

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Interference through Social Media

QoN Number: 5

Subject: Algorithm changes

Asked by: Claire Chandler

Question:

CHANDLER: If somebody in a social media company headquartere in another country, decided to tweak their algorithm so that certain politicians were being boosted and other politicians posts were being suppressed, how would the Government identify that, that has occurred and what notification processes might be in place if they did become aware that, that had occurred.

Ms Pfeiffer: I'll take that on notice and see if we can provide you a response very quickly, noting the timeframe for the report.

Answer:

It would be inappropriate to detail, in an unclassified forum, the extent to which security agencies have visibility of foreign interference through social media.

If instances of suspected foreign interference via social media are identified by individuals there are mechanisms open to them to report this including referring to the platform or reporting to the National Security Hotline.

The multi-agency Counter Foreign Interference Taskforce, which is led by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and has membership including the Australian Federal Police and other national intelligence community agencies, has responsibility to discover, disrupt and investigate foreign interference activity.