

ACMA Submission:

Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

Aristotle:

He insisted that the Earth must be in the middle because earth (the element) always sought to move toward its “natural place,” the centre of the cosmos. Even though Aristotle invented formal logic, he apparently did not notice a certain amount of circularity in his argument. It took a while, but in 1543 Copernicus made a strong case for Aristotle being mistaken. And then in 1610 Galileo’s observation that sealed the case for a sun-centred solar system.

The Vatican famously imprisoned Galileo and forced him to recant his scientific assertions that the Earth revolves around the Sun to avoid being burned at the stake.

Under Stalin, the Soviet government supported the science of Lysenko, a pseudo scientist who rejected basic principles in biology, because his theories supported the principles of Marxism. This gave rise to *Lysenkoism*, a term used to reference the manipulation of the scientific process to achieve ideological goals. This term seems more and more relevant today.

There’s the matter of society’s control over how science is conducted. Scientists, the normal humans that they are, are just as susceptible to being swept up by the cultural currents and politics of their society as anyone else. This would apply to any single entity determining 'Truth'.

“One thing I did learn in science is that to prove your theory, you have to have a control. How can they prove that bones are millions of years old? *My bible tells me the earth is not that old*“. Would questioning the Bible constitute misinformation or is the Bible untruthful? It is vitally important to encourage differing opinions and beliefs and not have a single entity determine what is false or misinformation, thus, not repeating the many political errors of yesteryear.

Conclusion.

There are problems with using law to restrict or prohibit certain types of public debate, including but not limited to:

- (i) the inherent imprecision of law for regulating complex and rapidly evolving social debate;
- (ii) the difficulties of enforcing legal restrictions on an activity that is international in scope;
- (iii) the limited predictability of the consequences of restricting articulation of societal activity;
- (iv) inertia in the legislative process; and
- (v) the susceptibility of legislators and regulators to inappropriate factors and influence.

Therefore, I submit that the Bill is not fit for purpose and should not be enacted.

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