

The proposed bill is generally very open ended and my concern is that enforcement of the legislation can be misused by entities that are given the task of formulating and then enforcing the “misinformation codes” as detailed in Division 4 of the legislation.

In short this legislation does not belong in a democratic country. There is no need to control the Australian people directly or indirectly through social media. I trust the Australian people can judge for themselves through ongoing debate. This legislation will create unnecessary bureaucracy we do not need and will only encourage autocratic rule in the future.

Is Australia ready to censor political opinions because they might be considered “misinformation”? Debate and discussion – often leading to disagreements – will always be present about any contemporary issue. That is especially true in the political sphere, where disagreement is common and even to be expected on a daily basis between different parties.

In layman terms this legislation leads into censorship. Whenever the word “censorship” is used, the overriding question then becomes: “who or what is the ultimate authority that judges what contents should be censored?” According to the proposed legislation, that authority would be the Australian Communications and Media Authority, ACMA. But which officials in ACMA would be making the call on which posts to censor?

The perception of what has been misinformation and disinformation has changed over time. Governments have had to change stance on so many occasions. Let's not waste time on a process of controlling what should not be controlled. Instead we need to continue and improve our democracy by encouraging true political debate where there is room to listen to all sides of politics. Otherwise we lose democracy.

A government pushing through this legislation seriously risks ridicule in future over narrow-minded control. There is far more need of balancing accountability of governments to the electorate. Censoring information that informs debate will bring governments on to the wrong side of democracy.

In conclusion, it is not a matter of adjusting this legislation, in my opinion this legislation is not necessary and is only damaging to our democracy.

Regards  
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