



ABC Submission to the 2025 DIGI Review of the Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation

November 2025

Introduction

The ABC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Digital Industry Group's review of its Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation (ACPDM). The ABC has made two previous submissions relating to the Code: a submission on the draft in 2020, and a response to the DIGI review of the Code in 2022. The ABC's current position remains consistent with these previous submissions. This submission is addressed to the two main issues raised in the 2025 Review Discussion Paper: the scope of DIGI's reporting, and the role of DIGI signatories in the information ecosystem.

Dis- and misinformation constitute a growing problem for media users and the information environment. They erode social cohesion and the shared fact-based narratives that underpin democratic processes. Governments around the world are taking action to address the problem. Media outlets are also engaged in efforts to identify and counter it through measures such as fact-checking and content focused on improving media literacy.

It is widely acknowledged that digital platform providers also have a responsibility to reduce harmful content. Their spaces are not passive infrastructure. They influence the content users see as well as how its presented through the algorithms that recommend new and popular content to users.

The misuse of digital platforms to spread and amplify dis- and misinformation is, therefore, a problem that should not be minimised. It can't be addressed at the source without compromising the free flow of information. This means action must be taken through the operation and regulation of the platforms themselves.

For its part, the ABC devotes significant resources to ensuring that trustworthy content is readily available via digital platforms. It also engages in fact-checking and content aimed at increasing media literacy. In line with this, the Corporation supports industry efforts to do as much as possible to prevent the spread of dis- and misinformation.

Reporting

Issue 1: The transparency reporting process as a means of informing the public and a framework for the review of activities by signatories under the Code.

The ABC acknowledges the difficulties in defining and identifying dis- and misinformation noted in the Discussion Paper. The paper suggests that, due to these difficulties, it may not be possible for signatories of the ACPDM to report effectively on efforts to address mis- and disinformation. In response to this, it suggests the ACPDM could be limited to reporting on efforts aimed at combatting disinformation only.

Limiting the ACPDM's scope to disinformation may make reporting easier but would not encourage or require platforms to address misinformation. Given that misinformation will remain a serious problem across digital platforms, DIGI signatories should accept some responsibility for reducing its volume and impact.

Signatories could commit funds to research towards better identification and analysis of misinformation as well as effective countermeasures. They could also commit to testing and developing new countermeasures based on advances in artificial intelligence. Perhaps most importantly, platform operators could introduce and/or improve measures to make news and information from trusted sources more prominent in user feeds and content recommendations.

The ABC would encourage signatories to maintain their commitment to reducing both dis- and misinformation on their platforms.

Contribution to Ecosystem

Issue 2: What role (if any) can the Code play in facilitating an ecosystem approach to combatting misinformation and disinformation?

The ABC acknowledges that the problem of dis- and misinformation requires a response from government, media, and the industry. However, the corporation believes the ACPDM should be focused on raising standards across the current signatories. The media and advertising sectors are already subject to greater regulation in relation to false and misleading content as well as external reviews of complaints. The media also has long-standing codes for professional conduct. The ABC itself has the highest editorial standards and is subject to rigorous reviews by the Australian Senate.

There is no question that politicians, media outlets, and advertising may contribute to the spread of misinformation. As outlined above, however, the DIGI signatories also have a responsibility to help address the problem. The ABC would encourage signatories to focus on improving their efforts to protect their users from both dis- and misinformation and ensure that they receive as much trustworthy content as possible.