

8 December 2020

L1 Endeavour House
1 Franklin Street
Manuka ACT 2603

+61 2 6130 0530
mail@tai.org.au
tai.org.au

ABN 90 061 969 284
ACN 061 969 284



Dear MP,

I write to urge you to consider introducing truth in political advertising laws as a priority electoral reform. The recent election campaign, as well as national and international trends, make truth in political advertising laws a matter of growing importance for the health of our democracy.

Not just in Queensland, but around the world, misinformation – including that contained in paid advertising during election campaigns – is interfering with our democratic processes.

In August 2020, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed truth in political advertising laws based on the existing South Australian laws, with the unanimous support of the Assembly's Labor, Liberal and Greens members. The laws will come into effect in time for the next ACT election.

The laws establish an offence for misleading political advertising, and empower the ACT Electoral Commissioner to request that the person who placed the advertisement not disseminate it or retract it in stated terms and in a stated way. The laws are limited to electoral material that requires authorisation, and do not burden publishers any more than existing rules about defamation or offensive material.

The Australia Institute conducted special exit polling following the Queensland election. This polling finds that nine in 10 Queenslanders (87%) say that Queensland should pass truth in political advertising laws, compared to 5% who say it should not.

Please find attached embargoed results of that polling – which we will release publicly in the coming days – as well as a detailed report the Australia Institute published on the broader issue of truth in political advertising that was recently presented to the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM).

The Australia Institute is conducting further research in this area and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your staff to discuss this important issue. Please contact our Australia Institute research specialist Bill Browne at bill@australiainstitute.org.au or on 0423 477 469.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Oquist
Executive Director
The Australia Institute