

My opposition to this Govt's ACMA draft proposal legislation

I want to register my absolute opposition and rejection of this government's draft proposal to combat online misinformation which I consider to be a major threat to freedom of speech in Australia.

This draft legislation, would grant the Australian Media and Communications Authority (ACMA) the power to issue massive fines to social media companies that fail to adequately crack down on misinformation on their platforms.

From reading the information, the draft defines misinformation as information that is "false, misleading or deceptive; and... reasonably likely to cause or contribute to serious harm".

This is a huge gag on free speech in a piece of legislation and is one of the worst pieces of legislation for free speech ever!

There are all sorts of inconsistencies and questions about this legislation, E.g. there is no definition of "serious harm," despite it being the relevant trigger for action in the prohibition section? I consider this draft to be very poorly drafted and thought out.

While reading through the proposal I'm shocked that while the bill would target everything from blogs, podcasts and people posting on Twitter, **state and federal governments would be exempted.**

So governments can tell lies, spread misinformation that they call truth, but I could be banned from challenging it?

I note that social media platforms have already signed up to a voluntary code for combatting misinformation – developed in response to pressure from the previous government.

This Labor Govt's proposal gives ACMA the power to force social media companies to change how they deal with misinformation and disinformation?

So ACMA would be able to force digital platforms to adhere to an industry-wide "standard" for the removal of harmful content, with failure to adhere to the standard leading to fines of up to five per cent of a company's global turnover? Would certainly be great revenue raising?

It's highly probable then that these powers would lead media companies and internet platforms to be extremely wary of the threat of fines and costs of having to defend themselves - this would lead to excessive censorship!

Give a Govt open slather to say whatever it wants without consequence?

No thank you! It's an unequivocal 'NO' to the Govt ACMA draft proposal legislation from me.

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