

RESPONSE TO THE EMC'S
INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA
ON VICTORIAN ELECTIONS AND VICTORIA'S
ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

June 2014

1. Background

The terms of reference of this inquiry with regard to the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) are to look at:

- a) the impact of social media on the Victorian electoral process, focusing on how social media platforms such as Twitter and Google are used for political communication and whether current regulations regarding the authorisation of political content on social media are appropriate;
- b) whether online electoral advertising, such as Google Adwords, is appropriately regulated in Victoria; and
- c) how social media and new communication technologies are used by the Victorian Electoral Commission to engage Victorians and improve knowledge of electoral processes.

In context, social media is a term used to describe a suite of platforms/services used by people to participate and interact in a social sense. It is user-instigated (where the user is an active consumer) compared to a person watching television or listening to radio who becomes a passive receiver. Social media is also a relatively new phenomenon – it's less than a decade old.

It is useful to provide a short description of the social media applications currently in use by the VEC for the purpose of increasing public awareness about electoral matters (for more specific information about their implementation by the VEC, see section 4). However, there is a vast array of applications that are popular within the community that are not addressed within this submission¹.

Facebook is a social networking service through which users share their personal profiles and activity updates. It made its first appearance in Australia in universities in 2005. Since 2006, anyone has been able to register and use Facebook. Facebook carries various forms of advertising.

YouTube, allows users to watch and share originally created videos. It was created in 2005 and has had a presence in Australia since 2007. YouTube carries advertising at the discretion of the person who uploads each video.

Twitter was created in 2006 and is a socially interactive, microblogging site. Users send and read short 140 character text messages or low-resolution images called 'tweets'.

WordPress is a free domain service provider. It allows individuals to create web sites with a particular focus on blogging, forums and social interaction via posted comments or links to other social platforms.

¹ See Appendix A for Australian social media user statistics (April 2014)

Google commenced in 1998 and is the most used web search engine in the world. Users key in a word, phrase or question to find information on a given topic. Search results are returned based on a formula designed by Google. Search engines are not social interaction applications or platforms – they are merely as the term describes – search engines, which may deliver the user links to social media platforms. Google carries several forms of advertising (including AdWords).

Social media is having a significant effect on societal norms in terms of worldwide connectedness (e.g. we know more quickly about world events as they happen and can converse easily with anyone anywhere in the world in real time) and issues-based media coverage (e.g. citizen journalism, journalists tend to take what is ‘trending’ on social media as news sources). There is also a less desirable aspect to social media in that it can provide a level of ‘invisibility’ with users able to choose the anonymity of pseudonyms (e.g. online bullying).

In more recent times, social media providers have included advertising on their platforms to generate revenue streams from the large participating audiences.

Within the electoral context and user perspective, social media allows the online exchange of views and communicates personal opinion (from candidates and voters). It is also increasingly being used by organisations for the provision of organisational information/opinion and advertising. This can take the form of personal/organisational commentary about elections, candidates, election results and political issues amongst other things.

The use of social media for electoral campaigning purposes has presented some challenges for participants in meeting the requirements of current Victorian legislation, and for administrators in relation to the enforcement of electoral legislation in this context. These challenges are discussed further in section 5.

2. Legislation

A review of legislation in terms of its application to electoral campaigning via social media is appropriate.

Electoral legislation in all Australian jurisdictions includes provisions requiring the authorisation of advertisements and notices containing electoral matter, more specifically requiring the name and physical address of the person authorising the material to be included. This ensures a person is accountable for the content of that material. In Victoria, authorisation provisions apply at all times – not just during campaign periods.

Electoral matter is generally defined as matter which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election. This can include (but is not limited to) express or implicit reference to or comment upon the election; the Government or Opposition; members of Parliament; a political party or candidate; or an election-related issue.

Electoral offences in the Victorian *Electoral Act 2002* that relate to electoral matter include the publication of material that is considered to be misleading in relation to the casting of a vote by the elector (s84(1)), or material that is likely to induce an elector to mark their vote otherwise than in accordance with the direction on the ballot paper (s84(2)), and failure to properly authorise electoral matter (ss.83, 85 and 86). See Appendix B for the aforementioned legislation in full.

Those publishing or distributing electoral matter must also ensure compliance with other legislation, including defamation law and laws that make it an offence to use the internet to harass or offend (*Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*).

In some jurisdictions, including Victoria, the definition of 'publish' has been extended to include publication by any means including publication on the internet. This means that authorisation requirements apply to any electoral material published on the internet, including that on social media. At the time this was drafted, this element most likely contemplated the internet as websites as opposed to social media platforms, which eventuated later.

In Western Australia, s.187B of the *Electoral Act 1907* was amended in 2006, removing the requirement for electoral matter published on the internet to be authorised if it formed part of a general commentary on an internet website.

In South Australia, legislation has been amended to exempt weblogs, surveys and other forums in which members of the public may post comments.

In the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), the Electoral Commissioner has recommended that persons providing internet commentary in a private capacity be exempted from authorisation requirements in his most recent report on the ACT's 2012 election.

Commonwealth legislation exempts electoral material on the internet that forms part of a general commentary on a website from authorisation requirements.

A summary of Australian electoral legislation as it applies to the authorisation of electoral matter is included in Appendix C.

3. Issues per electoral event

Until the 2010 State election, there had been no complaints about social media/lack of authorisation on social media, most likely due to the fact that most of the current platforms were only created in the latter half of the previous decade.

The Victorian legislation provisions around authorisation and what is considered to be publishing work well with all but one of the most popular platforms – Twitter. The constraint with Twitter is that it only allows tweets that are no more than 140 characters in length; therein creating an issue from an authorisation perspective.

The VEC provided some information on how social media could be authorised for the 2012 council elections, but advised candidates to seek their own legal advice. The VEC advises that advertisements, including sponsored links, published online must also carry or directly link to an authorisation page.

The use of online platforms (including social media) by candidates and others for campaigning purposes must conform to electoral and other laws and terms and conditions of the platforms concerned. In particular, candidates should ensure that:

- all website/webpages are authorised;
- all election-related/campaign postings to Facebook, Twitter, blogs et al are authorised; and
- care is taken not to defame, threaten or harass any person.

Advertisements, including sponsored links, published online must also carry or directly link to an authorisation message.

Candidates should seek their own legal advice in this area.²

Websites, individual web pages, blogs and other forms of social media, such as Twitter and Facebook postings, containing electoral matter or content must be authorised. Advertisements, including sponsored links, published online must also carry or directly link to an authorisation message.³

This may have resulted in a higher awareness and therefore a slight increase in the number of complaints - five related to unauthorised social media posts on Facebook and Twitter that year.

2006 State election – No complaints made about social media (six complaints regarding unauthorised websites/emails).

2008 council elections – Four complaints about social media, but they were in relation to defamatory/offensive comments on blogs rather than a lack of authorisation (one complaint regarding an unauthorised website).

² Sect 9, p.3 *Campaigning, Advertising and Social Media Information* - VEC 2012, VEC website <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/publications/publications-local.html#4>

³ Sect 7, p.16 *2012 Local Government Elections Postal Candidate Handbook*, VEC website <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/stand/stand-forms.html>

2010 State election — Two complaints were received about the one issue at the 2010 State election. Four unauthorised (anonymous) Google advertisements (AdWords) appeared with potentially defamatory comments about an independent candidate and links returning the user to the Australian Greens website. The Australian Greens complained upon being made aware of the issue, stating that they had no knowledge of the advertisements and had not placed them. Google responded quickly to a take down request, but would not provide details of the account holder.

2012 council elections – Five complaints were received about unauthorised Twitter and Facebook comments (three complaints about an unauthorised website and four relating to misleading/defamatory comments made on a website)

The VEC's experience to date is that election-related complaints generally fall into two categories:

1. Lack of authorisation:
 - a person or organisation will usually remove material or add the correct authorisation once contacted. The immediacy of social media and the internet is extremely useful in this resolution.
 - where material is intentionally posted or distributed without authorisation, the same challenge exists, whether online or offline, in identifying the author.
2. Content:
 - robust debate often results in alternative views causing offence to a person or organisation. Social media allows this to happen in 'real-time' as opposed to a traditional media environment.
 - individuals or organisations usually respond quickly with 'take-down' requests where an apparent breach of the law may apply.

Although many complainants refer to 'false' or objectionable comments and seek to invoke section 84 of the legislation (misleading and deceptive matter), this section of the legislation is narrowly interpreted by the courts to relate to the actual casting of the vote. Therefore, very few complaints made in this category involve a breach of electoral law.

To this point in time, the impact of social media on Victoria's electoral processes with regard to authorisation has been negligible.

The second term of reference for this inquiry questions whether online electoral advertising, such as Google AdWords, is appropriately regulated in Victoria. In terms of adhering to the *Electoral Act 2002*, Google and other search engines or internet service providers can be contacted with regard to having 'published' material considered to be a breach of the Act (in particular with regard to false and misleading content). At the point of contact, they are considered to have been made known of the breach and are likely to be regarded by the courts as holding responsibility as a publisher from that point. Relevant cases include

Google vs Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Australian Competition⁴ and Consumer Commission vs Allergy Pathway Pty Ltd (No 2)⁵ and Trkulja vs Google Inc⁶. The VEC has found that generally, Google will remove content very quickly.

AdWords is Google's largest revenue stream and returns advertising in relation to a particular search term. AdWords are listed based on a bidding process, which means organisations identify terms of interest and the rate at which they are prepared to pay for advertising. When a user conducts a search, Google's service identifies the terms, reviews the current 'bids' and lists the highest three advertisers on the search results page.

As mentioned earlier in this section, an issue arose in 2010 with regard to Google's advertising service AdWords. An anonymous advertiser placed potentially defamatory advertisements relating to a candidate, which returned the user to the Victorian Greens website as its supposed advertiser. In fact the Victorian Greens did not place the advertisement.

In trying to ascertain the identity of the person who paid for the advertising, the VEC had to attempt to deal with Google headquarters in the United States. Although Google is obliged to observe local laws in places where it publishes, and did respond to a 'take down' request, it would not reveal the identity of the advertiser – citing customer confidentiality. The VEC had no power to provide a court order or otherwise compel Google Inc. to make this information known.

The electoral industry is not alone when it comes to complaints and issues with mischievous use of Google AdWords. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission brought proceedings against Google⁷ and the Trading Post Australia⁸ over a similar issue; sponsored links returned the user to a competitor's website.

4. VEC's implementation of social media and AdWord marketing

Electoral commissions in Australia have typically been slow to adopt social media as a communication platform. The primary reason for this is the absolute requirement to remain impartial as administrators of an election. It was held that social media comment might be difficult to manage and that electoral commission Facebook pages and Twitter feeds may become targets for inappropriate comments or activity that could damage the impartiality of

⁴ Google Inc. v ACCC [2013] High Court of Australia 1.

⁵ (2011) 192 FCR 34

⁶ [2012] VSC 533

⁷ [2012] FCAFC 49.

⁸ [2011] FCA 1086

an election. However, the experience has actually been that audiences tend to self-moderate and will round on anyone being particularly rude or unfair.

The VEC has had an active presence on Facebook since July 2010 and on Twitter since June 2012. For both platforms the ongoing strategy has been to leave each channel dormant outside major electoral events such as State elections, council general elections and State by-elections.

During major events, a schedule of engaging posts that are aligned with the VEC's other communication activities is drafted and approved by the Commissioner. Nominated VEC staff are also free to respond to questions and engage with others who post. The VEC simultaneously monitors activity on each platform for inappropriate content.

Outside major electoral events, the VEC does not actively post on social platforms. However, both Facebook and Twitter are monitored during business hours and enquiries are responded to as they arise.

To assist with the monitoring of content, the VEC uses the dedicated 'about' section of its Facebook profile to detail a list of terms and conditions for the management of the page. This list, which predominantly focusses on the need for posts to use appropriate language and to be about the democratic process (rather than the political), is promoted early in each major electoral cycle and cited in cases where content must be moderated or deleted.

A similar set of terms and conditions is provided in the description space available on the VEC's Twitter profile. However, as the space available is so limited, these conditions are in the form of a link that refers to a listing hosted on the VEC's website.

The VEC does include an authorisation line of its own on its Facebook page and Twitter profile, but not on any specific posts on either platform.

The VEC has only used Google AdWords during State-wide electoral events. The two most recent occasions are the 2010 Victorian State election and the 2012 local council elections. In each case, search terms were selected that indicated a user was after general electoral information, rather than political information. Furthermore, the advertisements returned based on these searches were engineered to respond to specific topics of interest such as enrolment, nomination and voting locations.

5. Matters for consideration

In conclusion, the impact of social media upon the Victorian political process to date has been negligible. It could be argued that Victoria's current legislation reflects an 'internet' environment only - due to the period in which it was drafted, which pre-empted the rise of social media. Therefore, it did not contemplate some of the issues associated with social media and its almost constant evolution. One of the key challenges apparent, given the form of social media, is how to regulate it without the perception that it is interfering with

freedom of speech and remains relevant to technology advances. There are also a small number of matters that could be considered as a result of this inquiry.

- I. Given the authorisation requirements in legislation were drafted prior to the advent of social media, there is some difficulty authorising tweets due to Twitter's limit of 140 characters per tweet. This may possibly be addressed by including a link to an authorised website in the tweet itself, but clarification of authorisation requirements where word limit restrictions apply could assist the administration of laws in this regard.
- II. Given the volume of non-party and non-candidate commentary, perhaps authorisation of social media should only be considered as it relates to comments by candidates and political parties (as proposed by the ACT Electoral Commission⁹), which by their nature carry more weight.

Further challenges for electoral administrators arising from the increased number of people posting 'electoral' comments/material on social media include the effective communication and enforcement of legislative requirements.

The VEC notes that other jurisdictions (Western Australia and the Commonwealth) have included exemptions from authorisation where matter published on the internet forms part of a general commentary on an internet website. South Australian legislation exempts material in a weblog, survey or other forum in which members of the public post comments on the internet. The VEC also notes that current legislation in Victoria exempts newspapers from authorisation requirements where they publish comments made by speakers at a meeting (s. 86(2)(b)). This concept currently does not appear to extend to an online forum or comments posted in relation to online newspaper articles.

- III. In some respects it is easier to deal with complaints regarding social media and the internet; it is typically easier to identify and follow up authors online than it would be to remove unauthorised leaflets and identify the author resulting from a rogue, anonymous letterbox drop. The exception to this would be in the case of malicious breaches of the Act. Anonymous identities can be set up on social media forums. Although Facebook, Twitter and internet service providers require the user to register a profile, false identities can be set up on any of these platforms.

Similarly, internet service providers may refuse to provide details of account holders/registrants to electoral administrators, and the challenges of effective enforcement of activities that take place outside Victoria may come into play.

⁹ P. 46-47, Political Campaigning, *Report on the ACT Legislative Assembly Election 2012*
http://www.elections.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/10438/Report_on_the_2012_election.pdf

Where malicious breaches occur and the author can't be identified, candidates/parties/complainants may consider if the malicious action had an impact on the result of the election, and if so to petition the Court of Disputed Returns to consider the matter.

Lastly, attempts to investigate breaches by anonymous identities, particularly where the internet service provider/social networking services are headquartered outside of Victoria, can be time consuming and may extend well beyond the election period. Options to address the challenge of timely enforcement are not clear. This is further complicated by the fact that electoral administrators have no power to compel the provision of information regarding the identity of a person publishing electoral matter online. Public interest considerations quickly come into play where investigations become elongated and involve cross jurisdictional legal processes.

Appendix A

Social Media Statistics Australia – April 2014 ¹⁰

1. Facebook – 13,200,000 users (according to Ad tool)
2. YouTube – 12,700,000 UAVs
3. WordPress.com – 6,150,000
4. Tumblr – 4,800,000
5. LinkedIn – 3,500,000
6. Blogspot – 2,800,000
7. Twitter - 2,500,000 Active Australian Users ([see calculation](#))
8. Instagram - 1,600,000 Active Australian Users ([see calculation](#))
9. TripAdvisor – 1,350,000
10. Snapchat - 1,070,000 Active Australian Users ([see calculation](#)).

All figures represent the number of Unique Australian Visitors [UAVs] to that website over the monthly period unless otherwise stated).

In addition, the use of social media is also rising with non-English speaking communities within Australia. According to Sino weibo, 71% of Chinese speakers within Australia were on the platform in 2012 (Sino weibo is the Chinese version of Facebook). Through being able to set language preferences on Facebook, it can cater for non-English speakers e.g. Facebook is also used by more than 95% of the Indonesian and Indian communities within Australia. See the table below for the number of Facebook users within other ethnic groups within Australia¹¹:

Ethnic Community	No of Facebook users in Australia
Italian	96,000
Arabic	62,000
Korean	56,000
Vietnamese	40,000
Greek	32,000
Turkish	22,000
Croatian	11,600

¹⁰ Source: Social Media News socialmedianews.com.au 1 May 2014 – Users in Australia.

¹¹ Source InitiativeMedia – based on figures provided by Facebook April 2014

Appendix B

ELECTORAL ACT 2002 - SECT 83

Printing and publication of electoral advertisements, handbills, pamphlets or notices

(1) A person must not print, publish or distribute or cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed, an electoral [advertisement](#), handbill, pamphlet or notice unless—

(a) the name and address of the person who authorised the electoral [advertisement](#), handbill, pamphlet or notice appears at its end; and

(b) in the case of an electoral [advertisement](#), handbill, pamphlet or notice that is printed or published otherwise than in a newspaper, the name and place of business of the printer or publisher appears at its end.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 10 penalty units;

In the case of a body corporate, 50 penalty units.

Note to [s. 83\(1\)](#) inserted by No. 13/2013 [s. 20\(1\)](#).

Note

Section 179A applies to an offence against this subsection.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b), a person who makes copies for distribution of an electoral [advertisement](#), handbill, pamphlet or notice that is published on the Internet is deemed to be the printer of those copies.

[s. 83](#)

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply in relation to—

(a) a car sticker, an item of clothing, lapel button, lapel badge, fridge magnet, pen, pencil or balloon; or

[S. 83\(3\)\(aa\)](#) inserted by No. 41/2010 [s. 9\(1\)](#).

(aa) a letter or card which—

(i) bears the name and address of the sender; and

(ii) does not contain a representation or purported representation of a ballot-paper for use in an election; or

- (b) an article included in a prescribed class of articles.

S. 83(4) amended by No. 41/2010 s. 9(2).

(4) Nothing in subsection (3)(a) or (3)(aa) is to be taken, by implication, to limit the generality of regulations that may be made by virtue of subsection (3)(b).

ELECTORAL ACT 2002 - SECT 84

Misleading or deceptive matter

(1) A person must not during the relevant period—

- (a) print, publish or distribute; or
- (b) cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed—

any matter or thing that is likely to mislead or deceive an elector in relation to the casting of the vote of the elector.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 60 penalty units or 6 months imprisonment;

In the case of a body corporate, 300 penalty units.

(2) A person must not during the relevant period—

- (a) print, publish or distribute; or
- (b) cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed—

an electoral [advertisement](#), handbill, pamphlet or notice that contains a representation or purported representation of a ballot-paper for use in that election that is likely to induce an elector to mark the elector's vote otherwise than in accordance with the directions on the ballot-paper.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 60 penalty units or 6 months imprisonment;

In the case of a body corporate, 300 penalty units.

(3) In a prosecution of a person for an alleged offence against subsection (1) or (2), it is a defence if the person proves that the person—

- (a) did not know; and
- (b) could not reasonably be expected to have known—

that the matter or thing was likely to mislead an elector when casting the elector's vote.

Note to [s. 84](#) inserted by No. 13/2013 [s. 20\(3\)](#).

Note

Section 179A applies to an offence against subsection (1) or (2).

ELECTORAL ACT 2002 - SECT 86

Authors to be identified

- (1) A person must not during the relevant period—
 - (a) print, publish or distribute; or
 - (b) cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed—

a newspaper, circular or pamphlet containing an article, report, letter or other matter containing [electoral matter](#) unless the author's name and address are set out at the end of the article, report, letter or other matter, or if only part of the article, report, letter or matter appears in any issue of a newspaper, circular or pamphlet at the end of that part.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 5 penalty units;

In the case of a body corporate, 25 penalty units.

Note to [s. 86\(1\)](#) inserted by No. 13/2013 [s. 20\(1\)](#).

Note

Section 179A applies to an offence against this subsection.

- (2) This section does not apply to the publication in a newspaper of—
 - (a) a leading article; or
 - (b) an article that consists solely of a report of a meeting and does not contain [electoral matter](#), other than comment made by a speaker at the meeting.
 - (3) It is sufficient compliance with subsection (1) if a newspaper containing a letter containing [electoral matter](#) sets out the author's name and the suburb or locality in which the author's address is located.
- [s. 86](#)

Appendix C

A summary of Australian electoral legislation as it applies to the authorisation of electoral matter.

Jurisdiction	Authorisation of electoral material	Reference
Victoria	<p>Authorisation requirements apply to electoral advertisements, handbills, pamphlets or notices that are printed, published or distributed. Publish means publish by any means including by publication on the internet.</p> <p>The name and physical address of the person who authorised the material must appear at its end. Printed material also requires the named and business address of the printer.</p> <p>These authorization requirements apply at all times, not just during the election period.</p>	<p>Electoral Act 2002 s. 3 Definition of 'publish' s. 83 <i>Printing and publication of electoral advertisements, handbills, pamphlets or notices.</i> s. 86 <i>Authors to be identified</i> (applies only during election period- issue of the Writ to 6.00 pm on election day).</p>
Western Australia	<p>Authorisation requirements apply to electoral advertisements published on the internet, if the electoral advertisement is intended to affect voting in an election and the advertisement has been paid for. The name and address of the person who authorised the advertisement must appear at the end of the advertisement.</p> <p>This requirement does not apply to matter published on the internet that forms part of a general commentary on an internet site. (s. 187B (2))</p>	<p>Electoral Act 1907 s. 187B <i>Electoral advertisement on internet, when publishing is an illegal practice</i></p>
South Australia	<p>Authorisation requirements apply to electoral advertisements published in printed form or by electronic means including on the internet.</p> <p>The name and address of the person, registered political party or third party, who authorised the advertisement must appear at the end of the advertisement (s. 115).</p>	<p>Electoral Act 1985 s. 112 <i>Publication of Electoral Advertisements, notices</i> s. 116 <i>Published material to identify person responsible for political content</i> Electoral Regulations 2009 r. 17 Prescribed classes of material</p>

	<p>Authorisation requirements also apply during the election period to published material that contains political content where the name and address of the person taking responsibility for the material must be included (s. 116).</p> <p>Authorisation is not required for material in a public forum within a journal published in electronic form on the Internet. Public forum in this context includes a weblog, survey or other form in which members of the public may post comments (r. 17)</p>	(section 116)
Queensland	Similar authorization requirements to Victoria except only applies during the election period.	<i>Electoral Act 1992</i> s. 181 <i>Author of election matter must be named</i>
Tasmania	Similar authorization requirements to Victoria except only applies during the election period.	<i>Electoral Act 2004</i> s. 191 <i>Campaign material to be authorised</i> s. 197 <i>Misleading and deceptive electoral matter</i>
Northern Territory	Similar authorization requirements to Victoria except only applies during the election period. Definition of publish means to publish by any means including on the internet.	<i>Electoral Act 2004</i> s. 3 Definition of 'publish' s. 270 <i>Offences relating to campaign material</i>
ACT	Similar authorization requirements to Victoria.	<i>Electoral Act 1992</i> s. 292 <i>Dissemination of unauthorised electoral matter</i> s. 293 <i>Exceptions for news publications</i> s. 294 <i>Exceptions for dissemination of electoral matter on certain items</i>
New South Wales	<p>Authorisation requirements apply to electoral matter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in printed form, and • displayed on electronic billboards/digital road signs. <p>No reference to internet in NSW State legislation but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paid internet advertising 	<i>Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 (PEEA)</i> s. 151E <i>Name and address of author and printer to be printed on advertisements etc</i>

	added to equivalent provision in Local Government legislation in 2012.	s. 151EA <i>Authorisation of advertisements on electronic billboards, digital road signs etc to be displayed</i> Electoral Matter defined s. 151B
Commonwealth	<p>Authorisation requirements apply for electoral advertisements, handbills, pamphlets, posters, notices and electoral video recordings. The name and physical address of the person who authorised the material must appear at its end.</p> <p>Authorisation requirements also apply for paid electoral advertisements on the internet but do not apply to electoral matter on the internet that forms part of a general commentary on a website (s. 328A (2)).</p>	<p><i>Electoral Act 1918</i> s. 328 <i>Printing and publication of electoral advertisements, notices etc.</i> s. 328A <i>Publication of electoral advertisements on the internet</i></p>