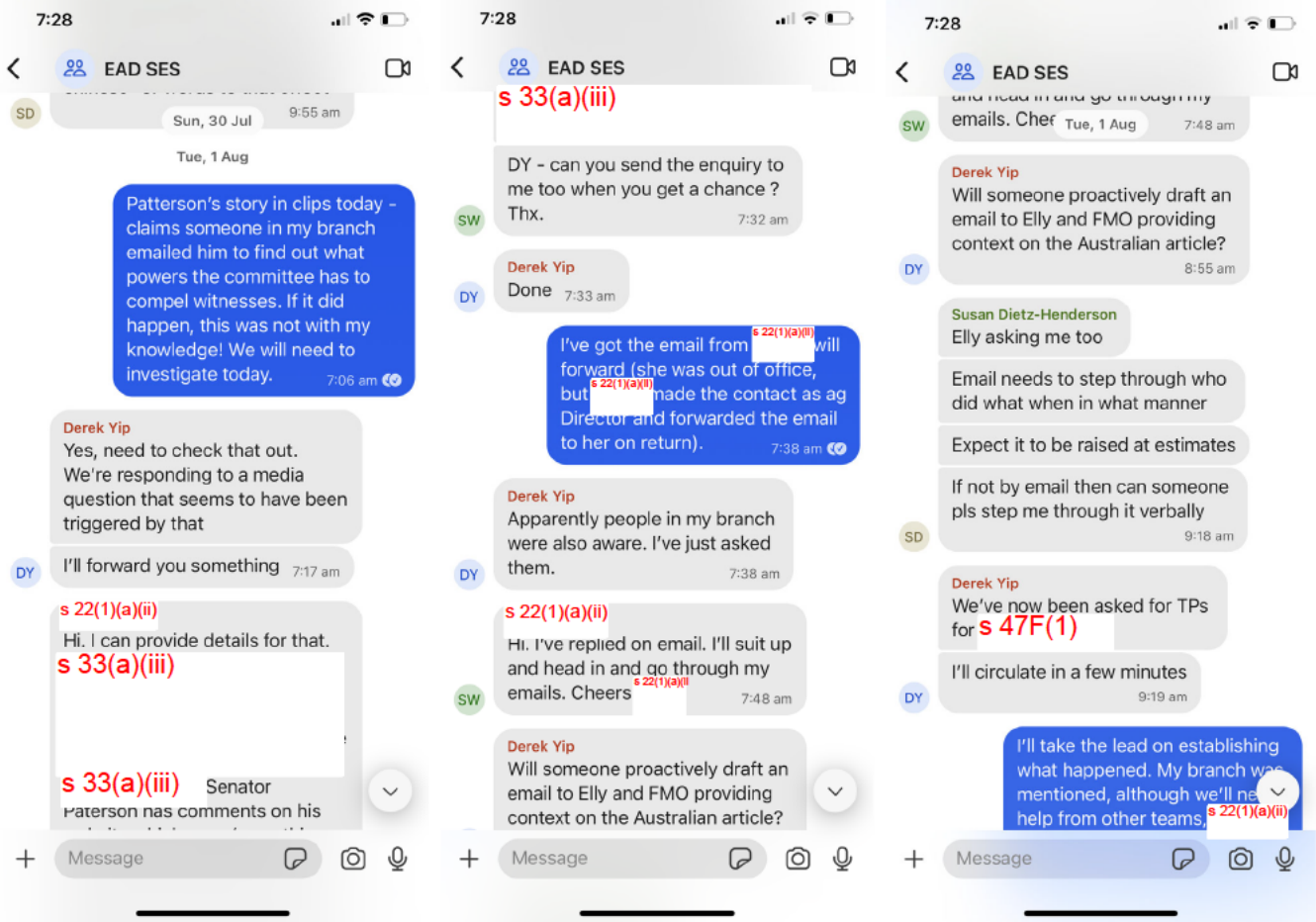


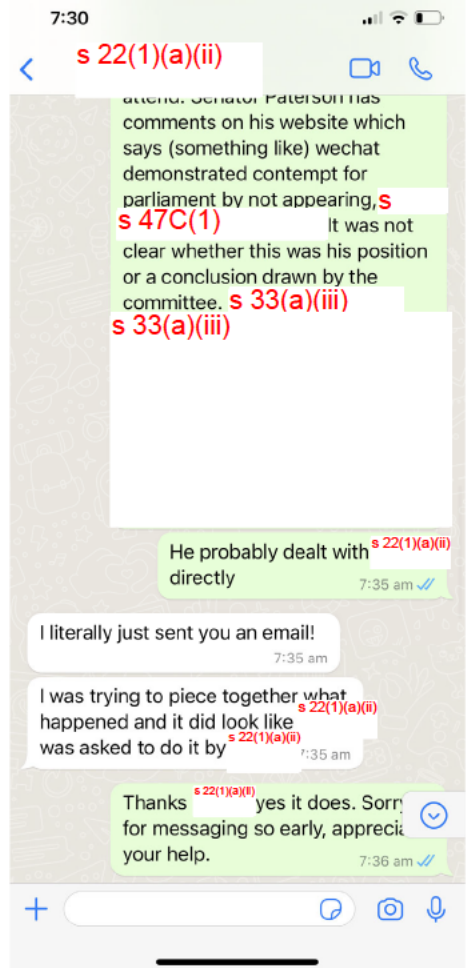
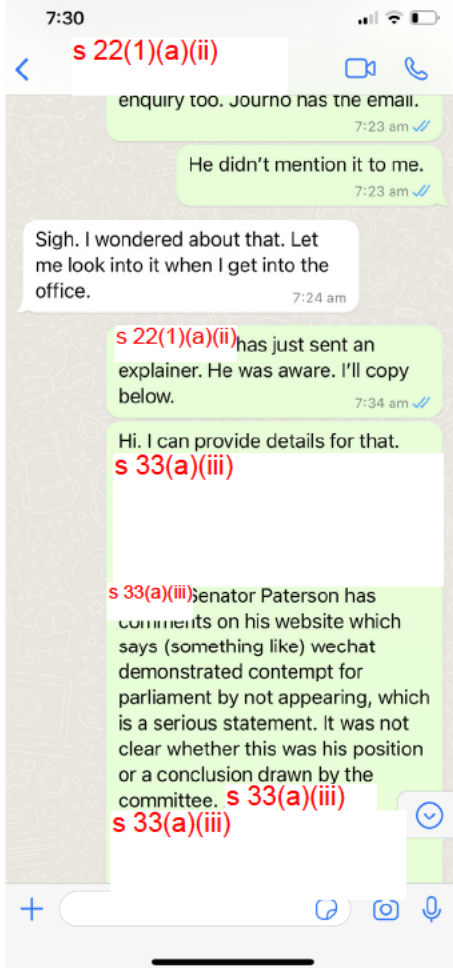
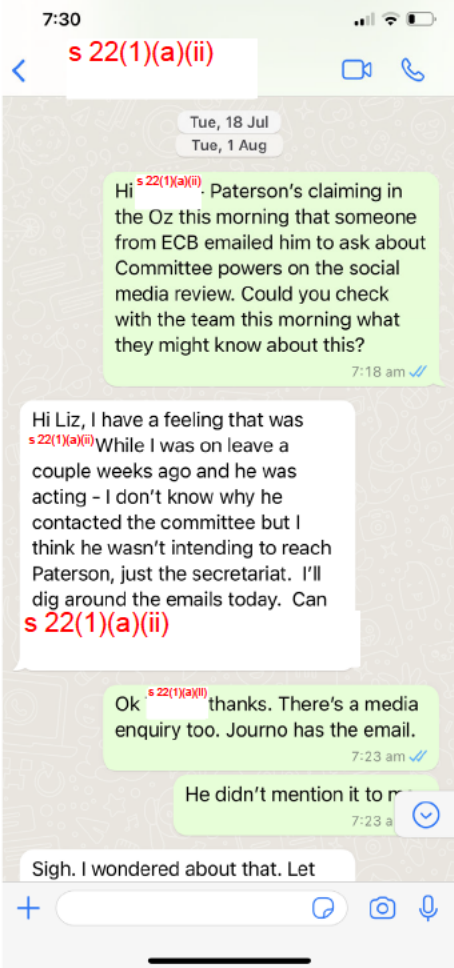












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**From:** Elizabeth McGregor  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 11:02 AM  
**To:** Elly Lawson; Susan Dietz-Henderson  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; Derek Yip; s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: timeline [REDACTED]  
**Attachments:** s 33(a)(iii)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Elly, Susan,  
With thanks to s 22(1)(a)(ii), our timeline below of events around engagement with the Senate Select Committee on social media. s 22(1)(a)(ii)

The email provided to the Oz is attached though.

s 33(a)(iii)

- EAD (CXS/CHX/CBS) begins consulting internally in DFAT (with the ISD Cyber team) s 33(a)(iii). ISD was also in contact with Home Affairs on the matter. Relevant email attached.
- s 22(1)(a)(ii) contacted the Committee Secretariat by phone, and subsequently by email, on 18 July to clarify its powers to compel a foreign company to participate in a committee process, and whether declining to participate would demonstrate contempt for Parliament (as Paterson had claimed publicly). Relevant email attached. s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 33(a)(iii)

- The Australian publishes an article on 31 July that quotes an official from DFAT's China external and coordination branch who had emailed the committee secretariat seeking clarification about the committee's powers. The article also reports that the Chinese Embassy had 'complained' to DFAT about the Senate inquiry.

Liz

---

**From:** Derek Yip  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 1:51 PM  
**To:** Elizabeth McGregor; Susan Dietz-Henderson  
**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**OFFICIAL**

I agree it's covered. Will progress.

Thanks both for the quick response.

Derek

---

**From:** Elizabeth McGregor <Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 1:50 PM  
**To:** Derek Yip <Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au>; Susan Dietz-Henderson <Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

I think they're ok too – the other part of DFAT's request was whether declining to participate would qualify as contempt for Parliament, but I think that's covered under powers if you are both satisfied.

---

**From:** Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 1:46 PM  
**To:** Susan Dietz-Henderson <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>; Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

The China bilat QTB (attached) was updated to include a question on whether the Chinese Embassy raised the Senate inquiry with DFAT.

s 47C(1) . I've adapted that a bit to reflect the point about why we engaged the secretariat. How's the highlighted point?

Derek

**Why did DFAT approach the Senate Committee for information about the Senate Select Committee inquiry on Foreign Interference through Social Media?**

- DFAT, as is common for many other government departments, regularly engages Parliamentary Committees on questions of process and operations.
- In this instance, DFAT reached out to the Committee secretariat to clarify its powers to compel a foreign company to participate in a committee process.

***Did Chinese officials complain to DFAT about the Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference in Social Media Inquiry?***

- Robust and independent parliamentary processes are a normal and important part of Australian democracy.
- Chinese officials occasionally discuss with Australian officials the impact regulatory and parliamentary processes can have on Chinese entities.
- DFAT takes opportunities to reinforce understanding about Australia's parliamentary processes when engaging foreign officials.
- China is well aware of the strong interest the Australian Government has in addressing possible foreign interference risks of social media.
- The Government will decide on how it responds to any Committee recommendations in due course.

***If pressed:***

- Not helpful to get into the specifics of direct exchanges between Australian and Chinese diplomatic officials.

s 33(a)(iii)

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**From:** Susan Dietz-Henderson <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 1:38 PM

**To:** s 47F(1) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au); Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>;

Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi <sup>s 47F(1)</sup>

Derek is forwarding you now the one we prepared today, which is not quite the same question.

We can adapt <sup>s 47C(1)</sup> and forward to you.

Susan

---

**From:** <sup>s 47F(1)</sup> @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 1:32 PM  
**To:** Susan Dietz-Henderson <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>; Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi Susan

Can you please provide, via email given question time is in 30 minutes, a response to the question as to why DFAT approached the Senate Committee for this information?

Thank you

<sup>s 47F(1)</sup>

---

**From:** Susan Dietz-Henderson <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 8:52 AM  
**To:** <sup>s 47F(1)</sup> @dfat.gov.au>; Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: QTB update[SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi <sup>s 47F(1)</sup>

Included.

Susan

---

**From:** <sup>s 47F(1)</sup> @dfat.gov.au>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 at 8:33:21 am  
**To:** "Elizabeth McGregor" <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** "Susan Dietz-Henderson" <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi team, just making sure that this is included in the QTB update today. Thank you, <sup>s 47F(1)</sup>

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/china-lodges-complaint-over-foreign-interference-inquiry-wechat-criticism/news-story/770d787e2bc0686710c00f8771a21128>

s 47F(1)

Senior Adviser to Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs

M: s 47F(1) | W: s 47F(1)

s 47F(1) | [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s 47F(1)@dfat.gov.au)



**From:** Elizabeth McGregor  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 6:08 PM  
**To:** Derek Yip; s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** Re: QTB update[SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Done - s 47F(1) aware, and has the report.

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**From:** "Derek Yip" <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 at 5:06:02 pm  
**To:** "Elizabeth McGregor" <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au  
**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Liz, yes please close the loop with s 47F(1). I haven't discussed with her.

I've copied s 22(1)(a)(ii) in. He'll manage the EAD political QTB tomorrow, and can discuss with s 22(1)(a)(ii) branch re: what needs to come out of our QTB.

Derek

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**From:** Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 2:58 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Many thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) s 47C(1)

We will need to let the office know though (Derek, let me know if you'd like me to close the loop with s 22(1)(a)(ii)).

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 2:47 PM  
**To:** Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au  
**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Thanks Liz. Home Affairs is leading on the response to this inquiry, once published, so we will liaise with them for more general TPs s 47C(1)



s 47C(1)

Cheers,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 2:26 PM**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>**Subject:** FW: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]**OFFICIAL**


---

**From:** Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 1:55 PM**To:** Susan Dietz-Henderson <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>; s 47F(1) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>; Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]**OFFICIAL**

s 47F(1)

The China bilat QTB (attached) was updated this morning to include a question on whether the Chinese Embassy raised the Senate inquiry with DFAT.

s 47C(1) . We've added an additional couple of points to answer a question about why we engaged the secretariat. See highlighted.

Let us know if you need anything else.

Derek

***Why did DFAT approach the Senate Committee for information about the Senate Select Committee inquiry on Foreign Interference through Social Media?***

- DFAT, as is common for many other government departments, regularly engages Parliamentary Committees on questions of process and operations.
- In this instance, DFAT reached out to the Committee secretariat to clarify its powers to compel a foreign company to participate in a committee process.

***Did Chinese officials complain to DFAT about the Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference in Social Media Inquiry?***

- Robust and independent parliamentary processes are a normal and important part of Australian democracy.
- Chinese officials occasionally discuss with Australian officials the impact regulatory and parliamentary processes can have on Chinese entities.

- DFAT takes opportunities to reinforce understanding about Australia's parliamentary processes when engaging foreign officials.
- China is well aware of the strong interest the Australian Government has in addressing possible foreign interference risks of social media.
- The Government will decide on how it responds to any Committee recommendations in due course.

**If pressed:**

- Not helpful to get into the specifics of direct exchanges between Australian and Chinese diplomatic officials.
- s 33(a)(iii)

---

**From:** Susan Dietz-Henderson <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 1:38 PM

**To:** s 47F(1) <[s47f1@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s47f1@dfat.gov.au)>; Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>;

Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s 47F(1)

Derek is forwarding you now the one we prepared today, which is not quite the same question.

s 47C(1)

Susan

---

**From:** s 47F(1) <[s47f1@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s47f1@dfat.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 1:32 PM

**To:** Susan Dietz-Henderson <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>; Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi Susan

Can you please provide, via email given question time is in 30 minutes, a response to the question as to why DFAT approached the Senate Committee for this information?

Thank you

s 47F(1)

---

**From:** Susan Dietz-Henderson <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 8:52 AM  
**To:** s 47F(1) <[s47f1@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s47f1@dfat.gov.au)>; Elizabeth McGregor <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: QTB update[SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s 47F(1)  
Included.

Susan

---

**From:** s 47F(1) <[s47f1@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s47f1@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 at 8:33:21 am  
**To:** "Elizabeth McGregor" <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** "Susan Dietz-Henderson" <[Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** QTB update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi team, just making sure that this is included in the QTB update today. Thank you, s 47F(1)

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/china-lodges-complaint-over-foreign-interference-inquiry-wechat-criticism/news-story/770d787e2bc0686710c00f8771a21128>

s 47F(1)

Senior Adviser to Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs

M: s 47F(1) | W: s 47F(1)

s 47F(1) <[s47f1@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s47f1@dfat.gov.au)>



**From:** Media  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 10:45 AM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; Derek Yip; s 22(1)(a)(ii) ;  
 Elizabeth McGregor; s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; Susan Dietz-Henderson  
**Cc:** Media  
**Subject:** RE: \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

## OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks very much! Confirming s 47C(1)

Thank you also for the response to s 47F(1) – we're progressing this to FMO now.

Appreciate the quick turnaround this morning.

Best,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Officer | Media Liaison Section  
 Communications Branch | Executive Division  
 T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 10:37 AM  
**To:** Media <media@dfat.gov.au>; Derek Yip <Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>;  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>;  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Elizabeth McGregor  
 <Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Susan Dietz-Henderson  
 <Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi MLS,

s 47C(1) cleared by FAS EAD, Susan Dietz-Henderson:

///

### ***Did Chinese officials complain to DFAT about the Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference in Social Media Inquiry?***

- Robust and independent parliamentary processes are a normal and important part of Australian democracy.
- Chinese officials occasionally discuss with Australian officials the impact regulatory and parliamentary processes can have on Chinese entities.

- DFAT takes opportunities to reinforce understanding about Australia's parliamentary processes when engaging foreign officials.
- China is well aware of the strong interest the Australian Government has in addressing possible foreign interference risks of social media.
- The Government will decide on how it responds to any Committee recommendations in due course.

***If pressed:***

- Not helpful to get into the specifics of direct exchanges between Australian and Chinese diplomatic officials.

s 33(a)(iii)

///

Kind regards,  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director | China Bilateral Section  
East Asia Political Branch | East Asia Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 10:12 AM

**To:** Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au;  
s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Elizabeth McGregor  
<[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au

**Subject:** RE: \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi Derek

Grateful update on this one if possible

With thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Officer | Media Liaison Section  
 Communications Branch | Executive Division  
 T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 9:18 AM  
**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au;  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Elizabeth McGregor  
 <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au  
**Subject:** RE: \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Thanks, <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>. We're on it.

Derek

---

**From:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 9:16 AM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au;  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au  
**Cc:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Good morning all

s 47C(1)

Noting a media response is being progressed, could we receive by 10am any points which address claims in this article [China lodges complaint over foreign interference inquiry, WeChat criticism | The Australian](#)

Regards  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Section  
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
 T +61 2 6261 1555 | E [media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)

*Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.*

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 9:08 AM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>; Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Greg Wilcock <[Greg.Wilcock@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Greg.Wilcock@dfat.gov.au)>; Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** URGENT: TP request from ATMO [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Morning team MLS,

s 47F(1) just called seeking an if raised TP on the China article in the Oz by s 47F(1) by **10am today** s 47C(1)

Will leave it in your capable hands.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

A/g Assistant Secretary  
Communications Planning and Public Diplomacy Branch | Strategic Communications Division  
M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** Elizabeth McGregor  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 7:41 AM  
**To:** Susan Dietz-Henderson; Derek Yip; s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Response to DFAT [REDACTED]  
**Attachments:** s 33(a)(iii) [REDACTED]; Draft TPs on Foreign Interference and Social Media Review.docx

The email referenced in the media clips is below. It was to the committee secretariat, not s 47F(1) [REDACTED], to clarify committee powers.

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@dfat.gov.au>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 at 7:35:09 am  
**To:** "Elizabeth McGregor" <Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Response to DFAT [REDACTED]

Liz I've found the thread I was thinking of. Unfortunately had no visibility as it was happening as I was on the China Literacy course - s 22(1)(a)(ii) sent me this thread when I was back in the office the next day. But I think s 22(1)(a)(ii) may have been asked to do this - I see s 22(1)(a)(ii) as a/g AS EEB is on the original thread. s 33(a)(iii)

Thanks  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@dfat.gov.au>  
**Date:** Thursday, 20 July 2023 at 11:53:13  
**To:** "s 22(1)(a)(ii)" <[REDACTED]@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Response to DFAT [REDACTED]

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Response to our question from the Committee Secretary below, and ISD's (now cleared) TPs on the matter attached, along with the relevant thread, in which s 22(1)(a)(i) summarised the WoG points s 47C(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au



**From:** Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 19 July 2023 1:44 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 47F(1) @aph.gov.au>; s 47F(1) @aph.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Response to DFAT

Dear <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>

**DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media**

In response to your email from yesterday, I provide the following information:

The paragraphs titled 'Foreigners as Witnesses' and 'Evidence from Overseas' in [Chapter 17 of Odgers' Australian Senate Practice](#).

The power to call for witnesses, and information about contempt (in the formal sense), is available [in this Senate Brief](#) and also [here](#) (esp. Privilege Resolution 3).

Generally, any particular concerns held by anyone in relation to the conduct of the Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference in Social Media inquiry should be raised by the person concerned directly with the committee, in writing.

Please feel free to call me on s 47F(1) if you would like to discuss.

Regards

s 47F(1)

Committee Secretary

Additional Committee Support  
Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media  
Senate Select Committee on the Perth Mint and Commonwealth regulatory compliance  
Telephone s 47F(1) s 47F(1)  
Suite S1.61 | Parliament House | PO Box 6100 | Canberra 2600 ACT | [www.aph.gov.au/senate](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate)

*Standing Order 37 prevents the disclosure of committee documents or their contents unless authorised by the committee.*

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 4:56 PM  
**To:** Committee, Foreign Interference 47th Parliament (SEN) <foreigninterference47parl.sen@aph.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** DFAT question for Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Good afternoon s 47F(1)

Thanks for speaking with me earlier and confirming that the Select Committee on Foreign Interference through Social Media is unable to compel foreign entities to participate in a hearing, nor answer questions in writing.

One additional detail that would be helpful to know is how best to characterise a decision by a foreign company not to participate in a hearing. We have seen suggestions that declining to participate in a hearing would 'demonstrate contempt' for Parliament and would welcome confirmation of if this is accurate.

Thanks for your help on this. If it's at all possible to please have a response by tomorrow, that would help me a lot.

Regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Assistant Director | China Coordination Section  
China External and Coordination Branch | East Asia Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | E s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)

**From:** Derek Yip  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 7:21 AM  
**To:** Elizabeth McGregor  
**Cc:** Susan Dietz-Henderson; s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** Fwd: \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Further to our messages on signal. Will also need to update QTB this morning.

Derek

---

**From:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 at 6:57:45 am  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, "Derek Yip" <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au  
**Cc:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

I don't believe there is a social post – as you suggested, the question is a little ambiguous but we have received further context from the journo.

//

Sorry my email was brief. This relates to the inquiry into foreign influence through social media.

We have obtained emails from a DFAT employee which show the official was asking about the power the senate has to compel foreign organisations to appear before an inquiry.

Senator James Paterson also claims that the Chinese embassy has raised concerns about the inquiry with DFAT.

//

With this context, I think the question should be interpreted it as '*Senator Paterson has accused the Chinese Embassy of complaining to DFAT, about his inquiry into foreign interference through social media. If you could provide any comment as soon as possible it would be very appreciated.*'

s 47F(1) has published an article – [China lodges complaint over foreign interference inquiry, WeChat criticism | The Australian](#) – we would still like to progress a response which would allow the journo to add a comment from the department to the online story. Suggestion below about a response framed around the robustness of parliamentary processes in democracy seems sound.

Regards  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Media Liaison Section  
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
 T +61 2 6261 1555 | E [media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)

*Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.*

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 9:43 PM  
**To:** Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>; Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint[SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Perhaps I have missed it or there is ambiguity, but do we have the social media post through which Senator Paterson has made this complaint? I couldn't see when I looked quickly at twitter.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Dir CBS

---

**From:** "Derek Yip" <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Date:** Monday, 31 July 2023 at 7:54:42 pm  
**To:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

We'll see what we can get you by 10am tomorrow, <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>, noting we also have QTBs to deal with in the morning.

Team CBS, expect something flat about the importance to our democracy of robust parliamentary processes will do. s 33(a)(iii), s 47C(1)

Derek

---

**From:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Date:** Monday, 31 July 2023 at 7:39:41 pm  
**To:** "Derek Yip" <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Cc:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

Dear EAD colleagues

Please see below a media enquiry from s 47F(1) /The Australian regarding a Chinese embassy complaint by Senator James Paterson.

MLS would be grateful for a draft response to this enquiry by 10am 01/08 to allow for FMO deadlines. Please let us know if this is unrealistic.

We would also appreciate **confirmation of receipt** of this request.

s 47E(d)

Kind regards  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Section  
Communications Branch | Executive Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
T +61 2 6261 1555 | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** s 47F(1)  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 7:08 PM  
**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hello,

Very sorry for the late notice but this story has crossed my desk very late.

Basically Senator James Paterson has accused the Chinese embassy of complaining about his inquiry into foreign interference through social media to DFAT.

If you could provide any comment as soon as possible it would be very appreciated.

I'm on s 47F(1) if I can clarify anything.

Thanks,  
s 47F(1)

--

**s 47F(1)**

Reporter

Press Gallery Parliament House Suite 117 Canberra ACT 2600

**Ms 47F(1)****Es 47F(1)**[W NewsCorpAustralia.com](http://www.news.com.au)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land in all states and territories on which we work and report. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present, and honour their history, cultures, and traditions of storytelling. Proudly supporting [1 degree](#), A News Corp Australia initiative.

#IStandWithEvan - To learn more about Evan Gershkovich, our Wall Street Journal colleague unjustly detained in Russia, [click here](#).



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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 10:38 AM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** Susan Dietz-Henderson; Derek Yip; s 22(1)(a)(ii) ;  
 Elizabeth McGregor  
**Subject:** FW: \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

## OFFICIAL

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

For Elly's visibility/awareness – Susan has cleared the below points s 47C(1)

Kind regards.  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director | China Bilateral Section  
 East Asia Political Branch | East Asia Division  
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
 T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 10:37 AM  
**To:** Media <media@dfat.gov.au>; Derek Yip <Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>;  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>;  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Elizabeth McGregor  
 <Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Susan Dietz-Henderson  
 <Susan.Dietz-Henderson@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi MLS,

Below s 47C(1) cleared by FAS EAD, Susan Dietz-Henderson:

///

***Did Chinese officials complain to DFAT about the Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference in Social Media Inquiry?***

- Robust and independent parliamentary processes are a normal and important part of Australian democracy.

- Chinese officials occasionally discuss with Australian officials the impact regulatory and parliamentary processes can have on Chinese entities.
- DFAT takes opportunities to reinforce understanding about Australia's parliamentary processes when engaging foreign officials.
- China is well aware of the strong interest the Australian Government has in addressing possible foreign interference risks of social media.
- The Government will decide on how it responds to any Committee recommendations in due course.

***If pressed:***

- Not helpful to get into the specifics of direct exchanges between Australian and Chinese diplomatic officials.

s 33(a)(iii)

///

Kind regards,  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director | China Bilateral Section  
 East Asia Political Branch | East Asia Division  
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
 T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 10:12 AM
**To:** Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au;  
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Elizabeth McGregor  
 <[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au;
**Subject:** RE: \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]**OFFICIAL**



Hi Derek

Grateful update on this one if possible

With thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Officer | Media Liaison Section  
Communications Branch | Executive Division  
T +61 2 6178 5022 | M +61 403 194 074

---

**From:** Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 9:18 AM

**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au); Elizabeth McGregor  
s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au); Elizabeth McGregor  
<[Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.McGregor@dfat.gov.au)

**Subject:** RE: \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Thanks, <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>. We're on it.

Derek

---

**From:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 9:16 AM

**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au); Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)

**Cc:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** \*\*Priority TP request\*\* China Article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Good morning all

s 47C(1)

Noting a media response is being progressed, could we receive by 10am any points which address claims in this article [China lodges complaint over foreign interference inquiry, WeChat criticism | The Australian](#)

Regards

<sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>

---

Media Liaison Section  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
T +61 2 6261 1555 | E [media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)

Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 9:08 AM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>; Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Greg Wilcock <[Greg.Wilcock@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Greg.Wilcock@dfat.gov.au)>; Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** s 47C(1)

## OFFICIAL

Morning team MLS,

s 47F(1) just called seeking an if raised TP on the China article in the Oz by s 47F(1) by 10am today s 47C(1)

Will leave it in your capable hands.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

A/g Assistant Secretary  
Communications Planning and Public Diplomacy Branch | Strategic Communications Division  
M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**From:** [Media](#)  
**To:** s 47F(1)  
**Cc:** [Media](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Monday, 31 July 2023 8:28:59 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)

---

## OFFICIAL

Thanks s 47F(1) , we will look into this for you.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

*Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.*

---

Media Liaison Section  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
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[dfat.gov.au](http://dfat.gov.au) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)



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---

**From:** s 47F(1)  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 8:15 PM  
**To:** Media <media@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hello,

Sorry my email was brief. This relates to the inquiry into foreign influence through social media. We have obtained emails from a DFAT employee which show the official was asking about the power the senate has to compel foreign organisations to appear before an inquiry. Senator James Paterson also claims that the Chinese embassy has raised concerns about the inquiry with DFAT.

I am basically seeking a response from DFAT about these claims.

Thanks,  
s 47F(1)

On Mon, 31 Jul 2023 at 8:11 pm, Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)> wrote:

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s 47F(1)

Grateful if you could please provide further information on this matter to assist us with a response to your enquiry.

Kind regards  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

*Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.*

---

Media Liaison Section  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
P +61 2 6261 1555  
[dfat.gov.au](http://dfat.gov.au) | [Twitter](https://twitter.com/dfatgovau) | [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/dfatgovau) | [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/dfatgovau) | [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/dfatgovau)



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---

**From:** s 47F(1)  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 7:30 PM  
**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for getting back to me.

Thanks,  
s 47F(1)

On Mon, 31 Jul 2023 at 19:15, Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)> wrote:

**OFFICIAL**

Hi **s 47F(1)**

Acknowledging receipt of your enquiry, however we are unlikely to have a response to you tonight.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

*Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.*

---

Media Liaison Section  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
**P** +61 2 6261 1555  
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---

**From:** **s 47F(1)**

**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 7:08 PM

**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hello,

Very sorry for the late notice but this story has crossed my desk very late.

Basically Senator James Paterson has accused the Chinese embassy of complaining about his inquiry into foreign interference through social media to DFAT.

If you could provide any comment as soon as possible it would be very appreciated.

I'm on **s 47F(1)** if I can clarify anything.

Thanks,  
**s 47F(1)**

--

s 47F(1)

Reporter

Press Gallery Parliament House Suite 117 Canberra ACT 2600

Ms 47F(1)

Es 47F(1)

W <http://NewsCorpAustralia.com>

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--

s 47F(1)

Reporter

Press Gallery Parliament House Suite 117 Canberra ACT 2600

Ms 47F(1)

Es 47F(1)

W <http://NewsCorpAustralia.com>

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land in all states and territories on which we work and report. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present, and honour their history, cultures, and traditions of storytelling.

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-000000000009b73fe0601c512ce-

--

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**To:** [Media](#)  
**Cc:** [Susan Dietz-Henderson](#); [Derek Yip](#); [Elizabeth McGregor](#); s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: **\*\*Media enquiry for action\*\*** due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 10:41:46 AM

---

## OFFICIAL

Hi MLS,

Please find below the FAS EAD cleared response to the media enquiry from The Australian.

Kind regards,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

////

### **For attribution to a spokesperson of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

Robust and independent parliamentary processes are a normal and important part of Australian democracy.

### **On background (not for attribution)**

China is well aware of the strong interest Australia has in addressing possible foreign interference risks of social media.

s 33(a)(iii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Assistant Director | China Bilateral Section  
 East Asia Political Branch | East Asia Division  
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
**T** s 22(1)(a)(ii) | **M** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 7:29 AM  
**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>; Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint[SEC=OFFICIAL]

### OFFICIAL

Thanks <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>, we will be in touch later this morning.  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 at 6:57:45 am  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>, "Derek Yip" <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[@dfat.gov.au](mailto:@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

### OFFICIAL

Hi <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>

I don't believe there is a social post – as you suggested, the question is a little ambiguous but we have received further context from the journo.

//

Sorry my email was brief. This relates to the inquiry into foreign influence through social media. We have obtained emails from a DFAT employee which show the official was asking about the power the senate has to compel foreign organisations to appear before an inquiry. Senator James Paterson also claims that the Chinese embassy has raised concerns about the inquiry with DFAT.

//

With this context, I think the question should be interpreted it as *'Senator Paterson has accused the Chinese Embassy of complaining to DFAT, about his inquiry into foreign interference through social media. If you could provide any comment as soon as possible it would be very appreciated.'*



s 47F(1) has published an article – [China lodges complaint over foreign interference inquiry, WeChat criticism | The Australian](#) – we would still like to progress a response which would allow the journo to add a comment from the department to the online story. Suggestion below about a response framed around the robustness of parliamentary processes in democracy seems sound.

Regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Section  
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
 T +61 2 6261 1555 | E [media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)

*Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.*

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 9:43 PM  
**To:** Derek Yip <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>; Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)  
**Subject:** Re: \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint[SEC=OFFICIAL]

## OFFICIAL

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Perhaps I have missed it or there is ambiguity, but do we have the social media post through which Senator Paterson has made this complaint? I couldn't see when I looked quickly at twitter.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Dir CBS

---

**From:** "Derek Yip" <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Date:** Monday, 31 July 2023 at 7:54:42 pm  
**To:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au), s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au), s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au), s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au), s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)  
**Subject:** Re: \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

We'll see what we can get you by 10am tomorrow, <sup>s 22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>, noting we also have QTBs to deal with in the morning.

Team CBS, expect something flat about the importance to our democracy of robust parliamentary processes will do. s 33(a)(iii), s 47C(1)

Derek

---

**From:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Date:** Monday, 31 July 2023 at 7:39:41 pm  
**To:** "Derek Yip" <[Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Derek.Yip@dfat.gov.au)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au), s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au), s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au), s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au), s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)  
**Cc:** "Media" <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** \*\*Media enquiry for action\*\* due to MLS by 10am 01/08 | s 47F(1) /The Australian | Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

### OFFICIAL

Dear EAD colleagues

Please see below a media enquiry from s 47F(1) /The Australian regarding a Chinese embassy complaint by Senator James Paterson.

MLS would be grateful for a draft response to this enquiry by 10am 01/08 to allow for FMO deadlines. Please let us know if this is unrealistic.

We would also appreciate **confirmation of receipt** of this request.

It is a requirement that draft responses are **cleared at SES level** before they are returned to MLS.  
**Please advise: name, title, and best contact number of the clearing SES.**

s 47E(d)

Kind regards  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Section  
Communications Branch | Executive Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
T +61 2 6261 1555 | M 0478 970 301

---

**From:** s 47F(1)

**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 7:08 PM

**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hello,

Very sorry for the late notice but this story has crossed my desk very late.

Basically Senator James Paterson has accused the Chinese embassy of complaining about his inquiry into foreign interference through social media to DFAT.

If you could provide any comment as soon as possible it would be very appreciated.

I'm on s 47F(1) if I can clarify anything.

Thanks,  
s 47F(1)

Reporter

Press Gallery Parliament House Suite 117 Canberra ACT 2600

**M**s 47F(1)

**E**s 47F(1)

**W** NewsCorpAustralia.com

---

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#IStandWithEvan - To learn more about Evan Gershkovich, our Wall Street Journal colleague unjustly detained in Russia, [click here](#).



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**From:** [Media](#)  
**To:** [s 47F\(1\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Media](#); [s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#)  
**Subject:** TP - China article in The Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 10:39:15 AM

---

## OFFICIAL

Hi [s 47F\(1\)](#)

Thanks for your patience. Please see requested TP and background below

//

### ***Did Chinese officials complain to DFAT about the Senate Select Committee on Foreign Interference in Social Media Inquiry?***

- Robust and independent parliamentary processes are a normal and important part of Australian democracy.
- Chinese officials occasionally discuss with Australian officials the impact regulatory and parliamentary processes can have on Chinese entities.
- DFAT takes opportunities to reinforce understanding about Australia's parliamentary processes when engaging foreign officials.
- China is well aware of the strong interest the Australian Government has in addressing possible foreign interference risks of social media.
- The Government will decide on how it responds to any Committee recommendations in due course.

#### ***If pressed:***

- Not helpful to get into the specifics of direct exchanges between Australian and Chinese diplomatic officials.

[s 33\(a\)\(iii\)](#)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Officer | Media Liaison Section  
Communications Branch | Executive Division

**T** s 22(1)(a)(ii) | **M** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**From:** [Media](#)  
**To:** s 47F(1)  
**Cc:** [Media](#); s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** \*FMO action - media enquiry\* s 47F(1) /The Australian | Foreign interference enquiry - Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 11:06:19 AM  
**Attachments:** [TP - China article in The Aus SECOFFICIAL.msg](#)  
[image001.jpg](#)

---

## OFFICIAL

Dear s 47F(1)

Grateful clearance to provide the below response to s 47F(1) /The Australian.

s 47F(1) came to us late last night and has already filed - [China lodges complaint over foreign interference inquiry, WeChat criticism | The Australian](#)

Please note – MLS provided talking points to s 47Fs 47C(1)

FMO only background to follow.

//

### **MEDIA ENQUIRY FOR FMO CLEARANCE**

**JOURNALIST DEADLINE:** ASAP (expectations managed)

**JOURNALIST/OUTLET:** s 47F(1) /The Australian

**DFAT POC:** Susan L Dietz-Henderson, First Assistant Secretary – East Asia Division, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

### **Attributable to a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokesperson:**

Robust and independent parliamentary processes are a normal and important part of Australian democracy.

### **On background (for use in reporting, not for attribution):**

China is well aware of the strong interest Australia has in addressing the possible foreign interference risks of social media.

//

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Media Liaison Officer | Media Liaison Section  
Communications Branch | Executive Division

**T** s 22(1)(a)(ii) | **M** s 22(1)(a)(ii)



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---

**From:** s 47F(1)

**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 7:08 PM

**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint

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Hello,

Very sorry for the late notice but this story has crossed my desk very late.

Basically Senator James Paterson has accused the Chinese embassy of complaining about his inquiry into foreign interference through social media to DFAT.

If you could provide any comment as soon as possible it would be very appreciated.

I'm on s 47F(1) if I can clarify anything.

Thanks,  
s 47F(1)

Reporter

Press Gallery Parliament House Suite 117 Canberra ACT 2600

**Ms 47F(1)**

**Es 47F(1)**

[W NewsCorpAustralia.com](http://www.news.com.au)

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**From:** [Media](#)  
**To:** s 47F(1)  
**Cc:** [Media](#); s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** \*FMO Only Background\* s 47F(1) /The Australian | Foreign interference enquiry - Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL:sensitive]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 August 2023 11:07:07 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

Hi s 47F(1)

Following the response – please see below Background on this enquiry.

s 33(a)(iii)

Regards,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Media Liaison Officer | Media Liaison Section  
Communications Branch | Executive Division  
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** s 47F(1)  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 8:15 PM  
**To:** Media <media@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hello,

Sorry my email was brief. This relates to the inquiry into foreign influence through social media. We have obtained emails from a DFAT employee which show the official was asking about the power the senate has to compel foreign organisations to appear before an inquiry. Senator James Paterson also claims that the Chinese embassy has raised concerns about the inquiry with DFAT.

I am basically seeking a response from DFAT about these claims.

Thanks,  
s 47F(1)

On Mon, 31 Jul 2023 at 8:11 pm, Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)> wrote:

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s 47F(1)

Grateful if you could please provide further information on this matter to assist us with a response to your enquiry.

Kind regards  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

*Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.*

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Media Liaison Section  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
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**From:** s 47F(1)  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 7:30 PM  
**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for getting back to me.

Thanks,  
s 47F(1)

On Mon, 31 Jul 2023 at 19:15, Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)> wrote:

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s 47F(1)

Acknowledging receipt of your enquiry, however we are unlikely to have a response to you tonight.

Kind regards  
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

*Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.*

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**From:** s 47F(1)

**Sent:** Monday, 31 July 2023 7:08 PM

**To:** Media <[media@dfat.gov.au](mailto:media@dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] URGENT: The Australian - Seeking comment on Chinese embassy complaint

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**s 47F(1)**

Reporter

Press Gallery Parliament House Suite 117 Canberra ACT 2600

**Ms 47F(1)**

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**s 47F(1)**

Reporter

Press Gallery Parliament House Suite 117 Canberra ACT 2600

**Ms 47F(1)**

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