

**From:** Jeff Pope  
**Sent:** Wed, 7 Apr 2021 12:59:37 +1000  
**To:** Tim Courtney; 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]

Thanks Tim, FYI emails has been sent to all social media companies about our re-engagement for the federal election so all good to go with making contact over this matter in my view.

**Jeff Pope | Deputy Electoral Commissioner**  
 Executive Leadership Team  
 Australian Electoral Commission  
 T: (02) 6271 4619 X: 21001 M: S47F



**AEC**

Australian Electoral Commission

Make sure you're **enrolled to vote**.  
 Visit [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)

---

**From:** Tim Courtney <Tim.Courtney@aec.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 7 April 2021 12:47 PM  
**To:** Jeff Pope <Jeff.Pope@aec.gov.au>; Tom Rogers <Tom.Rogers@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>; Louise Parrott <Louise.Parrott@aec.gov.au>; media <media@aec.gov.au>; Andrew Johnson <Andrew.Johnson@aec.gov.au>  
**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: <sup>s 47F</sup>



**AEC**

Australian Electoral Commission

Make sure you're **enrolled to vote**.  
Visit [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)

**From:** Tim Courtney  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 7 April 2021 8:19 AM  
**To:** media <[media@aec.gov.au](mailto:media@aec.gov.au)>; Louise Parrott <[louise.parrott@aec.gov.au](mailto:louise.parrott@aec.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** David Lang <[david.lang@aec.gov.au](mailto:david.lang@aec.gov.au)>; Bernadette O'Meara <[Bernadette.OMeara@aec.gov.au](mailto:Bernadette.OMeara@aec.gov.au)>; Holly Castro <[holly.castro@aec.gov.au](mailto:holly.castro@aec.gov.au)>; Julie Igglesden <[julie.igglesden@aec.gov.au](mailto:julie.igglesden@aec.gov.au)>; Tom Rogers <[tom.rogers@aec.gov.au](mailto: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 out 9:30 catch-up please.

**Tim Courtney | First Assistant Commissioner**  
National Executive | National Executive  
Australian Electoral Commission  
T: (02) 6271 4410 X: 21261 M: <sup>s 47F</sup>



**AEC**

Australian Electoral Commission

Make sure you're **enrolled to vote**.  
Visit [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)

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

FYI – <sup>s 47F</sup> 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: <sup>s 47F</sup>  
[www.aec.gov.au/media](http://www.aec.gov.au/media)



Make sure you're **enrolled to vote**.  
 Visit [www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)

---

**From:** media <[media@aec.gov.au](mailto:media@aec.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 7 April 2021 7:40 AM  
**To:** Louise Parrott <[Louise.Parrott@aec.gov.au](mailto:Louise.Parrott@aec.gov.au)>; Andrew Johnson <[Andrew.Johnson@aec.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Johnson@aec.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** media <[media@aec.gov.au](mailto: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](http://www.blackberry.com)

---

**From** <sup>s 47F</sup> <[\[REDACTED\]@theguardian.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@theguardian.com)>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 06 Apr 2021, 5:04 pm  
**To:** media <[media@aec.gov.au](mailto: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-llp-and-attack-opponents>

And have a look at <sup>s 47F</sup> [REDACTED] tweets which have pulled out some examples from some of the pages which he says suggests disclosure required.

[https://twitter.com/<sup>s 47F</sup>\[REDACTED\]/status/1379303705447591936?s=20](https://twitter.com/<sup>s 47F</sup>[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.

--

<sup>s 47F</sup> [REDACTED]

Chief political correspondent  
The Guardian | Australia

<sup>s 47F</sup> [REDACTED]

<sup>s 47F</sup> [REDACTED] [@theguardian.com](https://twitter.com/@theguardian.com)

twitter: @<sup>s 47F</sup> [REDACTED]



<sup>s 47F</sup> [REDACTED]

Parliamentary Press Gallery  
Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600  
[theguardian.com/au](https://theguardian.com/au)

Download the Guardian app for [Android](#) and [iOS](#)

---

This e-mail and all attachments are confidential and may also be privileged. If you are not the named recipient, please notify the sender and delete the e-mail and all attachments immediately. Do not disclose the contents to another person. You may not use the information for any purpose, or store, or copy, it in any way. Guardian News & Media Limited is not liable for any computer viruses or other material transmitted with or as part of this e-mail. You should employ virus checking software.

Guardian News & Media Limited is a member of Guardian Media Group plc. Registered Office: PO Box 68164, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London, N1P 2AP. Registered in England Number 908396