

Media Release
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Facebook Holds Australians to Ransom

Free TV Australia said today that threats from Facebook to prevent their Australian users from accessing or sharing news content is the clearest demonstration yet of why the ACCC Mandatory Code is so important.

Free TV Australia CEO Bridget Fair said: “What we’re seeing today is a global monopoly that will say and do anything to avoid making a fair payment for news content. Australian Facebook users are being held to ransom as a tactic to intimidate the Australian Government into backing down on this issue.

“This type of bullying behaviour is exactly the reason that the ACCC concluded that the Mandatory Code was the only reasonable way to even up the bargaining power between Facebook, Google and Australian News Media Businesses.

“Facebook is already awash with fake news and conspiracy theories. Removing trusted Australian news from their platform will only serve to allow misinformation to be further spread unchecked and unchallenged. Unfortunately Australian consumers will be the collateral damage in Facebook’s campaign to hold onto monopoly profits.

“The draft Code does no more than set an appropriate framework to allow fair negotiations between Australian News Media Businesses and digital platforms that would recognise the value of news content to those platforms.

“It is reactions like this that show how important it is that the Government moves forward with the Code and in particular that it includes the ACCC’s recommended non-discrimination provisions which are designed to protect Australians from these kind of punitive and oppressive responses from giant digital monopolies.

“We urge the Government to move to introduce the laws into Parliament as quickly as possible”, Ms Fair said.

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ABOUT FREE TV AUSTRALIA

Free TV Australia is a leading media industry organisation. It represents all of Australia's commercial free-to-air television licensees through advocacy, innovation and strategic advice. The members of Free TV Australia are Seven West Media, Nine Entertainment Co, Network 10, Southern Cross Austereo, Prime Media Group, WIN Network and Imparja Television.