

Submission regarding: Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

"It's down to anyone who believes they should be free to speak truth to power, not truth approved by power."

As a private Australian individual, I am definitely opposed to any form of restraint of free speech, even though I myself have suffered at the hands of people directing hate towards me via social media platforms on a number of occasions.

In an era where censorship is rife and where I personally consider that truths have been suppressed for the past 3.5 years by government departments in collusion with giant media corporations, I am NOT in support of this proposed Bill.

Also in consideration are recent revelations that certain giant social media corporations have indeed been influenced by governments, including the Australian government, to censor posts that have been deemed, sometimes by AI instruments - not even real people - to be "dis" or "mis" information and therefore banned by the platform. The opportunity to obtain a balanced view of all sides of arguments is rapidly diminishing. One side of the argument cannot be summarily dismissed because the government deems the argument to be against their own narrative. This is the death of free speech and is equivalent to burning books and libraries in an attempt to rewrite history.

In addition, now, as with the covid crisis, the government is seeking to abrogate responsibility for their proposed bill to private corporations which does/has/could further lead to a fascist-like regime where government and private corporations wield collective power over individuals and groups in an effort to coerce them into the government/corporate regime's way of thinking; call it what it is: "lockstep".

I find it especially cynical of the government to be rushing this bill through before the upcoming referendum on "The Voice", which has Australians divided yet again because of the lack of transparency regarding the powers and responsibilities of "The Voice", which the government seems to have indicated will only be revealed *after* the referendum.

Details of "The Voice" and proposed changes to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia seem opaque to a lot of people, not made any clearer by the very large and unwieldy documents released to explain the proposed body and constitutional changes, which any regular Australian citizen would have trouble reading and understanding.

I would guess that most Australians, including myself, are in *favour* of Australia's First Nation's people having a legitimate "voice" in Parliament, recognition of Aboriginal people in the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, equal opportunities for the growth of the Aboriginal population, cessation of the jailing of Aboriginal people, young and old, as a large proportion of jailed offenders and the resulting deaths in custody, and many other privations that have seen the demise of Aboriginal communities in Australia since colonisation.

I merely question whether the proposed "Voice" referendum is worded correctly – to me it seems particularly vague in content - and if in the third item of the proposed changes to the Constitution are the way ahead. I think the Australian people need to be much better

informed about the role of the government in manipulating the make up, the agenda and the powers of the Voice. *Why, if we currently have 11 Aboriginal parliamentarians, are their voices not taken seriously enough for sweeping changes to be made?*

The Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 “Fact Sheet” states: “rules made under the Bill may require digital platform services to have systems and processes in place to address misinformation or disinformation that meets a threshold of being likely to cause or contribute to serious harm.”

Who defines what is “mis” or “dis” information? Who determines what is likely to cause “serious harm”? How is “serious harm” defined?