

MEDIA RELEASE

AI will make the challenges facing Australia's democracy worse: Democracy Counts

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Democracy advocates are calling on parliamentarians to make their plans to renew and protect our democracy public, in the face of the risks presented by AI that have been outlined in Democracy Counts' submission to the Joint Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence.

"Artificial intelligence will make the challenges facing Australia's democracy worse," said campaign director Tom Mooney.

"While AI offers opportunities to improve democratic participation and public administration, we need to be clear eyed about the risks it presents and take active steps to strengthen our democracy.

"It is rapidly reshaping Australia's economy, institutions and information environment.

"AI increases the scale and sophistication of misinformation, disrupts the foundations of public-interest journalism, and intensifies power imbalances by concentrating influence in the hands of a small number of foreign technology companies.

"These changes are occurring at a time when civics and media literacy are at record lows, and public trust in political institutions is facing increasing pressure.

"All political parties and independents must come to terms with this as soon as possible and articulate their plan to strengthen our democracy," Mr Mooney said.

To be effective, those plans should include:

- support and investment in modern civics and media literacy education
- truth in political advertising laws
- regulation of lobbying so that politics works for all not just for some
- greater independence for public service appointments
- increased funding for public interest journalism
- protections from disinformation and interference through social media.

"Australia's democracy is one of the strongest in the world, but the rules have not kept up with the pace of change. Action is required to protect our democracy," Mr Mooney said.

"The best way to guard against the risks of AI is to ensure our democracy is on the strongest possible foundation for the future."

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