



Inquiry into social media and elections

Jacob Clifton

to: emc@parliament.vic.gov.au

22/05/2014 04:11 PM

From: **Jacob Clifton**

To: emc@parliament.vic.gov.au

To the Executive Officer of the Electoral Matters Committee,

Thank you for your letter of 12 May inviting Vision Australia to participate in your Inquiry to consider the impact of social media on Victorian elections and Victoria's electoral administration.

Please note that Mr Brandon Ah Tong-Pereira no longer works at Vision Australia. Could you please send future correspondence to me.

Vision Australia will not be making a formal submission to this Inquiry because the focus of the Inquiry does not specifically affect our clients even though the subject matter is relevant.

I will take this opportunity to reiterate a couple of points that we have made previously and I am happy for this email to be considered as formal correspondence.

Vision Australia advocates that The Victorian Electoral Commission should ensure that all communication technologies it utilises are accessible for people who are blind or have low vision.

The Victorian Electoral Commission should also ensure that all communication technologies utilised by registered political parties are accessible for people who are blind or have low vision.

This is necessary to ensure that people who are blind or have low vision are equally able to make informed decisions as part of the political process.

One example is that on-screen information whether it is broadcast on television or via the internet, should be verbalised when it is part of political advertising and political information.

Whilst it is not political advertising, a readily understood case in point is the ABC's Q and A program which continually displays tweets on the screen during the broadcast which are not able to be experienced by viewers who are blind or have low vision, and the presenter consistently fails to verbalise the "hashtag" simply referring to the "hashtag on your screen", which means that viewers who are blind or have low vision are not able to participate in the Twitter conversation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information on these points or others specifically relating to Victorians who are blind or have low vision.

Best wishes for your Inquiry, we will follow it with interest.

Kind regards,

Jacob Clifton

P.S In the event that the Victorian Electoral Commission or political parties require professional assistance to ensure information accessibility, Vision Australia provides professional Accessible Information services.

Jacob Clifton
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