

It is not the Government's role to decide what constitutes misinformation or disinformation, and hence what constitutes acceptable speech and information. Australian Government's, both Federal and State, have displayed sheer incompetence and wilful neglect for adherence to the Australian Constitution, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Australia lends its freedom of opinion and freedom of expression (Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, 2023).

The Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 [herein: The Bill], seeks to leverage digital platform providers to regulate information on the internet deemed 'misinformation' or 'disinformation'. Below is a selection of recent events, backed up by Government data and other information sources, highlighting how poorly Australia's Government's have behaved without the support of this bill.

Since the epidemic of personal freedom abuse of Australia's population throughout and after the COVID-19 pandemic, governments have proven unsuited to:

- i. Governments cannot interpret facts and information, and apply risk frameworks designed to act in the best interest of the public. See:
 - a. Mortality rates of COVID-19 in 2021 (n=1122) (Australian Government Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023) versus influenza deaths in 2017 (n=1183) (Australian government Department of Health, 2023).
 - b. The Covid-19 vaccine does not stop transmission (al, 2021)
- ii. Display conscience and remorse for misjudgements and decision which negatively impact the people of Australia. See:
 - a. Woman arrested in her home for organising an anti-lockdown rally (BBC News Australia, 2023). An excellent example of authoritarian/totalitarian censorship and punishment of citizens for actions misaligned with Government advice.
- iii. Exercising measured and effective policy as new information becomes available. See:
 - a. Ineffective and unnecessary Wellcamp airport quarantine facility (Hope, 2023) and the associated cost.

The above evidence suggests governments cannot be trusted to act in the interest of the people. The Bill seeks to expand on the poor, constitutionally misaligned, behaviour expressed since 2020 in response to the Covid-19 virus. The Bill will write into law what has been permitted ad-hoc. This expansion of powers is intolerable. As summarised by Harry Truman 73 years ago:

“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.” (Truman, 1950)

— **Harry S. Truman**

I am a perpetual proponent for people to speak their opinions, and engage in civilised discussion such that battle of ideas to generate the best possible outcome for the population. I do not support tightening of Government control over the population and restriction of ideas. The Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 is fundamentally undemocratic and I do not support it.

Bibliography

al, A. S. (2021, 11 16). *Community transmission and viral load kinetics of the SARS-CoV-2 delta (B.1.617.2) variant in vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in the UK: a prospective, longitudinal, cohort study*. Retrieved from The Lancet: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(21\)00648-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(21)00648-4/fulltext)

Australian Government Attorney-General's Department. (2023, 07 23). Retrieved from <https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/human-rights-scrutiny/public-sector-guidance-sheets/right-freedom-opinion-and-expression>

Australian Government Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023, 07 22). *Deaths in Australia*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/life-expectancy-death/deaths-in-australia/contents/covid-19-deaths>

Australian government Department of Health. (2023, 07 23). *AISR – 2019 national influenza season summary*. Retrieved from Australian government Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/aisr-2019-national-influenza-season-summary?language=en>

BBC News Australia. (2023, 07 22). *Covid: Australian anti-lockdown suspect's arrest draws controversy*. Retrieved from BBC News: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-54007824>

Hope, Z. (2023, 07 23). *\$600m later, the sorry story of Qld's quarantine hubs turns a page*. Retrieved from Brisbane Times: <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/600m-later-the-sorry-story-of-qld-s-quarantine-hubs-turns-a-page-20220727-p5b50k.html>

Truman, H. S. (1950, 08 08). *Special Message to the Congress on the Internal Security of the United States*. Retrieved from Harry S Truman Library: <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/public-papers/207/special-message-congress-internal-security-united-states>