

## SUBMISSION

This Bill does not strike an appropriate balance between freedom of expression and online safety.

It gives far too much power to government (through social media platforms) to censor what it doesn't like. Ultimately it is the government which will determine what is misinformation or disinformation, and this will stifle freedom of speech and public debate.

Exclusion of government-authorized content is hypocritical and again gives too much power to government and not enough to ordinary Australians.

The Bill is inconsistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the subject of freedom of expression. The Australian Human Rights Commission has also voiced concern over how this Bill could be used "to restrict public debate, censor unpopular opinions and enforce ideological conformity in Australia."

The definition of "harm" according to the Bill is very broad and could easily be used to shut down necessary and helpful online debate. Such respectful debate is good for our democracy.

Under this Bill, penalties for failing to comply with the set standards and failing to provide evidence requested by ACMA are excessive and will work against respectful free speech in the public square.

It is common knowledge that the internet is full of false information, but the government should leave it to the public to sort out the true from the false via open debate. The government is not the final authority on what is true and should not be the final authority (through social media companies) on what is permissible online.