

MEDIA RELEASE

Scams and AI deepfakes a threat to democracy: calls for action grow as PM takes tech plans to US

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More Australians will be deceived, scammed and profited off by foreign networks using AI deepfakes unless the government's proposed Digital Duty of Care expressly deals with fake content, advocates warn.

Social media is where the majority of Australians now get their news and having access to reliable information is a key pillar of democracy.

An ABC investigation recently revealed foreign networks are increasingly targeting Australians with fake videos about politics to make money off video views,¹ while other deepfakes are often used to lure Australians into investment scams or buying dodgy products.

The Digital Duty of Care would compel tech giants to do more to prevent and take down harmful content, but Democracy Counts Campaign Director Tom Mooney said scams and deepfakes were an omission.

"The Digital Duty of Care is an important initiative which creates basic rules for social media platforms to improve the experience for Australians," Mr Mooney said.

"But we are worried that failing to deal with deepfakes is missing a crucial opportunity to make the internet better.

"Foreign networks are using AI-generated photos and videos to trick Australians into thinking politicians, doctors, celebrities and even everyday people are saying or doing things they never did or said.

"Deepfakes degrade the credibility of even the reputable content they share a newsfeed with. The threat to democracy cuts both ways – people might believe anything, but people might also start to believe nothing. Many voters do not even know what to trust anymore.

¹<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-09-17/ai-generated-slop-economy-brazilian-deepfake-alternates/107158050>



DEMOCRACY COUNTS

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“The Digital Duty of Care is an important step, which could also include basic standards for tech platforms in preventing and removing scams and deepfakes.”

Democracy Counts – an alliance of organisations concerned with the future of democracy in Australia – will make a submission on the draft legislation, calling for basic rules for platforms to deal with scams and deepfakes.

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