

22 July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Concerns regarding the suggested Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

I write to you as a concerned citizen of our beautiful country Australia. It is my privilege to live in this beautiful land I call home with my children and grandchildren. I come from a country of terrible oppression, severe poverty and gluttony of power, a disproportion of health and wealth in what should be a beautiful nation and land. The ego and power frenzy of mankind is sadly so often the destruction of many wonderful nations and countries.

It is very concerning to me that the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 is a tool to prevent freedom of speech in Australia, my beautiful, peaceful, respectful, prosperous new homeland.

It is of the utmost importance to have a balanced, heard voice from all citizens of our country. I am not extremely wise when it comes to politics as someone of our politician's caliber and I mean that with the utmost respect, however to my understanding democracy is freedom of speech. Are we not a democratic society?

Google says: "Australia is a stable and peaceful democracy, one of the world's oldest. We have a vibrant civil society and robust independent media. Our freedoms of speech, association and religion underpin the strength not only of our economy, but of our civic life and political discourse." This is what the world reads about us. I ask of you, is this no longer true?

If you google freedom of speech you very quickly get the following answer:

"Is freedom of speech part of democracy?"

Freedom of Expression | Freedom House

Free speech and expression is the lifeblood of democracy, facilitating open debate, the proper consideration of diverse interests and perspectives, and the negotiation and compromise necessary for consensual policy decisions.

Democracy is freedom of speech. Freedom of speech and expression, especially about political and other public issues, is the lifeblood of any democracy. Democratic governments do not control the content of most written and verbal speech. Thus, democracies are usually filled with many voices expressing different or even contrary ideas and opinions."

Please DO NOT silence your people, our nation. Do not make us an oppressed nation, preventing us the people of Australia from having the same opportunities, freedom, and benefits as others. Please fight to keep our nation a democratic nation/society for the good of one and all, so no supreme one sided nation become our exitance and downfall through suppression of our current free voices - our great and fair, colour-filled nation.

I thank you for your time and consideration to this very important issue that shapes our nation, this that could potentially be the downfall of what still is a great land. Please let us continue to live well, fairly, and free of expression of opinions. It is a healthy and necessary part of a balanced nation and lifestyle. All families have difference of opinions, and we all need our voices to be heard.

Yours sincerely,
Bernadine Schneck