

**From:** s 22 [REDACTED]  
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**Subject:** TikTok [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
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Article of interest.

[the-canberra-times-20230207.pdf \(stream.com.au\)](#)

s 22 [REDACTED] can I please have some words (just via email) that I can use if asked about government advertising on this platform and where and when we have used it.

Thanks, s 22 [REDACTED]

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497 words

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# TikTok ban extends to PM&C, DFAT and APSC as list grows

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## FEDERAL POLITICS

BUREAUCRATS working across the Australian government's top agencies are banned from downloading the popular app TikTok after years of scrutiny over its alleged ties to the Chinese government.

The Prime Minister and Cabinet and Foreign Affairs departments are among the latest in a long line of federal agencies moving to prohibit staff from downloading the short-video app to work devices.

It follows bans imposed on public servants and military officials working in the Defence and Home Affairs departments in 2020 and 2021.

Former prime minister Scott Morrison has previously said the Coalition government was keeping an eye on the app, and its Chinese owners, ByteDance, but ruled out banning the app in Australia.

TikTok has previously defended itself against the claims, saying it was being used as a "political football" over rising tensions between China and other nations.

But the top agencies revealed employees are not permitted to have the app on official devices, with some citing security risk assessments, in answered questions on notice from Liberal senator James Paterson released on Monday and last week.

The ban on Prime Minister and Cabinet staff also extends to other agencies within the broader portfolio, meaning those at the Australian Public Service Commission and the National Indigenous Australians Agency were also affected.

TikTok is also banned on official devices across the Foreign Affairs and Trade port-

folio, which includes the department along with Austrade, Export Finance Australia and the top secret Australian Secret Intelligence Service.

Staff at Tourism Australia, however, are excepted under the ban as part of their role covers social media marketing.

Climate Change and Agriculture department staff are also covered under the blanket ban on TikTok while those at working at the Infrastructure Department, ABC, SBS and Australia Post can choose to download the app if they choose.

A TikTok spokesperson downplayed the concern, saying the ban extended to other apps beyond TikTok.

TikTok has previously said its Australian data is held in Singapore and the United States and it has never been asked by the Chinese government to hand over that data.

But its owners, ByteDance, fall under China's tough national security laws, prompting concern by Senator Paterson that China's government could compel the company to hand user data over - a scenario TikTok has continually rejected.

Senator Paterson, who also sits on the powerful intelligence and security committee, said the additional agencies following in Home Affairs and Defence's steps showed the risk the app could pose.

"The millions of Australians who have it on their phones are completely unprotected from these threats," he said.

Under questioning by the senator last year, the Department of Parliamentary Services conceded it had not given parliamentarians any advice regarding the security risks it could pose. The parliamentary department's chief information security officer Toby Amadio said TikTok had not been assessed for any potential risks.



Senator James Paterson. Picture by Elesa Kurtz