

If these past few years have taught the collective Us anything at all, it is the value of free speech.

The speed with which new and emerging information becomes available, inevitably lends itself to interpretation on a broad scale; interpretation by subject matter experts (whether self-proclaimed or actual); interpretation by those with a passing interest and those that have no knowledge or interest but retain the detail for future reference/input; interpretation by critical thinkers, or by those who understand some of the information and those that understand other parts of the information. We have immense capacity as individuals to bring our knowledge, experiences, skills and abilities and to collectively review, discuss, test or further investigate emerging information to form sound conclusions between what is true and correct and that which is neither.

The method of forming sound conclusions may require some test and failure and retest methodology, but that is how we learn, how we eliminate incorrect information or mis/dis-information as it is being called, to eventually conclude what is true and correct.

The proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill (CLA) is tantamount to eradicating free speech and the right of the collective Us to process information and identify that which is true and correct. Rather, it places this responsibility into the hands of a government endorsed minority, all reading from the same song book, lacking individual diversity of ideas and inputs. Such minority cannot possibly possess the required multiplicity of knowledge, experiences, skills and abilities to undertake such an instrumental task on behalf of the collective, as to accurately and consistently determine what is or is not mis/dis-information. It is akin to a fine craftsman of 75 years passing away and his tooling passed to an 8-year-old child to continue in his footsteps without any knowledge or skills of the craftsman being shared – it is a recipe for disastrous outcomes.

Similarly, what happens when freedom of speech is removed from the collective and given to the minority with their comparatively minute set of skills and knowledge, and they inevitably get it wrong? Who will be held accountable within the minority or government for the decisions that result in potentially disastrous outcomes? When it is later realized that the “mis-information” was in fact factual, how will reparations be made and in what timeframe?

The proposed CLA Bill comes at a time when the government and its endorsed bodies and associations have themselves been significant purveyors of actual mis/dis-information...think “Safe & Effective” which has resulted in now evident irreversible harms.

It is unarguably in the best interest of the collective Us to retain our God given right to exercise freedom of speech and employ our innate abilities of reasoning, investigation & open discussion, in order to evaluate for ourselves what is mis/dis-information.

We do not support the CLA Bill now, will not support it in the future and absolutely do not support any suggestion that it could be applied retrospectively.

The proposed “Ministry of Truth” Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill **MUST NOT BE PASSED.**