

**THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENT IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING LEGISLATION THAT  
WILL BE CRITICAL TO AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE AS A DEMOCRACY AND  
A GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT RESPONSE TO THE GROWING POWER OF BIG TECH.**

# **FACTS MATTER. BACK THE MEDIA CODE.**

The media code is the first of a set of reforms designed by the ACCC to deal with one of our most pressing problems: how do we maintain a fact base for our public discourse?

This code is the product of their 18 month inquiry, a 650 page report, community consultation and industry feedback.

The package of reforms the ACCC proposed include measures to:

- Require social media platforms to value journalistic news content
- Increase citizen rights to the personal information collected about them
- Increase understanding of how digital advertising works

This year the pandemic taught us a lot about the limitation of relying on social media – with disinformation, angry voices and parallel realities directly threatening the public health effort.

In contrast, the operation of a diverse free press grounds us in fact when we critically needed it with public health briefings, context and analysis and informed criticism and debate.

Through 2020 trust in both government and media has improved, yet the media companies who delivered this information have gotten weaker with waves of closures and job cuts.

As the ACCC found in its inquiry, their business model has been ruined by the advertising dominance of Facebook and Google that leverage ‘user consent’ to collect our personal information so that companies and organisations will pay them to shoot their ads back at you.

The ACCC also found that the platforms benefit substantially from publisher content and the user data it generates, yet publishers receive no payment for this.

And through the pandemic, when their own networks failed, the platforms have grown in value by billions of dollars.

Around the globe, politics has been brutalised by the transfer of public discourse to private networks: the role of these platforms in subverting democracy around the globe: from the violent targeting of minorities in Burma and India to the creation of parallel realities that threaten confidence in the recent US elections.

The media Bargaining Code is an attempt to rebalance the equation – with platforms recognising the value of facts via a bargaining deal that would fund journalism into the future.

Providing it includes ABC and SBS, this Code that will go to the Parliament demands cross-party support: a clear statement from all our elected representatives that will stand up for democracy.

**IT WILL BE AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP IN AUSTRALIA IN BUILDING A STABLE PUBLIC SQUARE  
WHERE IDEAS CAN BE EXCHANGED, ISSUES DEBATED AND DIVISIONS MEDIATED.**

**SEND A MESSAGE TO FEDERAL PARLIAMENT: BACK THE CODE.**