

AFFECTED GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

Organisation	Website URL	Facebook URL
Bureau of Meteorology	http://www.bom.gov.au	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/bureauofmeteo
logy">https://www.facebook.com/bureauofmeteo logy
Fire and Rescue NSW		https://www.facebook.com/frnsw
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA		https://www.facebook.com/dfeswa
South Australia Health		https://www.facebook.com/sahealth
Queensland Health		https://www.facebook.com/QLDHealth
ACT Government		https://www.facebook.com/ACTGov
ACT Health		
City of Launceston	http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/CityOfLaunceston
Official">https://www.facebook.com/CityOfLaunceston Official
Brisbane City Council	http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/BrisbaneCityCoun
cil">https://www.facebook.com/BrisbaneCityCoun cil
Translink Queensland		

AFFECTED NON-GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Organisation	Website URL	Facebook URL
Conservation Council ACT Region		
Australian Unions	https://www.australianunions.org.au/	https://www.facebook.com/AustralianUnions/
Good Food		
Deaf Australia		
Royal Australian Hospital		
South Australia Health		
DV Connect (Domestic Violence)		https://www.facebook.com/DVConnect
Australian Council of Trade Unions	https://www.actu.org.au/	
Women's Legal Service NSW		

Bowel Cancer Australia		
1800 Respect		
Women's Legal Service Tasmania		
Hobart Women's Shelter		
Sutherland Shire Family Services		
Neighbourhood Watch		
National Debt Helpline		
Australian Women Against Violence Alliance		
Stopping Family Violence		
Sacred Heart Mission		
Council to Homeless Persons		
Mission Australia		
MSF Australia		
The Medical Journal of Australia		
Australian Wildlife Conservancy		
Australian Rescue Helicopter Services		
University of Southern Queensland		
Monash Uni		
Sydney Theatre Company		
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre		
UNICEF Australia		
Edward River Council		
AFL Womens		
WWF Australia		
Victorian Council of Social Services		
UnityWater		
QUT Guild		
CCIQ (Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland)		
Queensland Maritime Museum		

From: s22
To: s22; [Dickson, Tom](#); s22
Cc: [LDO Mandatory Codes](#); [MG MCD Competition](#)
Subject: RE: Digital Platforms Code - Facebooks removal of news [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive, ACCESS=Legislative Secrecy]
Date: Thursday, 18 February 2021 11:21:23 AM

~~OFFICIAL:Sensitive
Legislative Secrecy~~

Hi s22

This is really useful

We've been asked to do a list of

- a) Government websites
- b) Non-news community organisations

That have been blocked.

If you have any more specific examples of these in the next 10 mins or so – can you send through to s22 and me.

s22

s22

Senior Adviser | Competition Unit | Market Conduct Division
The Treasury, 1 Langton Cres, Parkes, ACT 2600

p s22

s22

s22

~~OFFICIAL:Sensitive
Legislative Secrecy~~

From: s22

Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 10:24 AM

To: Dickson, Tom

Cc: LDO Mandatory Codes ; MG MCD Competition

Subject: FW: Digital Platforms Code - Facebooks removal of news [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive, ACCESS=Legislative Secrecy]

~~OFFICIAL:Sensitive
Legislative Secrecy~~

Hey MCD,

We've been looking at our Facebook accounts (as I'm sure you have been) finding out the exact details of Facebook's removal of news. It is below if it would be helpful.

We are standing by if you want our assistance with briefing.

Thanks

s22

Facebook has blocked news content from their platform, as of last night:

- Links from major news articles and blogs **cannot** be posted by a user onto their wall or a friends wall or posted into a group wall.
- Instead a pop-up occurs saying Australian news content cannot be posted due to the Government's new law.
- The pop-up says Australian news content is blocked globally – i.e. someone in the UK cannot see posts from the Australian either.
 - o However in Australia – international news has also been blocked i.e. NY Times and Washington Post, but this clearly still remains accessible in US and UK.
- Pages that have been blocked include:
 - o traditional news websites such as ABC and the Australian;
 - o many government pages – including ACT Health, Hobart Women's Domestic

- Violence shelter and a lot of the COVID related information;
- o satire publications including the Beetota Advocate and the Chaser;
- o some pretty niche publications which are borderline news i.e. Vogue, Top Gear, Scientific American, Australian Geographic *and amusingly, Facebooks own Facebook page (see attached image);*
- However news links **can be** message directly to one user, or in a group chat on messenger.
- Almost all existing news links have been removed – i.e. any news links someone once posted are no longer on the site.
- The few surviving news links to articles on Facebook are still functional.
- Institutional news page (i.e. the Guardian or Australian’s Facebook accounts) still exist, but all content has been removed from them – so they seem pretty useless now. Some news businesses are posting new material such as polls for their audiences and adds for their various shows, and this is not being prevented by Facebook.

s22



A live blog being run by the Guardian with examples of what has been removed is accessible [here](#).

s22

Analyst

Treasury, Law Design Office

Tel. s22

s22

[@treasury.gov.au](mailto:s22@treasury.gov.au)

~~OFFICIAL: Sensitive
Legislative Secrecy~~

From: [Penprase, James](#)
To: [Dickson, Tom](#); s22
Cc: s22
Subject: RE: List [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Date: Thursday, 18 February 2021 11:39:18 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi Tom, s22

This is a list of non-news organisations that have been reported to have been affected Facebook's decision to cease providing news content. This is not a comprehensive list, but based on what we could find in the time specified.

As mentioned, we don't generally have contacts in any of these organisations (they are not without our normal portfolio remit), so you'd need to cold call to verify. However, we've included the links to the non-operable Facebook pages (final column in the table) which would seem to provide a fairly strong indication that they are, in fact, impacted.

We also note that there are reports of retailers being impacted (Harvey Norman) and the ACTU.

Organisation	Website URL	Facebook URL
Bureau of Meteorology	http://www.bom.gov.au	https://www.facebook.com/bureauofmeteorology
Fire and Rescue NSW		https://www.facebook.com/frnsw
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA		https://www.facebook.com/dfeswa
South Australia Health		https://www.facebook.com/sahealth
Queensland Health		https://www.facebook.com/QLDHealth
ACT Government		https://www.facebook.com/ACTGov
ACT Health		
Conservation Council ACT Region		
City of Launceston	http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au	https://www.facebook.com/CityOfLauncestonOfficial
Brisbane City Council	http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au	https://www.facebook.com/BrisbaneCityCouncil
Australian Unions	https://www.australianunions.org.au/	https://www.facebook.com/AustralianUnions/
Good Food Deaf Australia Royal Australian Hospital South Australia Health DV Connect (Domestic Violence)		https://www.facebook.com/DVConnect
Facebook		https://www.facebook.com/facebook
Time Out		https://www.facebook.com/TimeOutSydney/

Sydney

Broadsheet

<https://www.facebook.com/broadsheet.sydney>

Sydney

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From: Dickson, Tom
Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 11:13 AM
To: Penprase, James
Cc: s22
Subject: RE: List [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Thanks James, if you could cc s22 too please that would be great.

Tom Dickson

Assistant Secretary, Branch Head
Corporations Branch
Market Conduct Division, Markets Group
[The Treasury](#), Langton Crescent, Canberra, ACT, 2600
P +61 2 6263 2868
M s22

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: Penprase, James <James.Penprase@INFRASTRUCTURE.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 11:10 AM
To: Dickson, Tom <Tom.Dickson@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
Subject: RE: List [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Working up a list now, will have it to you by 11:30.



James Penprase

Assistant Secretary
Broadcasters and Content Reform Taskforce
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
P +61 2 6271 1932
M s22
james.penprase@communications.gov.au
2 Phillip Law Street, Canberra ACT 2601
GPO Box 2154 Canberra, ACT 2601

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

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From: s22
 To: s22
 Cc: s22
 Subject: RE: List of pages blocked by Facebook. [SEC=OFFICIAL]
 Date: Thursday, 18 February 2021 2:22:23 PM

OFFICIAL

Hi s22
 Just a clarification re ABC news (and some other news websites e.g. SMH AFR etc) – note access to posts (with links to news articles) seem at the moment to be blocked for users that are logged into facebook, but still accessible to those not logged in to their account when accessing facebook.

s22

OFFICIAL

From: s22
 Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 2:04 PM
 To: s22
 Cc: MG MCD Competition ; Dickson, Tom ; Jeremenko, Robert ; Quinn, Meghan ; LDO Mandatory Codes
 Subject: RE: List of pages blocked by Facebook. [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22
 Here is an updated list for the Government websites – all of these ones appear to have been restored by Facebook – but we have included links to verification that is available of them having been blocked this morning.
 The info previously provided on blocked community group websites was also of course point in time – many of them now have been restored as well. We don't have verification for most of these.
 Please let us know if you need anything further on this.
 Thanks

s22
 AFFECTED GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

Organisation	Website URL	Facebook URL	Outage Verified/restored?
ABC News	https://www.abc.net.au/news/	https://www.facebook.com/pg/abcnews.au/posts/?ref=page_internal	Restored (Verified-ABC News)
Bureau of Meteorology	http://www.bom.gov.au	https://www.facebook.com/bureauofmeteorology	Restored (Verified – screenshot Guardian)
Fire and Rescue NSW	https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/	https://www.facebook.com/frnsw	Restored (Verified – 9 news screenshot)
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA	https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx	https://www.facebook.com/dfeswa	Restored – Verified (their Facebook post)
South Australia Health	https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/home/home	https://www.facebook.com/sahealth	Restored (Media reported outage)
Queensland Health	https://www.health.qld.gov.au/	https://www.facebook.com/QLDHealth	Restored (Verified – screenshot Brisbane Times)
ACT Government	https://www.act.gov.au/	https://www.facebook.com/ACTGov	Restored (Media reported outage)
ACT Health	https://health.act.gov.au/	https://www.facebook.com/ACTHealthDirectorate/	Restored (verified – screenshot SMH)
City of Launceston	http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au	https://www.facebook.com/CityOfLauncestonOfficial	Restored (Media reported outage)
Brisbane City Council	http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au	https://www.facebook.com/BrisbaneCityCouncil	Restored (Media reported outage)
Translink Queensland	https://translink.com.au/	https://www.facebook.com/TransLinkQLD/	Restored (Media reported outage)

s22
 Senior Adviser | Competition Unit | Market Conduct Division
 The Treasury, 1 Langton Cres, Parkes, ACT 2600

P s22 | M s22
 s22

OFFICIAL

From: s22 <@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
 Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 1:28 PM
 To: s22 <@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
 Cc: MG MCD Competition <MGMCDCompetition@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Dickson, Tom <Tom.Dickson@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
 Subject: RE: List of pages blocked by Facebook. [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks –

OFFICIAL

From: s22 <@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
 Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 1:11 PM
 To: s22 <@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
 Cc: MG MCD Competition <MGMCDCompetition@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Dickson, Tom <Tom.Dickson@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
 Subject: RE: List of pages blocked by Facebook. [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s22

A number of these have been restored, we are checking which ones are still blocked. Note Facebook's quote about this below.

What do you need from us in terms of 'verification' of ones that are no longer blocked? We can go back to check which ones were mentioned/screenshotted in media reports if needed?

s22

The Sydney Morning Herald have [quoted Facebook](#) in relation to pages being inadvertently impacted.

In a statement, Facebook said government pages should not have been impacted by the ban.

"The actions we're taking are focused on restricting publishers and people in Australia from sharing or viewing Australian and international news content," the Facebook spokesperson said.

"As the law does not provide clear guidance on the definition of news content, we have taken a broad definition in order to respect the law as drafted. However, we will reverse any pages that are inadvertently impacted."

s22

Competition Unit | Market Conduct Division

The Treasury, 1 Langton Cres, Parkes, ACT 2600

Ms22 | Ms22

s22

From: s22 <[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>

Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 12:15 PM

To: s22 <[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>

Cc: MG MCD Competition <MGMCDCompetition@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; LDO Mandatory Codes <LDO Mandatory Codes@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Dickson, Tom <Tom.Dickson@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Quinn, Meghan <Meghan.Quinn@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Jeremenko, Robert <Robert.Jeremenko@treasury.gov.au>

Subject: RE: List of pages blocked by Facebook. [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks

OFFICIAL

From: s22 <[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>

Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 12:06 PM

To: s22 <[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>

Cc: MG MCD Competition <MGMCDCompetition@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; LDO Mandatory Codes <LDO Mandatory Codes@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Dickson, Tom <Tom.Dickson@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Quinn, Meghan <Meghan.Quinn@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Jeremenko, Robert <Robert.Jeremenko@treasury.gov.au>

Subject: List of pages blocked by Facebook. [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22

Here is an initial list of pages blocked by Facebook that fall into the following categories:

- a) Government websites
- b) Non-news community organisations

We will do further verification and tidy up later in the day.

s22

s22

Competition Unit | Market Conduct Division

The Treasury, 1 Langton Cres, Parkes, ACT 2600

Ms22 | Ms22

s22

OFFICIAL

From: s22
To: s22; s22
Cc: s22; [Dickson, Tom](#); s22
Subject: RE: Facebook [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 18 February 2021 8:31:46 AM

OFFICIAL

Thanks s22
Rod has indicated that he does not plan to make any comments to the press.

s22

From: s22 @TREASURY.GOV.AU>
Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 7:45 AM
To: s22 @acc.gov.au>
Cc: s22 @acc.gov.au>; s22 @acc.gov.au>;
Dickson, Tom <Tom.Dickson@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; s22
s22 @TREASURY.GOV.AU>
Subject: Facebook [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi ACCC colleagues,

Could you please let us know if the Commission/Rod will be making any statements re: the Facebook announcement this morning?

Regards

s22

s22

Competition Unit | Market Conduct Division
[The Treasury](#), 1 Langton Cres. Parkes, ACT 2600
P s22 | M s22
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s22

The Treasury acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to elders both past and present.

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From: [Beckett, Ian](#)
To: [Dickson, Tom](#)
Cc: [Jeremenko, Robert](#)
Subject: RE: facebook points [SEC=PROTECTED]
Date: Friday, 19 February 2021 2:46:21 AM

s22



From: Dickson, Tom
Sent: Wednesday, 17 February 2021 10:40 PM
To: Beckett, Ian
Subject: FW: facebook points [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

FYI

Tom Dickson

Assistant Secretary, Branch Head
Corporations Branch
Market Conduct Division, Markets Group
[The Treasury](#), Langton Crescent, Canberra, ACT, 2600

P +61 2 6263 2868

M s22

PROTECTED

From: s22 <[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 12:40 PM
To: Dickson, Tom <Tom.Dickson@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; MG MCD Competition <MGMCDCompetition@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; Jeremenko, Robert <Robert.Jeremenko@treasury.gov.au>
Subject: FW: facebook points [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

FYI

PROTECTED

From: s22 <[REDACTED]@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 12:26 PM
To: s22 <[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>
Subject: facebook points [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

Hi s22

Assume you have these already but these were passed to us via our office from the Treasurer's office. Sending on in case.

- The Treasurer has this morning spoken with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg following developments this morning.
- The conversation was “constructive.”
- Mark Zuckerberg has raised a few remaining issues with the Government's news media bargaining code.
- But both the Morrison Government and Facebook are committed to continuing the dialogue and try to find a pathway forward.
- The Government is committed to enacting the news media bargaining code, which is now in the Senate after passing the House of Representatives last night.
- As we have said all along, we expect companies who are doing business in Australia to comply with the laws of the land.
- As the Communications Minister has said, if Facebook were to operate in a mode where affectively all content from a news organisation - with a fact checking process, with employed journalists and with editorial policies is not available on Facebook - then surely over time that would call into question the reliability of information on the platform
- As the Communications Minister said, it's important Australia has a diverse and well-resourced news media sector which is a critical part of our democracy and vitally important to the Australian people.
- The Government is also encouraged by further deals between Googles and news organisations, with News Corp now joining Seven West Media and Nine in signing letters of intent with Google.

Regards

s22

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News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code

s22



Talking Points - Facebook

- The Treasurer has been having productive conversations with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg following Facebook's decision to block news in Australia.

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- Both the Government and Facebook are committed to continuing the dialogue and try to find a pathway forward.
- Facebook’s decision to remove news content, with the fact checking process and editorial policies associated with public interest journalism, has broader implications for the reliability of information on the platform.
- The Government is committed to enacting the news media bargaining code, which is now in the Senate after passing the House of Representatives on 17 February 2021.
 - It’s important that Australia has a diverse and well-resourced news media sector which is a critical part of our democracy and vitally important to the Australian people.
 - The Government is also encouraged by further deals between Googles and news organisations, with News Corp now joining Seven West Media and Nine in signing letters of intent with Google.

s22





Facebook removal of news content

- On 18 February 2021, Facebook announced that, in response to the Code, they would immediately restrict the posting of:
 - News links from any news source (local or international) by Australian users; and
 - News links from Australian news sources by global users.
- Other Facebook apps, including Instagram and Messenger, were not impacted by these restrictions.
- Facebook's change had the inadvertent impact of temporarily blocking content from a number of pages and groups which were not news organisations: including Commonwealth, State, Territory and local Government websites; universities; community organisations and emergency services.
 - Many of these links have subsequently been restored.





From: [Sims, Rod \(ACCC - Unclassified DLM\)](#)
To: s22 [REDACTED]; [Quinn, Meghan](#)
Cc: [Codina, Martin](#)
Subject: FW: Response to Facebook Action in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 18 February 2021 5:58:09 AM

OFFICIAL

See note below; first I have heard of this.

Cheers

Rod

Rod Sims

Chair

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission

L20 175 Pitt St, Sydney NSW 2000

T: +61 2 9236 3000 www.accc.gov.au

PS – If you have received this outside normal hours, it was because it was convenient for me to be working, I don't expect a response until normal working hours.

The ACCC acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to the land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to their Elders past, present and future.

From: Jeans, David

Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2021 5:39 AM

To: Sims, Rod

Cc: Jacobsen, Geesche

Subject: Response to Facebook Action in Australia

Hi Rod,

Do you have five minutes to respond to Facebook's withdrawal of its news service in Australia?

<https://about.fb.com/news/2021/02/changes-to-sharing-and-viewing-news-on-facebook-in-australia/>

David Jeans

Staff Reporter, Tech + Cloud

Forbes Magazine

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