



THE HON CLARE O'NEIL MP
MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR CYBER SECURITY

FACT SHEET

8 December 2022

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY TASKFORCE

Australia's open society, tolerance, cohesion and democratic institutions are vital national assets worth protecting.

We know that foreign interference, including through misinformation and disinformation, is on the rise. But we are also seeing mis and disinformation originating at home as well. Democracy isn't just a system of government, it's also a mindset – rational, pluralistic, innovative and above all marked by social trust.

That means we need to take steps to protect our institutions and cohesion, including by reducing our susceptibility to attempts to undermine democratic norms – however they originate.

We can start by giving Australians the tools to spot these campaigns and not be taken in by them. In part, this is a conversation about how technology is shaping the environment for these campaigns to take root, but also about how we can use technology to make it difficult for them to be successful.

We also need to examine what a new generation of initiatives in civics and social cohesion can do to build trust, resilience and confidence in how our communities engage with challenges from extremism, authoritarianism and other challenges to democratic culture.

The Minister for Home Affairs is establishing a Strengthening Democracy Taskforce to identify concrete initiatives to bolster Australia's democratic resilience and enhance trust among citizens, and between citizens and governments.

The Taskforce, will engage across Australian society including working in partnership with Australia's vibrant civil society organisations.

The Taskforce will draw on rich sources of empirical data, rigorous research and diverse perspectives to deliver a practical, innovative agenda for sustaining and strengthening our democratic resilience, in the near term and for the long term.

The Minister has asked the Department to begin considering the large amount of work already being done on strengthening democracy, including:

- the Democracy 2025 partnership between Professor Mark Evans and the Museum of Australian Democracy
- international work such as the G7's and the OECD's work on resilient democracies

- academic work on social capital and trust among citizens and between citizens and government.

The Minister will appoint Expert Advisers in early 2023 to guide, challenge, test and support the work of the Taskforce.