

Foreign Arrangements Scheme (including Victoria BRI)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Why has the Foreign Minister cancelled Victoria's Belt and Road (BRI) arrangements?

- The Foreign Minister has noted publicly [21 April, Media Release] that she considered that the arrangements were inconsistent with Australia's foreign policy or adverse to our foreign relations.

- The Minister is not required to provide reasons for her decisions under these arrangements as doing so could reveal sensitive foreign policy matters.

Handling note: Further questions on the Foreign Minister's decision can be referred to DFAT.

Will this decision do further harm to Australia's relationship with China? What steps is the Government taking to prevent retaliation?

- The scheme is to ensure a consistent approach to foreign policy across all levels of government and is country agnostic.
- We have made clear to China that this decision is not about any particular country or any one state or territory.
- We have emphasised our commitment to working constructively with China to discuss our differences.
- Our engagement with China will remain clear-eyed, practical and in Australia's interest.
- The Government continues to welcome foreign engagement and investment, including from China, where it is not contrary to the national interest.

What is PM&C's role in implementation of the Scheme? Was PM&C consulted before the announcement of the decision?

- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade works with states and territories, local governments and public universities to support implementation of the scheme, and provide the Foreign Minister with advice to consider arrangements on a case-by-case basis.
- The final decision on whether to vary, cancel or prevent a core foreign arrangement sits with the Foreign Minister.

- The Prime Minister does not have statutory authority concerning these decisions and PM&C does not have a formal role in administration of the Scheme.

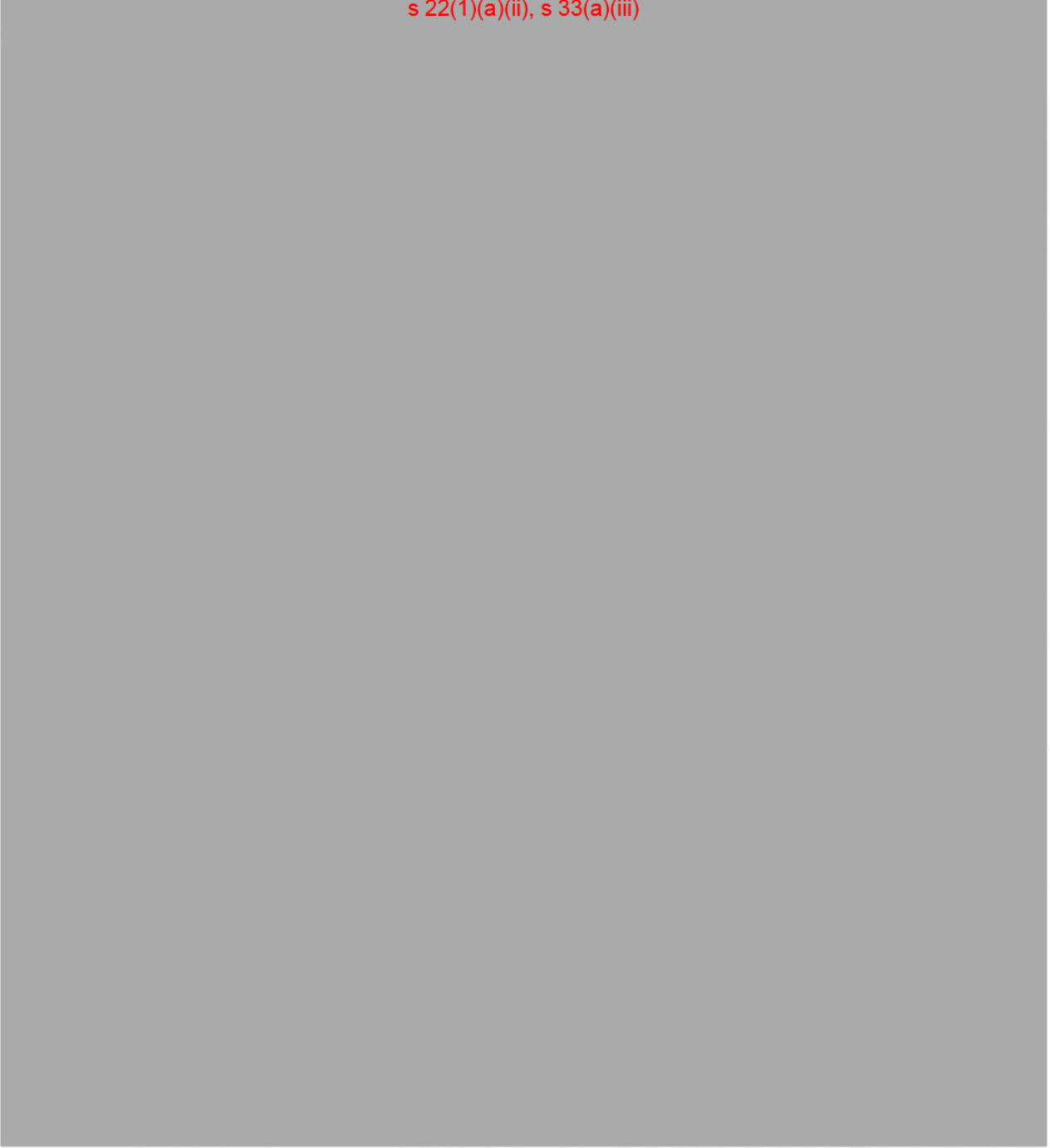
If pressed: Did PM&C provide advice to inform the Foreign Minister's decision?

- No, PM&C was not consulted on this decision.

If pressed: Did NSC or Cabinet consider the decision to cancel Victoria's BRI arrangement with China?

- I am concerned Senator that disclosing that information may disclose the deliberations of Cabinet.
- I would like to take a moment to consult with the Minister on this matter.

s 22(1)(a)(ii), s 33(a)(iii)



Media reported this week that the Federal Government could cancel Victoria's BRI agreements as early as next month. This would be the first BRI arrangement worldwide to be cancelled, |

s 33(a)(iii)
s 22(1)(a)(ii), s 33(a)(iii)

