

New research finds nearly three-quarters of Australians want better complaints handling from digital platforms

New research from the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) has revealed that almost three in four Australians agree that it needs to be easier to make a complaint and to get their issues resolved when dealing with digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, eBay, and Service NSW.

A nationally representative survey of 1,000 Australians conducted by the peak body for communications consumers using Ipsos' Digital Omnibus online survey found that 74% of respondents think that it needs to be easier for people to make a complaint, and 78% think that it needs to be easier for people to get their issues resolved on digital platforms. Digital platforms were defined as websites and apps such as social media, Government online services, job search sites, dating apps, messaging apps and online marketplaces. ACCAN's polling also shows that 60% of Australians feel there's not much they can do when something goes wrong online.

"Digital platforms are now a part of our everyday lives, from online marketplaces and job search sites to social media sites and dating apps. But the fact is that when things go wrong, making a complaint or having an issue resolved with the tech giants can feel like shouting into a void," said ACCAN Acting CEO Andrew Williams.

"If you experience an issue on a digital platform, you shouldn't have to navigate through the maze of 'providing feedback', only to hear nothing back from the platform. Making a complaint should be a straightforward process and the digital platforms should follow up with users who have made a report to explain what actions were taken."

These insights come as the tech industry is being tasked with creating a series of codes to regulate certain types of harmful online material as part of the Online Safety Act 2021.

ACCAN's research found that:

- 74% of Australians think that it needs to be easier for people to make a complaint
- 78% think that it needs to be easier for people to get their issues resolved
- 60% feel like there's not much they can do when something goes wrong online
- 79% think that digital platforms should be responsible for the content on their sites
- 79% believe more needs to be done to protect people's safety and privacy online
- 47% do not trust digital platforms to act in their best interests
- Only 27% believe the government is doing enough to make sure digital platforms do the right thing

"While it's positive to see the government is eager to introduce new rules to protect Australians online, it's vital that people have their voices heard by decision-makers during the process," said Mr Williams.

ACCAN believes this is best achieved through the Government and the digital platform industry working together to support an organisation to provide the community voice on digital platforms. Currently, Australia has no organisation that represents community interests on digital platform issues.

"In order for the technology industry and the government to build trust in digital platforms, the very people who use the platforms have to be brought into the conversation."

"Importantly, we need to consider the broad perspectives of People with Disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, First Nations peoples, young people, seniors, and people from regional, rural, and remote communities. As the peak body for communications consumers, this is an approach that ACCAN has championed in the telecommunications space for over a decade," explained Mr Williams.



Note to Editors

This data collection was conducted by ACCAN, using Ipsos' Digital Omnibus online survey. Terms and Conditions of Ipsos' Digital platform use: <https://www.ipsos.digital/terms-and-conditions>

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