

23 September 2020

Mr Craig Kelly MP
Member for Hughes
Via email Craig.Kelly.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Kelly,

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 September 2020 regarding my appearance at the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters on 16 September 2020.

I acknowledge your concerns and can assure you I did not intend that my responses to questions from the Committee would be interpreted or understood as comments on specific posts or individual pieces of content. Unfortunately, I provided a generic answer to a specific question which in the context of a committee hearing conducted over the telephone led to an unintended outcome.

My comments were made in the context of the ACMA currently overseeing the development of a voluntary code/s by digital platforms on misinformation and news quality in Australia. In June, we released [a position paper](#) to guide industry on the development of its code/s which forms part of the government's response to the 2019 Digital Platforms Inquiry.

Our paper identifies, non-exhaustively, chronic harms caused by misinformation on digital platforms, such as health and safety and electoral integrity. My comments reflected our position that platforms should adopt a harms-based approach and that acute potential harms should be dealt with by stronger and more immediate actions that substantially reduce the impact of exposure. A number of platforms have indicated they are increasingly responding to concerns about harmful content on their services and remove content they consider to be seriously harmful.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right and the ACMA recognises that neither platforms, the ACMA nor government should be the arbiter of truth for material circulating on digital platforms. Digital platforms will need to strike a balance in their code between upholding freedom of expression and limiting the spread and impact of seriously harmful misinformation. I certainly regret that my comments suggested that I had made any judgement on your Facebook posts. For this, I unreservedly apologise.

The ACMA will make public statement to ensure my comments are accurately understood within the context that they were made. I will advise you when that clarification is made.

Yours sincerely



Creina Chapman