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SUBMISSION

Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank-you for the opportunity to make a submission on this exposure draft.

I trust this submission will be dealt with as a **separate, individual submission** and not be amalgamated, and essentially dispensed with, as happened with my submission to the Senate inquiry on Universal Access to Reproductive Healthcare.

I have asked my MP to follow up why these submissions were amalgamated as I consider this undemocratic.

Please find attached my submission.

Yours sincerely

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SUBMISSION

Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

I think this bill should be withdrawn as will be evident from my submission below.

Introduction

I came to Australia from UK 50 years ago to study for my PhD.

After four years in this country, I was captivated by the freedom in this country. This included lots of freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom to live and travel anywhere in this vast country. I have been an Australian citizen since 1978. I have worked in many other countries but found no country where I would rather be than Australia.

Prior to the development of the internet, the main medium for discussion was the tea room at work, at the pub, in meetings in cities (Town Hall meetings), professional conferences, political meetings and similar events that could range in size from two people to thousands of people. Everyone had the opportunity to make statements, ask questions or just to listen to all the opposing views and hence develop an understanding of the issues on the topic. In some cases you could be howled down by those who disagreed with you or lauded by those who supported your stance. In many cases, this type of meeting was a source of information for political purposes, corporate marketing or just to decide that the person you were meeting with was someone who was on the same wavelength as yourself. In every case, it was up to the individual to work out what was true, what was false and use their intellect to discern the difference.

The internet in the late 1990's allowed for many variations in how to converse with people starting with email for instant letters and developing to provide websites that could provide information on a myriad of subjects. In the case of products, the reviews usually came by word of mouth. Obviously, this has changed significantly and it is now possible to see restaurant reviews that say "great food and outstanding service" from one customer and "cold terrible food and terrible service" on the same website. Australians have grown accustomed to reading and reviewing and making their own decision as to whether to patronise this restaurant. The same can occur with hotels, cars, car rentals etc. Different people have different expectations and different reactions to what is on offer. They can't both be true!

In the last few years, Zoom (and similar platforms) have become available where two people or thousands could be on the same meeting. In some cases, everyone can see each other and in others only the speakers are visible. I attend one every Friday morning that often discusses what is contentious information to some.

Misinformation versus the truth

The term misinformation has really only become a term in regular use in the last three to four years since the beginning of COVID. Why? I think that many people in government and bureaucracies underestimate the ability of the human brain to process statements in a logical fashion. Some people have this skill in greater abundance than others!

Many people had lots of reservations about the virus appearing from a bat but went along with that until further information was available. Then we found out about the Wuhan Institute of Virology which seemed like a much more credible source. Further research discovered that the virus was created in the lab and indeed patented several years before it was released. Some of this information was obtained by leaked emails from Dr Fauci and others. However, a lot of this accurate information has never been released and many people still believe that it originated from a bat. When PM Morrison asked for an international inquiry into the source of the virus outbreak and the CCP decided this was not a good idea, this further made us question the truth of the promoted narrative.

The next thing that occurred was that there were many reports of thousands of people dying from COVID. We then learnt that many people were labelled as dying from COVID when in fact they had many other co-morbidities that probably caused the death but increasing the deaths was useful **misinformation** because it increased fear in the population. Analysis of death records has proved this. The proportion of people who survive COVID is now thought to be 99.7%.

Many enterprising doctors (mostly in USA) tried many off-label drugs to treat people with COVID and found that Ivermectin and Hydroxychloroquine were very effective. Within weeks of this information being released, it was labelled as **misinformation** but in fact it has been used to treat thousands of patients in the USA. In Australia, we were told that Ivermectin is a horse de-wormer when there is a separately compounded product that is used for horses! This was **misinformation** promoted by government / health industry.

The next piece of information that we discovered was that it was intended to release the vaccines under an Emergency Use Authorisation and that one of the release criteria for this was that there must be no treatment for COVID for this to be allowed. Therefore, Ivermectin and Hydroxychloroquine had to be banned as a suitable treatment and I believe that vast stockpiles of these drugs were destroyed in USA. A lot of this was **misinformation**. It is interesting that many countries such as African countries and Indonesia where people take Ivermectin for other diseases had a very good outcome from COVID.

The vaccines arrived! They were going to solve the COVID problem! The vaccine was going to prevent people catching COVID and prevent transmission of COVID and therefore everyone should take one. It was a long saga from early 2021 to mid 2022 but it was soon shown that not only did the vaccine not prevent catching or transmitting COVID but it actually caused many injuries and deaths and is still doing so. Many people believe that they caught COVID from the vaccine or because they were vaccinated making them more susceptible to other pathogens. Therefore, there was a lot of **misinformation** here. Most people that I talk to know at least one person who has been injured by the vaccine or died from it. I believe my brother died from it in the UK via a very sudden death but the necessary autopsy deaths were not done.. There have been hundreds of athletes and other fit people in their 20's and 30's that have suddenly dropped dead. This does not happen to

people of this age unless there is a reason and Sudden Adult Death is not a recognised disease!

There is already huge censorship of views on the internet. Dr John Campbell has millions of followers on You Tube and yet has to be careful with every word he says so that he does not get taken down by You Tube. The reason that he has millions of followers is because people trust him to provide evidenced information. By definition, it cannot be misinformation if millions of people follow him and trust him. People, in general, are not stupid!

In **summary**, it seems that the Australian (and USA and many other countries) have been given a lot of **misinformation** by their governments in the last few years. If the **government is going to impose incredibly harsh penalties on people, they should have to live by the same standard and should not be excluded from this bill**. Why should the mainstream media be excluded as well? **Most of the information that was labelled as misinformation when first released (and some still is) has been proven over time to be the correct information and the government information has been proven / accepted as misinformation.**

This is why so many people have lost confidence in information provided by the government(s).

Misinformation in other areas of our life

The information above relates to COVID and the vaccines but there are many other areas where information is classified as misinformation. For many years, there has been a narrative about Global Warming / Climate Change. Many people were well aware of the stupidity of this narrative and yet most governments, corporations and individuals went along with this narrative because they were too scared to speak out with an alternative narrative. Fear is a weak dictator's way to control people.

Australia has had an enviable lifestyle which has mainly been provided by mining and agriculture. We have provided the world with the metals and energy they require so that they could grow and we could lift the world out of hunger and poverty. We have now decided that we are going to be one of 13 nations that will limit how many cattle we have because they fart too often! How stupid can we get?

Religion and Freedom of Speech

I came to Australia because it is / was a Christian country and as a Christian, it was important for me to live in a country that was governed by Christian values including freedom of speech and freedom of thought. I believe that the bible is inspired by God and that all governments should / must submit to his supreme rule.

We need to be able to refer to the bible as we inform ourselves on the issues of the day such as abortion, euthanasia, transgender issues and vaccination. We regularly communicate in groups across Australia and the world on Zoom and other platforms and do not believe we should be banned from a platform because we quote a bible verse. This is the Word of God not a piece of misinformation. It has been quoted for 2000 years.

It seems that it will be impossible for us to have any meaningful Christian discussion on any discussion platform if this bill becomes law because a sermon quotes a bible verse every few minutes!

Summary

I think this bill should be withdrawn.

Most Australians want freedom of discussion, freedom of thought, freedom of speech and they do not want a government bureaucrat or an employee of an internet platform deciding what speech should be allowed and what should be censored. Throughout history, open discussion and the option to promote alternative views is what has caused our society to advance. Science is all about discussing two or more different views on a subject and what is believed to be the best view may change many times as more information is researched or produced.

Vaccines are currently lauded as medicines answers to disease. This may be misinformation. Many people believe they have prevented themselves from getting COVID by taking a combination of Vitamins C and D, Zinc and Quercetin. What if it turns out that this could be the answer to kill viruses and prevent all viral diseases. This will never become reality if it is classified as **misinformation** and never researched or discussed.

For the sake of the future of Australia's technological leadership, please withdraw this bill. Australians are smart enough to handle **misinformation** on their own.