

MEDIA RELEASE

Critical research shapes national response to climate and energy misinformation

The Australian Government has released a major new report, [The Integrity Gap: Restoring Trust in the Climate and Energy Debate](#), in response to the growing prevalence and impacts of misinformation and disinformation in public discussions on climate and energy.

The report from the Senate Select Committee on Information Integrity on Climate Change and Energy draws extensively on work from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S) and QUT's Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC), incorporating evidence across key areas including platform transparency, data access, media literacy, and regulatory reform.

ADM+S researchers from QUT, University of Queensland and the University of Melbourne played a key role in informing the inquiry through formal submissions ([ADM+S Submission 21](#) and [DMRC Submission 60](#)), expert testimony, and sustained engagement. Their work is directly referenced in discussions of platform accountability, transparency, and research infrastructure.

“Climate change is the defining challenge of our time, and understanding how information about it is shaped, distorted, and targeted is crucial. This report makes clear that investment in humanities and social sciences is foundational to any credible response,” said Professor Daniel Angus, Chief Investigator at ADM+S at QUT and Director of QUT's Digital Media Research Centre (DMRC).

Some of the evidence presented to the Committee was informed by [research](#) from the ADM+S [Australian Ad Observatory](#) project, which highlighted examples of astroturfing, transparency gaps, and the widespread circulation of misleading information during election advertising. It found that misinformation, scare tactics, and messages exploiting cost-of-living pressures on everyday Australians were central to both online and other election advertising.

The report also recognises the [Australian Internet Observatory](#) (AIO) as a necessary national capability to track hidden digital influence ecosystems and provide independent transparency and accountability of platforms.

“The inclusion of the Australian Internet Observatory signals a maturing policy response. We are seeing recognition that platform power cannot be governed without independent, national-scale capacity to observe and analyse it,” said Professor Angus.

Established through an initiative from the ADM+S, AIO is a co-investment partnership with the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC) through the [HASS and Indigenous Research Data Commons](#) and a cohort of Australian universities. The AIO is designed to provide independent, large-scale insight into digital platforms and influence ecosystems. Its inclusion in the report signals a shift toward evidence-based infrastructure for understanding and responding to online harms.

“For over a decade, humanities and social science researchers have warned that opaque platform systems can undermine public debate. This report shows that governments are finally catching up, but only if they are willing to invest in the infrastructure and expertise needed to act.”

Several of the report's central recommendations align directly with areas the ADM+S has championed and led nationally, including:

- Increased funding for social sciences research relating to threats to climate and energy information integrity including potential solutions. (Recommendation 6)
- Funding models for independent monitoring support (for example, via the Australian Internet Observatory) to track hidden digital influence ecosystems and provide independent transparency and accountability of platforms. (Recommendation 7)
- Broaden the Australian Curriculum 'digital literacy' general capability to strengthen media literacy through the regular Education Ministers' Meeting curriculum review cycle (Recommendation 8)
- Incorporate the information integrity framework with examples from the climate and energy domain in the upcoming National Media Literacy Strategy (Recommendation 9)

Read the full report: [The Integrity Gap: Restoring Trust in the Climate and Energy Debate – Parliament of Australia](#)

Media contact:

Kathy Nickels, Communications and Engagement Manager
ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society

Mobile: 0433 431 550

katherine.nickels@qut.edu.au



ABOUT THE ARC CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE FOR AUTOMATED DECISION-MAKING AND SOCIETY

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 seven 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.

Our Centre aims to contribute to the mitigation of the social and economic risks in the development and implementation of ADM and artificial intelligence (AI), and to improve outcomes and efficiencies in four key focus areas where these technologies are already well advanced: news and media, transport and mobility, health care, and social services.