

From: s 47F
To: [Evan Ekin-Smyth](#); [Michael Lynch](#); [Matthew Haigh](#)
Cc: s 22 [Elena Dimcevska](#)
Subject: RE: s 47F enquiry - AEC's use of Tik Tok ads [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 18 April 2023 4:38:00 PM
Attachments: s 22

s 47C

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From: Evan Ekin-Smyth s 47F
Sent: Tuesday, 18 April 2023 4:28 PM
To: Michael Lynch s 47F; Matthew Haigh s 47F
Cc: s 22 Elena Dimcevska s 47F; s 47F
Subject: s 47F enquiry - AEC's use of Tik Tok ads [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Matt / Michael

Seeking comments by **COB today** on the below enquiry response. Will send to Tom & Jeff for visibility and approval early tomorrow.

s 47C

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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s 47C

Happy to discuss.
Cheers, Evan

Hj s 47F

The AEC is in-market with some digital advertising now as part of an early information campaign for the referendum - this activity does not include Tik Tok advertising. Further information about this early awareness phase is available at [Referendums: it's been a while... AEC launches information campaign - Australian Electoral Commission](#).

The AEC's advertising campaign for later stages remains in planning. These future phases of AEC advertising for the referendum will commence after the Constitutional Alteration Bill passes Parliament and then during the referendum period itself. The use of Tik Tok for advertising was suggested in an early strategy document prepared by an external advertising agency but these are considerations for the AEC to then make a decision – something that will be done as part of finalising our advertising plans in the coming weeks and months. We are aware of broader government considerations regarding the use of Tik Tok as a channel and this will come into consideration in a final decision regarding AEC advertising.

The use of Tik Tok as an advertising channel has been recommended to the AEC before. To date, we have not used Tik Tok during an AEC advertising campaign. However, we have engaged with Tik Tok Aus/NZ previously to ensure users have access to appropriate AEC information - at the 2022 federal election this included an 'election hub' that was surfaced to users on the platform during the election period.

As with all national electoral events, the AEC will run a multi-channel advertising campaign to help people fulfil their right and responsibility to vote at the referendum. We look at a variety of audience segmentations and cater to those segmentations through appropriate mediums. The referendum will almost certainly have the largest and most complete electoral roll Australia has ever had at more than 97 per cent of people enrolled. It is a phenomenal base for democratic participation that our current and future communication will seek to build upon.

Planning for the referendum advertising campaign, including determining the final mix of social media channels to be targeted, is ongoing.

Cheers
Evan

Evan Ekin-Smyth | Director
Media & Digital Engagement
Australian Electoral Commission

s 47F

From: s 47F

Sent: Tuesday, 18 April 2023 2:00 PM

To: S 22

Cc: S 47F

Subject: S 47F query

S 22

Hi there,

I am emailing with regards to a proposed advertising campaign by the AEC for the Referendum. As part of an FOI request, it was revealed the Department of Finance approved a trial campaign proposed by Universal McCann to run an advertising campaign. It had not received approval from the AEC and CAB yet as of early February.

The Department of Finance today told us that "non-corporate entities have not used TikTok for government advertising."

Did the AEC proceed with this trial campaign? If it did, why? As the platform has been banned on government issued devices. If it did not, why?

I appreciate you may need time to find an answer. My deadline is 1pm tomorrow (Wednesday). S 47F
[redacted], who will take over the story as I will be on leave.

Any questions please sing out.

Many thanks,

S 47F

S 22