



Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
by email: [pjcis@aph.gov.au](mailto:pjcis@aph.gov.au)

**15 June 2018**

**Supplementary Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security into the *Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Bill 2017 (FITS Bill)*.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide another submission in relation to this Bill. We refer to the background provided in our first submission dated 14 February 2018.

The proposed amendments to the FITS Bill released last week went some way to resolving some of the concerns of our organisation and civil society more broadly. Indeed media reports have stated that the FITS Bill has been amended to exempt the activities of charities. Nonetheless, clauses remain that appear that they could still capture the work of many charities and not-for-profits.

Specifically:

- The definition of 'foreign principal' has not been sufficiently narrowed, which means that the relationships that charities have with international partners or counterpart (sister) organisations could still be required to be registered. The definition of 'foreign political organisation' should be explicitly defined. The PJCIS report on that Bill appeared to recommend this, however no such rectification has been proposed in relation to the FITS Bill.
- It needs to be made clear that only a direct principal/agency relationship is caught by the legislation. The definition of 'acting on behalf of' has not been consistently narrowed across the Bill. While 'collaboration' and 'funding' are removed from the definition of 'on behalf of' in section 11(1) other terms with similar meanings still remain in of sections 11(1)(a), 11(1)(b) and 11(3).
- There remains an exemption in the FITS Bill from registration for commercial or business pursuits, and also for professional industry associations, but not for charitable and public interest work. This assumes that charities pose a greater threat to the integrity of public debate or political discussion than corporations or industry groups, which is false, and unjustifiable. PJCIS should recommend an exemption from registration requirements for charitable and public interest, not-for-profit groups.

We submit that the PJCIS should recommend explicitly how these issues be rectified.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a further submission.

**For more information:**

PAUL SINCLAIR | Acting Chief Executive Officer

*The Australian Conservation Foundation is Australia's national environment organisation. We stand up, speak out and act for a world where reefs, rivers, forests and wildlife thrive.*

[www.acf.org.au](http://www.acf.org.au)