



An open letter to Angus Keene
MD of Australia and New Zealand, X

Sept 27th, 2023

Dear Mr Keene,

Re: Concerned recent changes to your user-reporting systems may have left Australian users unable to report electoral misinformation weeks away from a referendum

We write to report our urgent concerns about the ability for users to report electoral misinformation on your platform. There now appears to be no channel to report electoral misinformation when discovered on your platform. We do not believe the loss of this feature is limited to Reset.Tech, rather, we believe all Australians are affected. We know of five separate individuals across Australia who have looked and are unable to report electoral misinformation. We believe this change occurred in the last week or two.

It is extremely concerning that Australians would lose the ability to report serious misinformation weeks away from a major referendum.

A recent change to your reporting process appears to have left Australian users unable to report electoral misinformation. This is because the categories for reporting in Australia offer no option to report electoral misinformation. Users are offered inappropriate categories such as hate speech, abuse, spam, imitation etc. Previously Australian users could select 'It's misleading' about 'Politics' category. This may leave violative content subject to an inappropriate review process and not labelled or removed in compliance with your policies.

We appreciate that this may signal an end to the 'test' of allowing users to report electoral misinformation in Australia – at a disastrous point in time for Australia's electoral integrity (see appendix 1). Alternatively, it could be a badly timed error that you wish to quickly rectify.

We believe this breaches your commitments under Australia's misinformation code. Under Digi's *Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation*, signatories to outcome 1c commit to enabling users to "report content or behaviours to Signatories that violate their policies ... through publicly available and accessible reporting tools". X's Civic Integrity Policy makes clear that electoral misinformation is against your policies (see appendix 2). Users should be able to report this content appropriately.

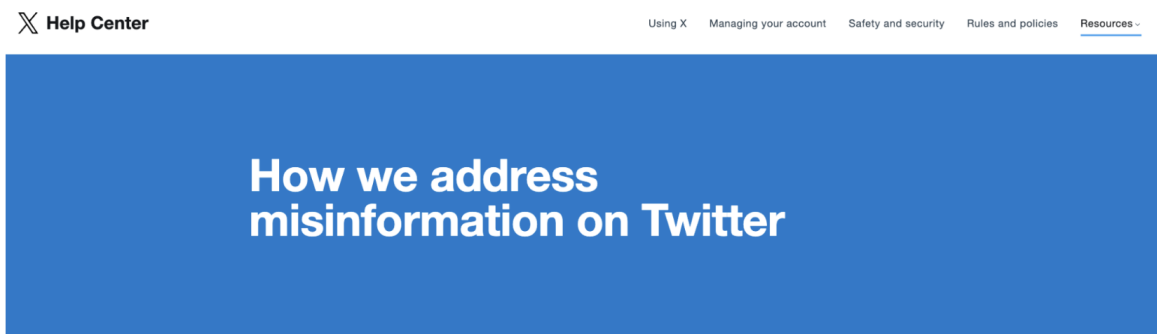
We look forward to a timely reply, given the importance of ensuring the safety of Australia's electoral integrity at the current time. Given our grave concerns about the risk of electoral harm and recent, publicly documented difficulties concerned stakeholders face attempting to contact X, we have decided to share this as an open letter.

Regards,

Reset.Tech Australia

Appendix:

1. Help Centre describing the available of Misleading Information Reporting Flow in Australia¹



And lastly, we're testing **opportunities for you to share feedback** with us and the community. While the actions we ultimately take against a misleading post are driven by our rules, the public conversation is better served with diverse participation.

- **Misleading Info Reporting Flow** - Some of you can report posts for containing misinformation. This is currently available in limited testing to some people in Australia, Brazil, the Philippines, South Korea, Spain, and the US, though we are exploring how to expand. These reports are reviewed and acted on independently from other post reporting flows (e.g. for abuse), as this test flow is used to inform our misinformation-related strategy and operations.
- **Community Notes** - Community Notes participants can write a note with additional information, to provide public context to the community on a post they feel is misleading. Available in limited testing to some people in the US. Learn more [here](#).

Also confirmed by X's feed in August 2021



The trial was subsequently expanded to Brazil, the Philippines and Spain in January 2022.²

¹ X nd *How we address misinformation on Twitter* <https://help.twitter.com/en/resources/addressing-misleading-info>. Image altered to include the help desk header, and only the relevant section about the misleading info reporting flow

² Twitter Philippines 2022 *An update on reporting potential misinformation on Twitter* https://blog.twitter.com/en_sea/topics/company/2022/update-on-reporting-potential-misinformation-on-twitter

2. X's 2023 Civic Integrity Policy³

Misleading information about how to participate

You may not advance verifiably false or misleading information about how to participate in an election or other civic process. This includes but is not limited to:

- misleading information about procedures to participate in a civic process (for example, that you can vote by Post, text message, email, or phone call in jurisdictions where these are not a possibility);
- misleading information about requirements for participation, including identification or citizenship requirements;
- misleading claims that cause confusion about the established laws, regulations, procedures, and methods of a civic process, or about the actions of officials or entities executing those civic processes; and
- misleading statements or information about the official, announced date or time of a civic process.

Suppression

You may not advance verifiably false or misleading information about the circumstances surrounding a civic process intended to intimidate or dissuade people from participating in an election or other civic process. This includes but is not limited to:

- misleading claims that polling places are closed, that polling has ended, or other misleading information relating to votes not being counted;
- misleading claims about police or law enforcement activity related to voting in an election, polling places, or collecting census information;
- misleading claims about long lines, equipment problems, or other disruptions at voting locations during election periods;

Intimidation

You may not engage in or promote behaviors that may coerce others to refrain from participating in a civic process. This includes, but is not limited to:

- inciting or promoting violent behaviors intentionally near a location where an electoral process is being conducted, including polling stations and vote counting locations;
- inciting the disruption or destruction of procedures, infrastructure, or election equipment that is necessary for someone to participate in a civic process;
- inciting others to harass voters or poll workers;
- promoting the brandishing of firearms near polling locations to intimidate voters and election workers;
- threats regarding voting locations or other key places or events (note that our Violent Speech policy may also be relevant for threats not covered by this policy).

³Relevant excerpts from X 2023 *Civic integrity policy*
<https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/election-integrity-policy>