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Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2023.

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To whom it may concern,

Article 19 from the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Australians will not have the right to freedom of online opinion and expression as expressed by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights if this Orwellian Bill becomes law.

If you want to know who rules over you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticise. Is that the Australia we all want to live in?

If freedom of opinion means anything at all, it means the right to tell people online what they do not want to hear.

Thomas Jefferson, 3rd US President, was right when he said that ***"The liberty of speaking and writing guards our other liberties."***

And who in ACMA decides what constitutes misinformation and disinformation?

Take for example during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic when the mere suggestion the virus came from an accident from the Wuhan laboratory was labelled as misinformation and disinformation. Social media platforms at the behest of Govts everywhere silenced such talk on social media. Fast forward to now and it is widely acknowledged that there could have well been a laboratory leak and it's actually ok to talk about it now but not 3 years ago.

Another example a few years back was the amount of people coming forward online to share their unfortunate personal experiences with the two mRNA vaccines. Their online voices were silenced as misinformation and disinformation about the vaccination injuries they or a loved one had suffered and yet today it is widely accepted and acknowledged that many people did in fact suffer severe Covid-19 vaccination injuries.

Just how can bureaucrats from ACMA be in a position to know what is posted online as a personal truth verses their subjective assessment that its misinformation and disinformation? They can't.

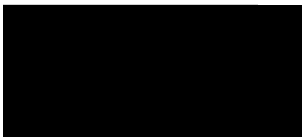
Labelling an uncomfortable truth as misinformation and disinformation is wrong and places Australians freedom of expression and opinion on a very dangerous slippery slope. There are trans-activists right now demanding that anyone who defines a *Woman* for example, as an adult female human, be silenced (and punished) because they according to the trans-activists are spreading gender misinformation and disinformation. Is this the sort of online posts ACMA are going to make a determination that constitutes misinformation and disinformation? We keep this up then words will cease to have any meaning especially if ACMA decides that they and they alone are the sole arbitrary on what constitutes misinformation and disinformation.

Don't give ACMA (or anyone) these new powers. Their risk of application abuse outweighs any potential benefit to combat so called misinformation and disinformation.

I'm a sentient intelligent being. I have awareness and cognitive abilities. I know what is 'up and what is down' and I don't need some unelected bureaucrat to make determinations of what might or might not be misinformation and disinformation.

So give me the continued right to free speech, whether it be me standing on my soap box in the real public square or in the online public square and I'll use it to secure and protect all of my other human rights.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Semple