

**Cornerstones of modern democracy are freedom of speech and freedom of conscience.** Democracies operate on the basis of open debate within society at large, within the media, within educational institutions, within the medical profession, within government at every level; in fact, it's hard to think of a facet of society that does not require free speech and open debate to be healthy and wise.

Yet, the Labour Government is proposing a Bill to give the state control of "truth". Unelected bureaucrats will silence speech in the public square. How Orwellian ! The UN Declaration of Human Rights makes freedom of speech and communication a fundamental right and would recognise this Bill to be an outrageous attack on and censorship of free speech. How ridiculous for a country like Australia that surely seeks to be a modern democratic nation. **This Bill will bring Australia into line with the government of communist countries like China, policing legitimate speech, outlawing any content that does not match the government agenda and messaging.** This Australian proposed censorship regime of course excludes government-authorized content and mainstream media content. This is the pinnacle of hypocrisy and inconsistency whereby there is one rule of the government and another rule for Australians in what we have the freedom to say.

**Recent government policies during the COVID19 era give no confidence that 'the government is always right' or that 'the government has the truth'.** We experienced then the shutting down of debate on this pressing social issue to the enormous harm and detriment of the population at large, which is still suffering the negative effects of the lockdowns (job losses, business losses, negative educational impact on our kids, depression) and suffering from the vaccines themselves (which the high mortality rate worldwide has clearly shown are neither safe nor effective). Open debate about the efficacy of early treatment of COVID19 with ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine would have allowed its use and saved hundreds of thousands of lives worldwide and the vaccine could not have been given emergency approval. **Censorship did not give a good outcome in this instance and this Bill to enshrine censorship into Australian law and life is a chilling prospect.** Shame on you all !