

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian social media inquiry: Researchers highlight key issues ahead of Government's interim report

The Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society, established by the Federal Government, is due to release their interim report highlighting the influence and effects of social media on Australian society.

As part of its inquiry, the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision Making and Society (ADM+S) [submitted research findings](#) to the Committee, presenting insights into the impacts of social media in Australia.

ADM+S Associate Investigator at RMIT University and lead author on the submission, James Meese, said, "The launch of the inquiry provided a great opportunity to synthesise all the critical research happening across our centre, and provide the committee with a series of evidence-based findings to consider."

The ADM+S submission provided research on the limited effectiveness of facial recognition technologies for age verification, the decision of Meta to abandon deals under the News Media Bargaining Code, and discussed the relationship between Australian journalism and the presence of mis and disinformation on digital platforms.

It also provided an overview of the impact of algorithms, recommender systems and corporate decision making of digital platforms in influencing what Australians see, describing the use of novel research data donation methods to identify a range of harmful, and potentially illegal, advertising practices.

Professor Kimberlee Weatherall, Chief Investigator at the University of Sydney node of the ADM+S and a contributing author on the submission, "ADM+S research is providing much-needed transparency, and rigorous evidence on what advertising Australians encounter in their social media feeds, and how personalised feeds mean different people see very different kinds of ads. It highlights the importance of independent, interdisciplinary research to inform public policy."

The Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society was formed in May 2024 in an effort to enable Parliament to make social media companies more transparent and accountable to the Australian public.

“Parliament needs to understand how social media companies dial up and down the content that supports healthy democracies, as well as the anti-social content that undermines public safety,” said the Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP.

The Committee is due to present an interim report on or before 15 August 2024, and its final report on or before 18 November 2024.

The ADM+S submission was a collaborative process involving contributions from RMIT University, Swinburne University, QUT, University of Melbourne, University of Queensland and the University of Sydney.

The entire ADM+S submission to the Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society can be viewed [online](#) (submission number 120).

Its contributing researchers were: Assoc Prof James Meese, Dr Cesar Albarran-Torres, Prof Kath Albury, Prof Daniel Angus, Prof Axel Bruns, Prof Jean Burgess, Assoc Prof Nicholas Carah, Dr Robbie Fordyce, Dr Jake Goldenfein, Assoc Prof Timothy Graham, Lauren Hayden, Dr Ariadna Matamoros Fernandez, Prof Christine Parker, Dr Zahra Stardust, Prof Nic Suzor, Prof Kimberlee Weatherall.

[View the ADM+S Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Social Media and Australian Society](#)

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The ADM+S Centre

The ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S) is a cross-disciplinary, national research centre, which aims to create the knowledge and strategies necessary for responsible, ethical, and inclusive automated decision-making (ADM). Funded by the Australian Research Council from 2020 to 2027, ADM+S is hosted at RMIT in Melbourne, Australia, with nodes located at eight other Australian universities, and partners around the world. The Centre brings together leading researchers in the



humanities, social and technological sciences in an international industry, research and civil society network. The Centre aims to contribute to the mitigation of the social and economic risks in the development and implementation of ADM, and to improve outcomes and efficiencies in four key focus areas where automation is already well advanced: news and media, transport and mobility, health care, and social services.