

Making a complaint about online misinformation or disinformation

Misinformation and disinformation is false, misleading or deceptive information which can cause harm. It can include:

- made-up news articles
- doctored images and videos
- false or misleading information shared on social media
- scam advertisements.

Misinformation and disinformation can pose a risk to public health and safety, and our democratic processes. We have seen false information spread about the COVID-19 virus and vaccines during the pandemic. Increasingly, we are seeing false information being spread in some countries, including Australia, about electoral processes.

Some misinformation is deliberately spread – this is called disinformation – to cause confusion and undermine trust in governments or institutions. It is also used for financial gain, where people are duped into clicking on links in fraudulent emails or lured into financial scams.

Not all misinformation is deliberately spread to cause harm. Sometimes people share misinformation without realising it.

During a federal election, misinformation and disinformation about the electoral process may constitute a breach of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, for misleading or deceiving an elector in relation to casting their vote.

During a referendum, misinformation and disinformation about the referendum process may constitute a breach of the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984*, for misleading or deceiving an elector in relation to casting their vote.

How to check misinformation or disinformation about an election or referendum

To find or check information about the electoral process, from a trusted, authoritative source, visit the AEC website at aec.gov.au. The AEC website includes a [Disinformation register](#), which lists and corrects prominent misinformation and disinformation about the electoral process.

Make a complaint

To report misinformation or disinformation you have seen online, contact the platform on which you saw it. You can generally find instructions for reporting misinformation or disinformation on their terms of service or help pages. Click on the name of the platform below to see the relevant page:

- [Apple News](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Google \(all services\)](#)

OFFICIAL

- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Microsoft \(Bing\)](#)
- [Reddit](#)
- [Snapchat](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [WhatsApp](#)
- [YouTube](#)

Fighting the spread of misinformation

A number of online platforms – Adobe, Apple, Meta, Google, Microsoft, Redbubble, TikTok and Twitter – have signed up to the [Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation](#), aimed at combating online misinformation and disinformation.

This voluntary code provides safeguards against serious harms caused by the spread of misinformation and disinformation on digital platforms in Australia.

Responsibilities of digital platforms

Digital platforms that have signed up to the code are responsible for implementing measures to protect Australians against harm from online misinformation and disinformation. These measures may include taking action on information or accounts in breach of platform policies, fact-checking or directing Australians to authoritative information on key topics. Signatories are also required to release an [annual transparency report](#) detailing the actions they are taking.

Find out about the [commitments that signatories have made](#) under the code.

If you believe a code signatory is not complying with the code, you can [make a complaint to DIGI](#), the industry organisation that administers the code.