

TIP FOR TAP BY LABOR SENATOR

ALP senator Sam Dastyari is again in hot water again, with reports that he had warned a Chinese donor that his telephone was bugged. He has been accused by the Federal Government of “acting against Australia's national interest”.

He denied that he had done anything more than pass on political gossip from journalists.

There were demands that Senator Dastayari detail his dealings with Mr Huang, from Attorney-General George Brandis and Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop.

"If the allegations reported in Fairfax papers this morning are true, then serious questions arise about Senator Dastyari, about his loyalty to Australia, about the extent to which he is under the influence of foreign interests," Senator Brandis said (29 November 2017).

The famous Section 44 of the Australian Constitution disqualifies any Federal politician from office “who is under any acknowledgment of allegiance, obedience or adherence to a foreign power.” It is this same section of which many had fallen foul over the dual-citizenship crisis recently.

Ms Bishop called on Senator Dastyari to, "reveal publicly each and every discussion he had with his Chinese benefactor and the action he has taken in relation to representations made to him by his Chinese benefactor".

"If they are accurate, it would show that Senator Dastyari was acting against Australia's national interest, against Australia's national security concerns and that would make his position as a senator untenable."

Senator Dastyari said he had previously explained the meeting with Mr Huang was to tell him he did not think it was appropriate to have any future contact.

"I thought it was a matter of common courtesy to say this face to face. Neither my office or I have spoken to Mr Huang since," Senator Dastyari said.

Mr Huang has previously denied suggestions he tried to influence Australian politicians.

Senator Dastyari [quit the Labor frontbench last year](#) after admitting that Mr Huang's company paid one of his legal bills.

Fairfax has reported that Senator Dastyari visited Mr Huang in October last year — weeks after he quit the shadow ministry. It says Senator Dastyari warned Mr Huang his phone was being bugged. In a statement this week, Senator Dastyari said he was never briefed by any security agency or received any classified information about any matter.

In September, he [apologised for allowing the company to pay off a \\$1,600 travel debt](#) which he owed to the Commonwealth. Senator Dastyari was the manager of opposition business in the Senate and spokesman for consumer affairs.

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Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull had asked whether Senator Dastyari's reported divergence from Labor's policy on the South China Sea was because of the donation from the Chinese-linked company.

Government documents revealed the [Top Education Institute](#), a Sydney-based company with links to China, reimbursed the Commonwealth after Senator Dastyari blew his parliamentary travel budget. He said no donors had asked for anything in exchange for the funds.

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