

s 47F

From: s 47F
Sent: Friday, 12 May 2023 3:25 PM
To: EIAT
Subject: Re: [External] Proposed Referendum Update: Referral of Content from the AEC [SEC=OFFICIAL]
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Categories: s 47F

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Hi s 47F

Thank you for providing this information.

As always, happy to visit Canberra to discuss if preferred.

Kind regards

s 47F

From: "EIAT"<EIAT@aec.gov.au>
Date: Tue, May 9, 2023, 12:07 PM
Subject: [External] Proposed Referendum Update: Referral of Content from the AEC [SEC=OFFICIAL]
To: s 47F
Cc: "EIAT"<EIAT@aec.gov.au>

Good afternoon s 47F,

Recently, the Australian Parliament passed the [Referendum \(Machinery Provisions\) Amendment Act 2023](#) which amended the [Referendum \(Machinery Provisions\) Act 1984](#). The Referendum Act outlines the process for a federal referendum event and includes the role of the Australian Electoral Commission in the administration and operational delivery of a referendum.

As outlined in the Referendum Act, the AEC is responsible for the administration of laws that deal with certain referendum communications, this includes some communications shared on social media platforms. The AEC is providing you with the attached letter outlining the current legislative environment and circumstances where the AEC may contact you concerning referendum related content.

Further legislative updates:

In addition to the recently passed Amendment Act, the [Constitution Alteration \(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice\) 2023 Bill](#) was also introduced to Parliament in late March. [The bill has been referred to a Parliamentary Committee](#), due to report on 15 May 2023. Please note, the Bill has not yet passed Parliament, meaning the referendum is still proposed. Should the constitution alteration bill be passed, a referendum must be held no earlier than two months and no later than six months following the passing.

While a date hasn't been announced, the Government have stated their intent to hold the referendum sometime between September and December 2023. The exact timing is a matter for Government and the AEC is not provided

with advanced notice. The date will be formalised by the issuing of a writ by the Governor-General, which is the formal instruction to the AEC to conduct a poll.

AEC Information campaign launched:

In April, the AEC launched our referendum information campaign. This initial stage of the campaign is centred around 'early-education' providing information to educate voters on federal referendums. Please see our [media release available here](#).

As we move through the referendum timeline in the coming months, our campaigns will continue to gradually change focuses, including topics such as enrolment and voter services (how/where voters can cast their vote).

Throughout the campaign, the AEC will be engaging in digital advertising and media outreach, as well as working with community groups and other stakeholders, to educate voters on referendums. The AEC will be directing voters towards our dedicated referendum sub-site at <https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/> for further information.

We will look to keep you updated with key milestones as our communication campaign progresses.

Referendum resources:

As part of the campaign, we have also launched a number of referendum resources, including our [Referendum disinformation register](#), which will list prominent pieces of disinformation relating to the referendum process, the correct information, and any action taken by the AEC. Importantly, the disinformation register **focuses solely on mis and disinformation about the referendum process**. The AEC does not have a role in fact-checking claims about the 'Yes' or 'No' campaigns for the referendum, though we are responsible for distribution of a 'yes/no' pamphlet to each household where there is an enrolled voter. Content for the booklet is provided by parliamentarians representing each side, and published verbatim by the AEC.

The AEC has also made available a number of [Electoral backgrounders](#). These backgrounders communicate referendum and electoral law, particularly in relation to referendum and electoral offences, in relatively plain English for the information and guidance of interested persons. These backgrounders are not intended to substitute a careful reading of the legislation. Rather, they are published for general information only and should not be relied upon for any particular purpose.

I would encourage you all to familiarise yourself with the information on our [referendum sub-site](#), and of course, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at EIAT@aec.gov.au.

We will soon be in contact to discuss suitable times for a meeting with the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce.

Kind regards,

s 47F | Director

Defending Democracy Unit | Electoral Integrity and Communications Branch

Australian Electoral Commission

T: **s 47F**



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