

Submission for the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

I would like to put forward the following points for consideration with respect to the above Amendment Bill:

1. I generally oppose this Amendment Bill for the following reasons:
 - a. It has the risk, if not managed correctly, of suppressing valuable information that would otherwise not be available to the general public in order to make informed decisions or that may be in the interests of the general public
 - b. It goes against the principles of freedom of information
 - c. It goes against the principles of freedom of speech
 - d. It may, if not managed correctly, have an adverse effect on human rights.
2. Introducing the amendment Bill will allow ACMA to have powers to impose and enforce standards, insist that providers keep unrealistic records or even impose stronger forms of regulation such as penalties. This may result in severe restrictions by platform providers to publish any material even if it is in the public interest and reduce access to valuable information for the public to create a balanced view on a range of issues.
3. The Bill focusses only on digital platforms and does not address the misinformation and disinformation that is allowed to be presented by mainstream media. If such a bill is required, then it should cover all platforms and media outlets.
4. I support ACMA monitoring all platforms and media outlets to prevent harmful and potentially damaging or offensive information getting published.
5. I support the introduction of a code of practice for all platform and media service providers so that they are all collectively aware of the general standards expected.
6. The term misinformation and disinformation is quite subjective and needs more careful consideration and a clearer definition.