

Inquiry into the Impact of Social Media on Elections and Electoral Administration Survey

Ms C Hughes

Phone number: [REDACTED]

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Organisation name:

Your position or role:

SURVEY

Q1. Encouraging social media platforms to take more action against inappropriate activities (such as bots, harassment, trolling, spreading fake news).

Response: Very good idea

We appear to be fast becoming a State/Nation of dumbed down, gullible folk, who apparently lack the skills to critically think or analyze for themselves.

Fake news has become more dangerous, with the likes of QAnon conducting widespread recruiting campaigns via social media, while so many distracted by, &/or at home with Covid-19 restrictions. These far right loony conspiracy theorists prey on the vulnerable, uneducated, disenchanting, fearful folk, and this captive market are exposed to blatant misinformation, which, in the case of Covid-19, could lead to their own death, or others in their families/communities.

Totally selfish, and lacking in any form of civic responsibility, and potentially impacts State resources, in particular health/medical.

Q2. The government funding media literacy campaigns to help people know what they can trust online.

Response: Very good idea

While this is a 'very good idea', those who most need a campaign of this nature, are the most likely not to participate, as they're so far down the rabbit hole of misinformation, they are convinced they're the 'enlightened', and the rest of us are the disadvantaged ones!

Q3. Requiring public disclosure of all online political advertising (for example, webpages created by social media platforms showing all of the political advertising on their platform and who paid for it, or webpages created by parties/candidates showing all of the online ads they have run).

Response: Good idea

I thought this was already a requirement under electoral legislation? Is on-line not specifically mentioned, and why the need for above?

Q4. Requiring online electoral advertising to state who paid for it.

Response: Very good idea

Transparency essential.

Q5. Government support for independent and trust-worthy organisations that can fact-check claims or identify misinformation.

Response: Very good idea

Absolutely! Victoria has an excellent one now in RMIT who could be funded to better assist their workload.

Q6. Using independent organisations (e.g. the Victorian Electoral Commission) as a source of reliable information about electoral candidates.

Response: Good idea

It would be good to have proper bio's of candidates available via VEC, as those of us who take the time to laboriously research their backgrounds on-line, and via social media, can spend hours doing so.

I'm sure the majority of voters don't research at all, and make decisions based on even just the name, sex, or title of minor Party.

If the VEC promoted full bio's via an advertising campaign, it would probably make a difference in the number of informed voters, and perhaps reduce 'Donkey' votes too.

Q7. New laws requiring truth in political advertising.

Response: Very good idea

Should be essential, plus penalties for non compliance, along with public retractions/corrections appearing prominently, not a couple of lines hidden in the middle of a daily newspaper.

Q8. Are there other things you'd like to see the government do relating to social media or online advertising and elections?

Response: Ensure that Facebook does remove posts that are fake, contain misinformation, &/or blatant lies. Facebook, being an American company, and relying on automated algorithms, miss the mark totally when it comes to localised specific content ie Australian.