



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security

Review of the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Bill 2017

Issue date: 25 June 2018

Bipartisan support for new foreign influence laws

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security has today released its bipartisan advisory report on a Bill to strengthen transparency of foreign influence in Australia's political and government decision making.

The Chair of the Committee, Mr Andrew Hastie MP, said that the Bill's creation of a registration scheme to provide visibility of covert or obscured foreign influence was given careful consideration by the Committee.

"ASIO advised the Committee that there has been a significant increase of covert influence activities within Australia. These represent a threat to Australia's sovereignty, the integrity of our national institutions and the exercise of our citizens' rights", Mr Hastie said.

"The Foreign Influence and Transparency Scheme responds to this threat by positioning Australia to counter attempts by authoritarian foreign states to exert improper influence over our political landscape", Mr Hastie said.

"The Committee's review was informed by evidence from eight public hearings, 92 submissions and 48 supplementary submissions. The Committee's final Report makes 52 recommendations, the most important of which is that the Bill be passed. Recommendations range from supporting enforcement provisions that provide penalties of up to five years imprisonment for intentionally violating the scheme, through to ensuring parts of the community, including religious groups and charities, are exempt from registering."

"The Committee also recognises that former Cabinet Ministers, Ministers, members of Parliament and senior Commonwealth officers continue to occupy positions of influence beyond their time in office. Accordingly, the Committee has recommended that former occupants of these roles should carry additional obligations and for a longer period of time. The report also recommends that these obligations be extended to senior staff working for Ministers".

"The Committee has also recommended that reports be provided to the Committee both prior to the Scheme's commencement, and 18 months following commencement. A full review should be commenced within three years." Mr Hastie added.

Further information about the review can be obtained from the Committee's [website](#).

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