

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

Mr Thomas Danese

**Phone number:**

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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

Fake news spreads 6 times faster than real news. A lie told to one person affects that one person, but when thousands or millions of people are fed the same lies every day, they believe them. Their perception of the world becomes distorted and what results is a very dangerous situation. We have already seen how social media algorithms have affected opinions of 5G and COVID-19, it is not a stretch to say that they have a significant influence in elections.

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

**Response:** Very good idea

I think many people simply absorb information without thinking critically about it. They get their news from sources they trust, and when their sources lie they don't consider for a moment that they could be misled.

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:** Very good idea

I think it would expose conflicts of interest, which can only be good for democracy.

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

**Response:** Very good idea

Voters would be more aware of potential conflicts of interest or powerful corporations influencing public opinion.

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

**Response:** Very good idea

Misinformation is a euphemism for propaganda, and propaganda narrows the mind. It is a tool to further entrench the power of the powerful, and further oppress the oppressed. It is insidious, like cancer, corrupting our minds and we don't notice until it's too late.

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

**Response:** Very good idea

Corporate media can make any claim they want at the moment.

Q7. New laws requiring truth in political advertising.

**Response:** Very good idea

Anything is possible when you lie. People need to know the truth so that they can make the best decision they can based on their own judgement.

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

**Response:** Introduce a tax on the data collected from users by social media. Make them pay more if they want to take more of our information; we're humans but they treat us like livestock, taking what they want without giving us a choice. Because we really don't have a choice. We either keep our information to ourselves or stay in touch with friends and family.

Another idea could be to mandate features that allow users to set a time limit on their use, or give regular reminders or how much time they've spent on it.