

**ACMA Submission**  
**By Christiena Ennis**

The responsibility of a democratically elected government should never include opinion policing and should instead prioritise nurturing citizen interests, safeguard rights, and foster well-being. The focus should be on preserving democratic principles and shaping a future where transparency, accountability and the power of the people prevail. Spying on the citizens of Australia is NOT part of ANY Democratic process.

When the very essence of free expression is stifled, and our democratic principles are curtailed by censorship through online surveillance of Australian citizens via the digital platforms that they choose to interact with, we can wave a fond farewell to Democracy. This Act is the very beginning of dystopia.

**1. The definitions of misinformation and disinformation**

The issue that misinformation and disinformation pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, our democracy, society and economy is simply impossible to prove. ACMA is being placed in the position of “parent” to the citizens of Australia and discounting every citizen’s adult ability to make decisions for themselves.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, misinformation is

*“false or inaccurate information, especially that which is deliberately intended to deceive”.*

**Who** determines, and **How** is it determined that any statements, conversation, debate, personal opinions and any discussion is “false, inaccurate, or even if something is deliberately intended to deceive”?

Australians enjoy one of the World’s best education systems. Does the Government have so little faith in its own education system that it cannot believe the recipients of this system cannot make decisions for themselves?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, ‘disinformation’ is

*false information which is intended to mislead, especially propaganda issued by a government organization to a rival power or the media.*

Again, Australian citizens are being treated as fools. Again, the Government obviously does not consider the ability of its citizens to determine whether they are being misled. Granted, some genuine disinformation is cleverly disguised, but the Government itself as well as almost every politician in the Australian Government is guilty of, as a minimum, hiding truth from the public, to outright lying to the public. Everything that has occurred over the past three years is a testament to this.

How can we, and why must we, trust unelected bureaucrats to determine what determines misinformation and disinformation? How is it possible for unelected bureaucrats to determine whether we are telling the truth or not?

How can we, and why must we, trust artificial intelligence and/or electronic (whatever) bots to determine what is misinformation and disinformation? How is it possible for unelected AI /bots or whatever technology being chosen for this travesty,, to determine whether humans are telling the truth or not? This is too subjective for their understanding. They are not human; ergo they cannot think as humans, ergo they cannot judge humans. Human expression, human freedom of speech,

should not be the purview of electronic surveillance technology to make judgments on what is truth and what is not; what constitutes misinformation and what constitutes disinformation.

The proposed powers for ACMA would enable monitoring and increased surveillance efforts from digital platforms. However, my concerns are ***how is it determined that disinformation and/or misinformation is/are occurring?***

Case in Point – the Voice to Parliament issue is the current debate occurring in the Public Space on all media. The ‘Yes’ group is stating that the ‘No’ group is “*spreading both misinformation and disinformation*” according to Linda Burney, the current Labor Minister for Indigenous Affairs. This was publicly rebutted by Senator Price. **THIS DEBATE IS HEALTHY!** It means we are FREE to SPEAK and DEBATE and CENSOR according to the dictates of **our own thoughts, beliefs and conscience**. It’s called **Free Speech, which should be readily available to ALL citizens. It allows US ALL to have a VOICE, whenever and wherever we choose within the confines of decency and our Laws.**

We currently have the **freedom to debate** the issues on Social Media such as Facebook etc. **This is our right to** express our private thoughts and opinions to friends and acquaintances and for that matter, to anyone in the public domain who wants to join in the discussion/debate. **This is healthy!** The depression that will occur in Australian citizenry whose freedom of expression is denied to them will be found to be **unhealthy**.

## **2. The definition of digital platform services and the types of services we propose be subject to the new framework**

If you are going to introduce a new Act, then everyone in the industry should be included. All digital services should be included. A digital platform is the very backbone for operations and customer engagement. There should be no exclusions. This reeks of selective targeting which is totally anti-Democratic. After all, misinformation and disinformation can and does occur on all types of digital platforms!

## **3. how instant messaging services will be brought within the scope of the framework while safeguarding privacy**

Instant messaging should NOT be brought within the scope of the framework. There is sufficient coverage for scams as things stand now. To go beyond this is an infringement of personal privacy and amounts to personal surveillance without participant permission. In other words - CENSORSHIP.

## **4. The scope of the information-gathering and recording keeping powers, which includes the prevalence of false, misleading or deceptive information on digital platform services**

This point concerns me in that information keeping in this sense constitutes anti-Democratic censorship. Again, who or what determines what is false, misleading or deceptive information on a digital platform? This leaves the door open to the reliance on artificial intelligence making decisions about human ideas, emotions and opinions.

The past has taught us that so-called ‘fact checkers’ make mistakes (deliberate or otherwise) that have, at a later date, proven to be correct. So-called ‘conspiracies’ later emerged as verifiable truths and this unveils a chilling reality of wrongful deplatforming, discrediting, and defamation.

How can we be certain who is the bearer of misinformation and/or disinformation? By way of example: the “Covid-19 so-called ‘vaccines’ prevent you from succumbing to the disease”. This was a patent untruth spread universally by those who had a vested interest in the profits.

Why is “Professional News” exempt? Are they always truthful? Can we totally rely on what they say at all times? I think not.

**5. the preconditions that must be met before the ACMA can require a new code, register a code and make an industry standard**

Public consultation by the industry body or association producing a code must always be a pre-condition to registration.

**6. How the digital platforms industry may be able to operationalise the Bill and various content exemptions (e.g. professional news, satire, authorised electoral content)**

Professional news, satire and authorised electoral content should NOT be exempt. They should be operating under the same laws as every citizen is expected to.

**7. Appropriate civil penalties and enforcement mechanisms for non-compliance.**

No comment other than it is a nice little earner for ACMA (the Government). Always Follow The Mondy.