



Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Leader of the House

4 August 2021

1 William Street Brisbane
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Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3035 6100
Email health@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Ms Kara Hinesley
Director of Public Policy (ANZ)
Twitter

VIA EMAIL: khinesley@twitter.com

Dear Ms Hinesley

I write in relation to tweets issued by Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP – Shadow Minister for Finance, Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Manager of Opposition Business and Liberal National Party Member of Parliament for the Queensland electorate of Kawana.

The tweets issued by Mr Bleijie (**attached**) relate to the COVID-19 virus and the vaccination program in Queensland. In particular, the tweets express a view that the Premier of Queensland, The Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk MP and Deputy Premier of Queensland, The Hon Steven Miles MP are “anti-vaxxers”.

I refer to the Twitter's “COVID-19 misleading information policy”, which states that “*you may not use Twitter's services to share false or misleading information about COVID-19 which may lead to harm*”. [<https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/medical-misinformation-policy>]

The referred policy states that “*in order for content related to COVID-19 to be labelled or removed under this policy, it must, advance a claim of fact, expressed in definitive terms; be demonstrably false or misleading, based on widely available, authoritative sources; and be likely to impact safety or cause serious harm*”. I will deal with each one in turn.

Advance a claim of fact, expressed in definitive terms

As is evident in the attached tweets, Mr Bleijie is advancing a claim of fact, expressed in definitive terms by stating:

- “Doesn't help that we have an anti-vaxxer Premier @AnastaciaMP either”.
- “Our anti-vaxxer Premier @AnastaciaMP dictates that ...”
- “You must be an anti-vaxxer like your boss @AnastaciaMP”
- “This was to be expected when we have an anti-vaxxer Premier @AnastaciaMP spreading misinformation”.

It is clear, that on multiple occasions Mr Bleijie is expressing a fact that the Premier of Queensland is an anti-vaxxer, a claim which is false.

(2)

Be demonstrably false or misleading, based on widely available, authoritative sources

It is clear and evident from multiple media sources, including Twitter that the Premier of Queensland and the Deputy Premier of Queensland have received their COVID-19 vaccinations (links below):

- First Jab: <https://twitter.com/AnnastaciaMP/status/1401680891395514371>
- Second Jab: <https://twitter.com/AnnastaciaMP/status/1410852005329788930>.

In addition, I tweeted on 3 July 2021 "*The Queensland Government supports vaccines, we want all Queenslanders to roll up their sleeve and get a vaccine. To say otherwise is simply incorrect Member for Kawana*". In response to my tweet, Mr Bleijie responded "*The Qld Gov may as the official line but not the Premier or Deputy Premier!*". This is evidence that the Member for Kawana was explicitly told that the Queensland Government was supportive of vaccines, but still continues to spread misleading information.

Be likely to impact public safety or cause serious harm


At a time when public confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines is most critical, the publicly elected Member of Parliament, Mr Bleijie is spreading misinformation about senior members of the Queensland Government, namely the Premier and Deputy Premier, and undermining not only public confidence in the vaccine, but the Queensland Government's rollout of the vaccine, which could ultimately lead to vaccine hesitancy and harm to Queenslanders.

I therefore request that Twitter review Mr Bleijie's contribution to Twitter in respect to the tweets and either remove them or ban Mr Bleijie from the Twitter platform for spreading false and misleading information about this important public health issue.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely



YVETTE D'ATH MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Leader of the House

(3)

ATTACHMENT 1



Jarrod Bleijie
@JarrodBleijieMP

...

.@YvetteDAth maybe vaccine hesitancy in Qld started when Chief Health Officer Dr Young told young people they have more chance of dying from the AZ vaccine than Covid-19! Doesn't help that we have an anti-vaxxer Premier @AnnastaciaMP either. #qldpol

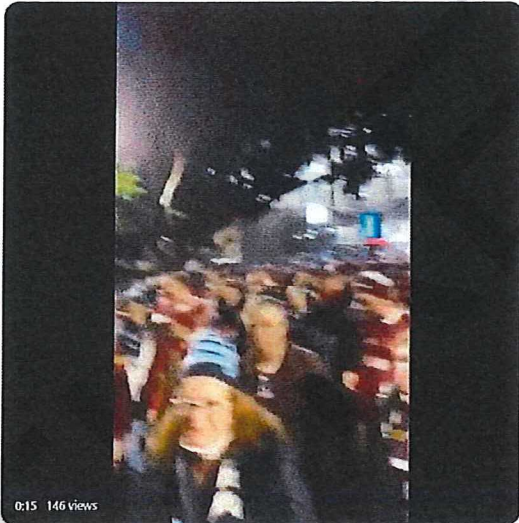
10:44 AM · Aug 4, 2021 · Twitter for Android



Jarrod Bleijie
@JarrodBleijieMP

...



Our anti-vaxxer Premier @AnnastaciaMP dictates that you can't dance at your local music festival but says big sporting games can proceed because everyone is sitting and not mingling. How's this for sitting and no mingling Anna? What a joke! #qldpol #AnnaCluster



4:09 PM · Jul 3, 2021 · Twitter for Android

(4)

 **Jarrod Bleijie**  [@JarrodBleijieMP](#) ...
.[@StevenJMiles](#) you missed one....VACCINES! You must be an anti-vaxxer like your boss [@AnnastaciaMP](#) [#qldpol](#)

 **Steven Miles**  [@StevenJMiles](#) · 1m
Three things will keep us out of another lockdown, masks, QR codes, and testing.

If we keep them up can avoid another lockdown.

[#lockdown](#) [#COVID19Aus](#)



2:07 PM · Jul 3, 2021 · Twitter for Android

 **Yvette D'Ath MP**  [@YvetteD'Ath](#) ...

Replying to [@JarrodBleijieMP](#) [@StevenJMiles](#) and [@AnnastaciaMP](#)

The Queensland Government supports vaccines, we want all Queenslanders to roll up their sleeve and get a vaccine. To say otherwise is simply incorrect Member for Kawana.

2:08 PM · Jul 3, 2021 · Twitter Web App

 View Tweet activity

6 Likes



 Tweet your reply

Reply

 **Jarrod Bleijie**  [@JarrodBleijieMP](#) · Jul 3 ...
Replying to [@YvetteD'Ath](#) [@StevenJMiles](#) and [@AnnastaciaMP](#)
The Qld Gov may as the official line but not the Premier or Deputy Premier!



(5)



This was to be expected when we have an anti-vaxxer Premier @AnnastaciaMP spreading misinformation #qldpol #AnnaCluster



#AstraZeneca supplies are so high in some rural areas that doses are being dumped because they've expired.

A Townsville GP says he's walked the streets looking for people willing to get vaccinated but the "political noise" has confused patients.



Hundreds of vaccines dumped in rural Australia as confusion reigns
abc.net.au

10:27 am · 02 Jul 21 · [Twitter Web App](#)

11:26 AM · Jul 2, 2021 · [Twitter for Android](#)



9 August 2021

The Hon Yvette D'Ath MP

Minister for Health and
Ambulance Services
Parliament of Queensland

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Queensland 4001 Australia

Telephone +617 3035 6100
health@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister,

I write in response to your correspondence dated 4 August 2021 regarding Tweets posted by Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, Shadow Minister for Finance, Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Manager of Opposition Business and Liberal National Party Member of Parliament for the Queensland electorate of Kawana.

We share the Queensland Government's belief that it is vital that Australians can identify trusted health information online. Since introducing our COVID-19 guidance last year, Twitter has challenged 11.7 million accounts, suspended 1,155 accounts, and removed over 32,800 pieces of content worldwide.

Current Policies. We have an internal team dedicated to developing and enforcing our policies that brings a wide range of perspectives and expertise to developing our policies. The Twitter Trust & Safety Council provides input on our safety products, policies, and programs. Twitter also works with a range of Australian safety advocates, academics, researchers, advocacy organisations, and community groups working to prevent abuse. We maintain strong collaborative relationships with relevant multinational and Australian stakeholders, spanning the World Health Organization, numerous government officials, public health organisations and non-profits around the world to help inform our approach and updates to our relevant policies.

COVID-19 misleading information policy

At Twitter, our primary goal in addressing COVID-19 misleading information has been focused on removing demonstrably false or potentially misleading content that has the highest risk of causing harm, as well as surfacing credible content from authoritative sources through Twitter's [Explore tab](#), dedicated search prompts for [COVID-19](#), and [vaccinations](#) with trusted partners, like the Australian Department of Health.

We established our first COVID-19 policies in March 2020, and we've had three updates to this policy and guidance since then. As scientific understanding of COVID-19 continues to develop, we remain committed to evolving our policies in response to the rapidly changing circumstances surrounding the pandemic.

Earlier this year, Twitter updated our policies to cover new enforcement actions in relation to misleading information around the COVID-19 vaccines. Our policies state that people may not use Twitter's services to

share false or misleading information about COVID-19 which may lead to harm, such as increased exposure to the virus, or adverse effects on public health systems. This includes sharing content that may mislead people about the nature of the COVID-19 virus; the efficacy and/or safety of preventative measures, treatments, or other precautions to mitigate or treat the disease; official regulations, restrictions, or exemptions pertaining to health advisories; or the prevalence of the virus or risk of infection or death associated with COVID-19.

We also seek to protect robust, public debate about the response to COVID-19 recognising that the state of scientific knowledge about certain aspects of the pandemic and public response to it (including the development of vaccines) is still relatively nascent. In the absence of other policy violations, the following are generally not in violation of this policy:

- Strong commentary, opinions, and/or satire, provided these do not contain false or misleading assertions of fact.
- Counterspeech. We allow for direct responses to misleading information which seek to undermine its impact by correcting the record, amplifying credible information, and educating the wider community about the prevalence and dynamics of misleading information.
- Personal anecdotes or first-person accounts.
- Public debate about the advancement of COVID-19 science and research. This includes debate about research related to COVID-19, such as the effectiveness of treatments and mitigation measures, so long as the claims don't misrepresent research findings.

A critical aspect of getting this balance right is our quickly evolving efforts to address impact. The consequences for violating our COVID-19 misleading information policy depends on the severity and type of the violation and the account's history of previous violations. In instances where accounts repeatedly violate this policy, we will use a strike system to determine if further enforcement actions should be applied.

World Leaders on Twitter

There continues to be meaningful public conversation about how we think about Tweets from world leaders on our service. When it comes to the actions of world leaders, politicians, and public figures on Twitter, the actions we take and policies we develop set a precedent around online speech, and we work to be deliberate and considered in what we do.

We recently called for public feedback as we assess our approach to world leaders. The response exceeded our expectations — nearly 49,000 people from around the globe took time to share their feedback on how content from world leaders should be handled on our service. During this process, we've also engaged experts, including NGOs, governments, academics, and civil society, to ensure we're hearing as many diverse and thoughtful perspectives as possible. As our teams review and distill the data, we've been looking for key themes, new ideas, and creative thinking so we can begin to develop an update to our approach and consider next

steps. Further details on our consultation is available [here](#) and more information on the current policy is available [here](#).

Review of content. Our policies are written to help us address serious harm. The solutions we develop also need to protect the rights of people to engage in political commentary.

Twitter does not use political viewpoints, perspectives, ideology, or party affiliation to make any decisions on how we enforce our rules. We believe strongly in being impartial, and we strive to enforce our rules dispassionately.

When reviewing the Tweets in question that were posted by Mr Jarrod Bleijie on his account @JarrodBleijieMP, Twitter's teams undertook a rigorous review of the content in question against the Twitter Rules and Terms of Service. The Tweets flagged were determined to not violate Twitter's COVID-19 misleading information policy. While the account's Tweets may be distasteful, the accusations contained in Mr Bleijie's Tweets have been determined to be allegations instead of misinformation under our relevant policies. At this stage, allegations are not actionable under our rules as Twitter cannot arbitrate or validate such claims.

We continue to critically examine additional safeguards we can implement to protect the conversation occurring on Twitter. The challenges we face as a society are complex, varied, and constantly evolving. Twitter cannot address these issues alone. Every entity has a role to play, and Twitter welcomes continued engagement with government and policymakers on these important topics. We would be pleased to respond to any further questions that you or the Queensland Government might have regarding the information detailed in this letter.

Sincerely,

Irrelevant



Kara Hinesley
Twitter Director of Public Policy
Australia and New Zealand