



# DEMOCRACY COUNTS

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Parliamentarians presented with plan to win back public trust

02.07.26

Journalists, former politicians and NGO representatives from across the political spectrum stand shoulder to shoulder today to highlight what's needed to safeguard Australia's democracy.

Truth in political advertising laws, electoral funding reform, stronger defenses against misinformation and increased funding for public-interest journalism are amongst reforms being proposed by the new Democracy Counts campaign.

The growing alliance of 35 organisations is seeking to strengthen Australia's democracy given only 13% of Australians think our political system is working well<sup>1</sup>.

"We've all heard the warnings about democracy in decline but the message we're bringing to Canberra today is not one of despair but one of action," said Campaign Director Tom Mooney.

"These are the reforms governments must embark upon to earn back the public's trust in politics and politicians, and to ensure all Australians can have a meaningful say in the decisions that affect their lives.

"Australia's democracy is not broken. But the rules that protect it haven't kept up."

Democracy Counts is a non-partisan alliance of groups with diverse interests, but a shared commitment to safeguarding democracy.

The group has taken out a full page ad in today's Australian newspaper and the Australian Financial Review to call for governments to:

- Support modern civics and media literacy education
- Implement truth in political advertising laws
- Regulate lobbying so that politics works for all and not just some
- Create greater independence for public service appointments
- Increase funding for public interest journalism
- Protect our nation from disinformation and interference through social media

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<sup>1</sup> [The State of Australia's Democracy](#)



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The reforms are backed by experts and voters, with Democracy Counts polling showing high levels of public support.

Truth in political advertising laws, for example, are supported by 81% of Australians and opposed by only 5%. South Australia has such laws and Independent MP Zali Steggall this week introduced a truth in political advertising bill to federal parliament.

### **PRESS CONFERENCE DETAILS**

10:45am, Thursday 2 July 2026

Mural Hall, Australian Parliament House

- Tom Mooney, Democracy Counts
- Parliamentary Friends of Democracy Co-Chairs:
  - Dai Le, Independent MP for Fowler
  - Jerome Laxale, Labor MP for Bennelong
  - Richard Colbeck, Liberal Senator for Tasmania
- Peter Greste, Alliance for Journalists' Freedom
- Lizzie O'Shea, Digital Rights Watch
- Claire Stutchbury, Local and Independent News Association
- Holly Rankin, advocate and recording artist (Jack River)

### **QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS**

#### **Peter Greste, Executive Director, Alliance for Journalists' Freedom**

"Democracy can only work if we all have access to reliable, trusted and independent sources of information, and when the decisions of government – apparently made in our name and for our good – are both visible and accountable. Good journalism ensures that happens."

#### **Lizzie O'Shea, Founder and Chair, Digital Rights Watch**

"We're concerned that the information ecosystem available on social media is fueled by division and mis- and dis-information, rather than giving people an opportunity to make informed decisions about their democracy. We need strong regulation and a strong regulator that can hold technology platforms to account and make sure that they're working in the interests of Australians."

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