

From: Tim Courtney
Sent: Wed, 7 Apr 2021 12:46:59 +1000
To: Jeff Pope; Tom Rogers
Cc: David Lang; Bernadette O'Meara; Holly Castro; Julie Igglesden; Louise Parrott; media; Andrew Johnson
Subject: RE: Laming Facebook pages without political authorisation [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi,

Just to keep everybody in the loop on this.

Media have responded to the Guardian indicating that we will investigate this matter, and this has generated further media interest.

Legal will look at the known FB pages (2 at the moment) and provide advice as to if this constitutes electoral matter which should be authorised, or not.

As I mentioned earlier, we have not had cause to contact any social media company since the last FE and a draft email has been prepared for the DEC to send to known social media outlets to re-establish operational contacts which is expected to be sent shortly.

Pending advice from legal and after the email from the DEC, advice will be provided to ELT on proposed next steps for approval.

I would note that even during an election period, matters similar to this were effectively dealt with by referring to the relevant social media company for resolution.

Tim Courtney | First Assistant Commissioner

National Executive | National Executive

Australian Electoral Commission

T: (02) 6271 4410 X: 21261 M: s 47F



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From: Tim Courtney
Sent: Wednesday, 7 April 2021 8:19 AM
To: media <media@aec.gov.au>; Louise Parrott <louise.parrott@aec.gov.au>
Cc: David Lang <david.lang@aec.gov.au>; Bernadette O'Meara <Bernadette.OMeara@aec.gov.au>; Holly Castro <holly.castro@aec.gov.au>; Julie Igglesden <julie.igglesden@aec.gov.au>; Tom Rogers <tom.rogers@aec.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Laming Facebook pages without political authorisation [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi,

Thanks for this – Louise if you can discuss with the authorisation teams please ahead of our 9:30 catch-up please.

Tim Courtney | First Assistant Commissioner
 National Executive | National Executive
 Australian Electoral Commission
 T: (02) 6271 4410 X: 21261 M: ^{s 47F}



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From: media <media@aec.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 7 April 2021 7:49 AM
To: Tom Rogers <Tom.Rogers@aec.gov.au>; Tim Courtney <Tim.Courtney@aec.gov.au>
Cc: media <media@aec.gov.au>; David Lang <David.Lang@aec.gov.au>; Bernadette O'Meara <Bernadette.OMeara@aec.gov.au>; Holly Castro <Holly.Castro@aec.gov.au>; Julie Igglesden <Julie.Igglesden@aec.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Laming Facebook pages without political authorisation [SEC=OFFICIAL]

FYI - ^{s 47F} from The Guardian is following up [her piece from yesterday](#) re Laming FB accounts.

I think there is a decent fresh story in it for her leading with whatever our response will be. My email to LS below refers, including the highlighted sentence.

Happy to discuss this morning.
 Cheers, Evan

Evan Ekin-Smyth
 Principal Media Advisor
 Australian Electoral Commission
 T: (02) 6271 4419 X: 21085 M: ^{s 47F}
www.aec.gov.au/media



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From: media <media@aec.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 7 April 2021 7:40 AM
To: Louise Parrott <Louise.Parrott@aec.gov.au>; Andrew Johnson <Andrew.Johnson@aec.gov.au>
Cc: media <media@aec.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Laming Facebook pages without political authorisation[SEC=OFFICIAL]

Louise / Andrew - see the below enquiry from the Guardian, which is an expected follow-up to their earlier published piece on the matter. A fresh angle of media scrutiny on the under fire Mr Laming.

The journalist is looking for a yes or no around whether these pages meet the definition of electoral matter and therefore whether they should contain an electoral authorisation. If the answer is yes, the question she's also asking is what action we will take.

The third option for us in terms of this media response is a holding line that 'we are reviewing the material with reference to the requirements of the Electoral Act' - with background info re the requirements that they already know.

The three different options for response will no doubt be categorised as 'AEC pursuing Laming for wrong-doing', 'AEC lacking teeth yet again', or 'AEC investigating'.

Whatever our interim answer is I think we should aim to give it by early afternoon - and I will give the journalist a line about a forthcoming response 'today'.

Let me know an ETA. I'm also happy to come up to level 6 to discuss. I'll provide a separate heads-up email to Tim / Tom.

Cheers
Evan

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: s 47F [redacted]@theguardian.com>
Date: Tuesday, 06 Apr 2021, 5:04 pm
To: media <media@aec.gov.au>
Subject: Laming Facebook pages without political authorisation

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Australian Federal Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Evan, as discussed, here is the story,
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/apr/06/liberal-mp-andrew-laming-used-dozens-of-facebook-pages-to-promote-lnp-and-attack-opponents>

And have a look at s 47F [redacted] tweets which have pulled out some examples from some of the pages which he says suggests disclosure required.
[https://twitter.com/s 47F \[redacted\] status/1379303705447591936?s=20](https://twitter.com/s 47F [redacted] status/1379303705447591936?s=20)

Also keen to know if paid advertising makes any difference or not to the requirement of disclosure.

Thanks so much.

--

s 47F [redacted]

Chief political correspondent
The Guardian | Australia

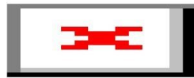
s 47F

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s 47F

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