

I would like to submit my objection to the Government's Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023. I feel that this Bill is not in accordance with Australian Democratic principles and Human Rights that provide for freedom of speech. It appears that this Bill will prevent people, with opposing views to the Government, be penalised and prevented from speaking their Truth. I feel that this Bill represents a threat to the freedom of all Australians to voice their own opinions, should they not be in line with Government narratives. This will perpetuate the fear that was instilled in many during the pandemic and is not conducive to a free and educated population as it does not encourage, either critical thought or lively debate, both of which lead to education and informed truths. I have many questions regarding this Government overreach into our lives. Some of these questions include:

- Who will determine what is truth and what is not? After all, in the past three years, many of the Government's 'truths' have been proved to be misinformation. However, the Government, both State and Federal, will be exempt from penalty if found in breach of the new legislation;
- What will be the qualifications of those afforded the privilege of determining those 'truths'? Will they be objective? Who will finance them? If the answer is the Federal Government, is this not considered corruption?
- How will this Bill not provide greater division amongst Australian people than is already evident in the debate for a Voice?
- The Government has already spread many untrue facts. I would like to exemplify recent 'truths' such as 'the vaccine is safe and efficacious', 'the vaccine will prevent the virus', we know that these 'facts' have now been proved as untrue and misleading.

I would like to conclude with this thought:

I strongly suggest that the Federal Government consider Socrates. You can not arrive at a truth until there has been critical analysis of the beliefs of others. How will this be possible when those opposing beliefs are silenced. While he gave no definition of truth, he believed in questioning what others believed as truth. He believed that genuine knowledge came from discovering universal definitions of the key concepts, such as virtue, piety, good and evil, governing life. Do not underestimate the intelligence of the Australian people.