



**NICK XENOPHON**  
Independent Senator for South Australia  
**AUSTRALIAN SENATE**

Our ref: NC – HEH/JR

Mr Grant Hehir  
Auditor-General for Australia  
Australian National Audit Office  
GPO Box 707  
Canberra ACT 2600

**BY EMAIL:** [Margaret.larkham@anao.gov.au](mailto:Margaret.larkham@anao.gov.au)

Dear Auditor-General

**RE: Advertising campaign by the Australian Government**

I refer to the Government's radio advertising campaign promoting the recently signed Free Trade Agreements in Asia.

An example of a radio advertisement (audio file) recently aired in Adelaide is attached to the email carrying this letter.

Referring to the 2014 *Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by non-corporate Commonwealth entities*, issued by the Department of Finance, I would be grateful if you could investigate whether the above-mentioned campaign breaches these guidelines, or indeed any other guidelines or legislation.

I note that the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) is yet to be ratified by Parliament and is the subject of much public debate.

In particular, I would be grateful if you could consider the following:

1. The Independent Communications Committee is required to consider campaigns and provide advice where a campaign is valued at more than \$250,000.

2. The Special Minister of State can exempt a campaign from these guidelines on the basis of a "national emergency, extreme urgency, or other compelling reason". Could you please indicate whether an exemption was granted in this case and whether your office has the power to look behind the veracity of any exemption?

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you would like to discuss this further.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Xenophon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**NICK XENOPHON**

29 / 10 / 2015