

Severity Impact Assessment

REPORTED BY: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) DATE OF REPORT: 02/05/2025
TITLE / ROLE: Assistant Director, Democratic Institutions INCIDENT NO.: s. 47E(d)

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INCIDENT INFORMATION			
DATE OF INCIDENT	28 April 2025 - Ongoing	TIME OF INCIDENT	
MANAGING AGENCY	Department of Home Affairs	POC	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
PHONE	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	EMAIL	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

s. 33(a)(iii)

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION

- On **28 April 2025**, The Age newspaper published an article claiming:
 - o “Volunteers wearing Monique Ryan campaign T-shirts had been captured on video saying a community organisation, which has historical links to the Chinese Communist Party’s foreign influence operation, told them to vote for Dr Monique Ryan in the electorate of Kooyong.” The article claims that “in the footage, a woman says the instruction came from Ji Jianmin, who is the president of the Hubei Association, an organisation representing people from the Chinese province that has also been accused of working with the United Front Work Department, a central party agency that advances CCP interests internationally”.
 - o The video referred to in the article had been uploaded to a Kooyong community Facebook group on April 22, showing two people wearing Ryan T-shirts stating:
 - “The Hubei Association President Ji Jianmin, how should I say this, he required us Chinese diaspora to support her,” and that “Monique [Ryan] is an independent federal MP, her policies are quite suited to the needs of us Chinese diaspora. It feels like she can give a voice to us, so we want to support her.”
- On **28 April**, Senator James Paterson, Coalition Campaign Spokesman and Shadow Minister for Home Affairs, Cyber Security Cabinet Secretary and Liberal Senator for Victoria released a press statement claiming the “allegations reported in The Age are very serious”. And, that “if confirmed, this would constitute an act of foreign interference in our democracy”, calling that “The Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce..., must urgently investigate”.
- Articles about the video content and its referral to the EIAT had been reported in by the following mainstream news outlets:
 - o Australian Financial Review
 - o Sky News
 - o Sydney Morning Herald
 - o The Age
 - o The Australian
 - o The Daily Mail UK
 - o The Guardian’s election liveblog
 - o The Herald Sun’s liveblog
 - o The Nightly
- On **30 April**, the Australian newspaper reported that Minister O’Neil had decline/cancelled a plan to include 10 volunteers from the Hubei Association in her campaign team due to the reporting related to Dr Ryan’s campaign staff being influenced by the Chairman of the Hubei Association.
- As of midday **30 April**, The AEC had received 15 media enquiries from all the major mastheads referring to the issue first reported by The Age.

s. 7(2A)

s. 33(a)(iii)

IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN

s. 37(2)(b)

- 29 April 2025: The AEC released the following holding response to The Age:

"The AEC is aware of the article published in The Age yesterday, as well as the statement published by Senator Paterson. The AEC will review this matter in the same way that we review all matters that are raised with us. This includes referral for consideration by the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce. The AEC was not contacted by The Age for this story.

It is important to note that Australia has a secret ballot. Nobody knows how another individual votes. Your vote is your choice. We have also published advice to voters about influence in Australian elections, including a general reminder for all voters that every voter is responsible for making their own decision about how to vote and who to support at this federal election"

s. 7(2A)

s. 37(2)(b)

Released by Department of Home Affairs
under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

PLANNED ACTIONS AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

s. 37(2)(b)

s. 7(2A)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

s. 47E(d)

INCIDENT INFORMATION SHARING		
AGENCY REQUIRING NOTIFICATION	POINT OF CONTACT NAME	DATE OF NOTIFICATION
AEC	Stuart Oreo	28 April 2025
AGD	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	28 April 2025

s. 7(2A)

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s. 7(2A)

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Home Affairs	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	28 April 2025

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