

I write to protest against the proposed Combating Mis/Dis-information legislation.

The fundamental tenet in a developed, democratic country is the freedom of expression and the freedom for adult citizens to be exposed to a variety of views, opinions and perspectives on all subjects and in all aspects of life. We do not have to agree with such opinions for them to be first “approved” by government or its delegate authorities such as ACMA.

Giving the power to ACMA to decide what information Australian citizens should be allowed to have access to on the internet, traditional media, and social media is Orwellian, and indicative of the behaviour of a fascist regime, not a democratic nation. We already have the biggest media organisation in the country, the ABC, promulgating very biased views on all aspects of life.

Further, giving the authority to a government body such as ACMA to adjudicate what is “harmful” or what constitutes “harm” as per the definitions stated in the wording of the proposed legislation gives ACMA an all-encompassing power to suppress any opinion, whether it be social or political, it disagrees with; in its current wording, it is the worst invasion of our rights as citizens in my living memory and I vehemently object to its passing.

Australian adults are not so fragile they need government to protect them from any imaginable “harm” as defined in the proposed bill. The wording and scope of the ACMA authority needs to be revised and limited to specified cases not anything at all ACMA “disagrees with”.

Free and open debate on even “unpleasant” subjects is a basic ingredient in a civilised society. Legislating penalties restricting debate and respectful social interaction is a most abhorrent concept for a democratic government to be enacting.