

New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation.

3 July 2023

This is the greatest political attack on free speech by any Australian government in peace time, since Federation. In Australia, a democratic free speech society based on principles that have evolved over two thousand years from their beginnings in ancient Greece. The greatest thinkers, writers, philosophers, political leaders for centuries have espoused freedom of speech as man's inalienable right, as is the right to disagree. Luther, Erasmus, Voltaire, Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, Alexander Meiklejohn, many, many more. Countless wars have been fought when tyranny threatens individual freedoms and rights.

The proposed censoring crackdown on "misinformation and disinformation" is clearly an attempt to make public debate illegal with severe penalties imposed for breaches for anyone who dares criticise the government.

The non-elected enforcer of this draconian legislation is ACMA. Who are these people and what are their biases? They determine what is misinformation and what is not? How? They do NOT represent the electorate as they are not elected. Their judgements will be deemed infallible and not subject to appeal, scrutiny or reversal when proved wrong over time.

ACMA says:

- "Would have no role in determining truthfulness, nor will it have a role in taking down or requesting action regarding individual pieces of content." **How does this possibly make sense?**
- "Allow the ACMA to create and enforce an industry standard.
- " the ACMA would be able to choose from a range of formal enforcement actions."

The Government is EXPLICITLY excluded from these laws. So, whatever the government says or propagandises is deemed Truth and cannot be questioned for fear of being in breach of ACMA rules with severe penalties applied. The implication is that the Government is truthful and correct always, and dissenters are non-truthful, and spreaders of misinformation and disinformation as determined by ACMA.

This will stop all public debate. Open debate needs to be encouraged NOT forced underground.

Not only is this attack on democratic free speech anti-democratic by nature but has a similarity to how the Chinese Communist Party, North Korea, Russia and other dictatorial regimes control information and suppress populations.

This ill-conceived, half baked, Orwellian attempt at free speech destruction needs to be rejected NOW. No "voluntary" codes should be agreed to.

Regards

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