

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my profound concern over the proposed expansion of the Australian Communications and Media Authority's (ACMA) powers to combat misinformation and disinformation. While the intention to protect the public from harmful or misleading information is commendable, the potential for government overreach and the implications for democratic principles are deeply troubling.

The cornerstone of any democratic society is the free exchange of ideas, which includes the right to question, to disagree, and even to be wrong. This freedom is not just about the protection of 'truth', but also about the process of arriving at truth. It is through the crucible of debate, disagreement, and discourse that ideas are tested and truths are forged.

When the government assumes the role of arbiter of truth, it risks undermining this process. It is not the role of the government to decide what is true or false, but rather to provide an environment where truth can emerge through rigorous debate and scrutiny.

Moreover, the proposed powers risk creating a chilling effect on free speech. If individuals and organizations fear government sanctions for spreading what the government deems to be 'misinformation', they may self-censor, leading to a stifling of the very discourse that is essential to a functioning democracy.

Furthermore, the definition of 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' can be highly subjective and prone to political manipulation. What one government or political faction considers 'misinformation', another might consider a legitimate alternative viewpoint. This leaves open the potential for these powers to be used to suppress dissenting voices and control the narrative to the government's advantage.

In conclusion, while the fight against misinformation and disinformation is a worthy cause, it should not come at the expense of our democratic principles. I urge you to reconsider this proposal and seek alternative ways to combat misinformation that do not risk undermining the very foundations of our democracy.

Yours sincerely,

Concerned Citizen