

The proposed misinformation and disinformation bill proposed to legislation is harmful to the freedom of opinion and speech in Australia. This bill would allow censorship to be inflicted upon any opinion that is not “factual” in the eyes of the ACMA organisation. This would mean that differing ideological, religious, and medical beliefs would be prevented from being shared or taken down, limiting what people in Australia are able to say.

Additionally, the Australian Labor Government should not be exempt from any form of censorship should it spread “misinformation or disinformation”. In fact, the government should have more restriction on the information that it places into the media, as it is the government that Australians look to for guidance and should have the peace of mind to know the government is also not spreading any non-factual data.

The harm of the bill extends to balance in media. With one association dictating what is and isn't true, it removes the decision-making of the individual of what they should and shouldn't believe, and instead projects only the opinion of the association, while omitting the opinions of fellow Australians.

Furthermore, this proposed bill also further violates the privacy of Australians, as it is another association that data is passed through. In Section 24 clause 1, the bill states that “The ACMA may take, and retain for as long as is necessary, possession of a document produced under this division” meaning that ACMA is able to create records of activity using information we did not consent to release and keep these records for as long as deemed necessary, another huge violation of privacy.

It is for the reasons above that I strongly believe that the Misinformation and Disinformation Bill should NOT be passed into Australian legislation.

Thankyou.