

## **Communications Legislation Amendment ( Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation ) Bill 2023**

I am writing to state my opposition to the proposed government ACMA Misinformation, Disinformation Bill.

During covid many posts were taken down and suppressed from the main social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and others. They were deemed to be false information at the time, for example with regard to lockdowns, masks, the vaccine, mandates and more.

The government paid overseas media authorities to suppress these posts that did not agree with the government narrative at the time.

Senator Alex Antic obtained information from online Freedom of Information sources that over 4,000 posts were removed at a substantial cost to the Australian tax payer.

This was in fact government censorship which stifled what is now understood to be factual information and debate on such information

I believe the new proposed misinformation bill will give ACMA the power to do the same with any information on social media sites that they do not deem to be truth or in line with government narrative. This would have the propensity to suppress factual information and make public debate impossible.

One wonders how ACMA will decide what is truth and what is misinformation when there is no debate and if the bill was introduced would we find out that what was considered misinformation will become truth in the short term. Without genuine debate this is a very dangerous situation especially if the main stream media adopts the same policy.

History shows us that censorship is one of the main arms of control used by tyrannical and communist countries and the population are denied the right to free speech and a free society.

I believe that this new misinformation bill is at it's heart censorship and denies Australians the freedom that a democratic country such as Australia should offer it's citizens.