

I am totally against the new ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation as proposed in the exposure draft of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

I am an Australian citizen and believe our right to freedom of speech is one of the core values of our democracy and without the ability to have freedom of speech you put our democracy at risk.

I do not want to become a country where free of speech is censored or where fear of censorship prevents people sharing their opinion. Freedom of speech is what makes Australia stand out from other nations like China and North Korea. I do not want to head down a path towards our government silencing our citizens on topics that it thinks are misinformation or disinformation.

Recently our government censored many social media posts containing scientific data, information and opinions that was contrary to the government's assurances on the Covid 19 vaccination being effective in stopping transmission of Covid 19. We now know that those social media posts were correct in that the Covid 19 vaccines do not stop transmission and in fact were not even tested for transmission. If this information was allowed to be discussed, debated and researched openly at the time, maybe mandates would never have been introduced thus saving millions of dollars to the Australia economy and heartache and loss of income to those who lost their jobs. This was an example of the government's overreach incorrectly censoring social media posts that were true all along.

The government cannot be the sole arbiter of what is misinformation or disinformation. History has shown this can be very dangerous.

Any information or opinion on social media should be allowed together with any open discussion and public debate about the topic. People are not stupid. We can make up our own minds what is correct information and what is not. We do not need the government to decide this for us.