

16 July 2023

I write to register my objection to the federal government's proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023. This bill will erode democracy in all its forms, and is particularly sinister because it won't apply to certain groups and the government. How convenient.

I wholeheartedly object to Big Tech, governments, ACMA and other bureaucrats (or anyone else) stepping in to ensure censorship of my reading material "for my own good." I am perfectly capable of reading widely, researching and forming my own opinion. Part of being able to do this is to have independent media sources available at my fingertips.

Neither the mainstream media nor the government can be relied on to provide an independent voice. The last few years of COVID hysteria and nonsense demonstrates that perfectly. We were subjected to relentless propaganda (and still are). Most things that the government and the media said were 'incorrect' actually turned out to be true. The same problem has applied in the case of the 'No' campaign for the proposed voice to parliament. Why were videos and information produced by the Institute of Public Affairs, for example, blocked? And how about the established arrangement between the Department of Home Affairs and social media companies in Australia over the last few years – and yet this scandalous and outrageous arrangement has received very little coverage in the mainstream media.

I am well aware of what happens to people's liberties in the name of 'hate speech.' For some years now, I have been following the work of Toby Young and the UK's Free Speech Union. I have seen that 'hate speech' is a phrase used by woke censors to silence opinions that they don't like.

The other danger is the possible re-categorisation of information sources that the government doesn't like. For example, what happens if a mainstream outlet (eg. Outsiders on Sky News Channel) starts reporting about something that the government doesn't agree with? What's the bet that that outlet would just suddenly be re-categorised as "non mainstream media" and then blocked and cancelled.

Why don't you like the fact that we can read a wide variety of information these days? What are you so scared of us finding out?

Governments, Big Tech and unelected bureaucrats should never have the right to be arbiters of truth. Information is proven to be correct or not by bringing it out into the open and debating it, not by suppressing it.

I refuse to be told what I can and can't research or think. Take your proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 bill and throw it off the nearest cliff. We don't want it – it has no place in a democratic country.

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