

Forgive me while I lol. The Albanese government has presented to the Australian public an Orwellian Bill of legislation George would feel proud of, not only for its proposed reach and draconian control of the proper functioning of a free, just and proud society, but for the audacious use of arrant misinformation to shape the discourse about misinformation. There are so many levels of misinformation the ACMA, the Labor government and the N&MRC are basing this nonsense on it is hard to know where to start.

But, let us dive into what the premises of this document are based on.

1. That Australians are being subjected to "unprecedented" harmful and extraordinary levels of misinformation.
2. That the truth is always known and the known truth cannot be questioned, nor alternative truth be allowed to pollute the citizenry's ears.
3. That the Australian public is unable to discern for itself what is and what is not true
4. That harm follows from misunderstanding truth, and that the harm is disabling to the proper functioning of the nation
5. That the government apparatus (which includes ACMA) in modern, nay in all of Australia's federated history is the font of all truth and is able to judge fairly and truly in every instance
6. That digital platforms equally, have any better claim to be able to judge what is truth and what is not.

That's enough to be going on with, but in case it is not clear, I would like to make sure that the drafters of this bill know, that I think it is irredeemable and it should be consigned to the scrap heap, never to arise again. Now to why I think that.

*1. The premise that Australians are being subjected to "unprecedented" harmful and extraordinary levels of misinformation.*

Lets define just what misinformation is, because the bill does not, nor does it define a harm. And there lies the rub. If a term cannot be quantified, and it is arbitrarily up to a body to make the decision on the behalf of a perhaps reluctant user, perhaps one that is politically or socially divergent to the decision making body we have a problem, a big problem. Is it the Labor governments intention to stifle free speech, and free speech, because that's exactly how it appears upon reading this legislation? Is a harm not feeling like my ears have been petted well, or perhaps that a nasty word was used or is it something more? Just on this one point this bill must fail.

Further, just what is misinformation? Here's the definition provided in the bill;

Misinformation is online content that is false, misleading or deceptive, that is shared or created without an intent to deceive but can cause and contribute to serious harm.

Fair enough. But what if today's mainstream accepted information is incomplete, or erroneous in the first place? What if others have better information even today? Are they not to be heard and their information tested against the current paradigm? Which leads me to point 2 and 5.

*2. That the truth is always known and the known truth cannot be questioned, nor alternative truth be allowed to pollute the citizenry's ears.*

*5. That the government apparatus (which includes ACMA) in modern, nay in all of Australia's federated history is the font of all truth and is able to judge fairly and truly in every instance*

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/inquirer/government-censors-work-hard-to-decide-what-we-are-allowed-to-see/news-story/535ecceb5c5c6363f15778214ee1b25e>

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/long-shot-democrat-challenger-warns-australia-against-boosting-government-power-over-online-speech/news-story/e9f2c9f7279a3b43c2e133d29d464355>

Just in one edition of one weekend newspaper we have several articles pointing to the **truth** finally being allowed to emerge dusty and unwillingly, blinking into the light. Many of the Australian public were screaming loudly, but seemingly uselessly into the ether, trying desperately to get the rest of the general public to at least hear our pleas for common sense, proper scientific debate and reason to at least know that ALL of the measures being touted by both federal and state governments against a relatively harmless disease were at best useless, and most likely were more harmful than the disease. There was ample evidence, with ample numbers of eminently qualified people able to talk calmly and reasonably about that evidence. They were quietly censored, BY OUR GOVERNMENT, aided and abetted by the social media platforms. Indeed, this is still going on. A majority of our deluded public do not know that all cause mortality did not increase in 2020, when apparently this most deadly disease hit our shores, nor did it rise markedly until mass “vaccination” was practised upon an unsuspecting, uninformed and therefore non consensual target population. Since then, all cause mortality has risen alarmingly, hospitalisation likewise, presumably for a variety of reasons, from increased susceptibility to respiratory diseases and more insidiously “turbo” cancers, heart disease (shockingly high numbers of young fit people), nerve issues, the list is extensive, worrying and a horrid indictment on the medical and government professionals who have, and still do promote an unsafe ineffective injection.

Those of us who had well founded fears as to the safety of these injections feel somewhat comforted now, that at least we had some chance of reaching the ears and eyes of an unsuspecting public. The Misinformation Bill as presented would scotch all chance of that happening, as vested interests, with big wallets would make sure all contrary information was squashed at source, never to see the light of day, with the imprimatur of being Government endorsed.

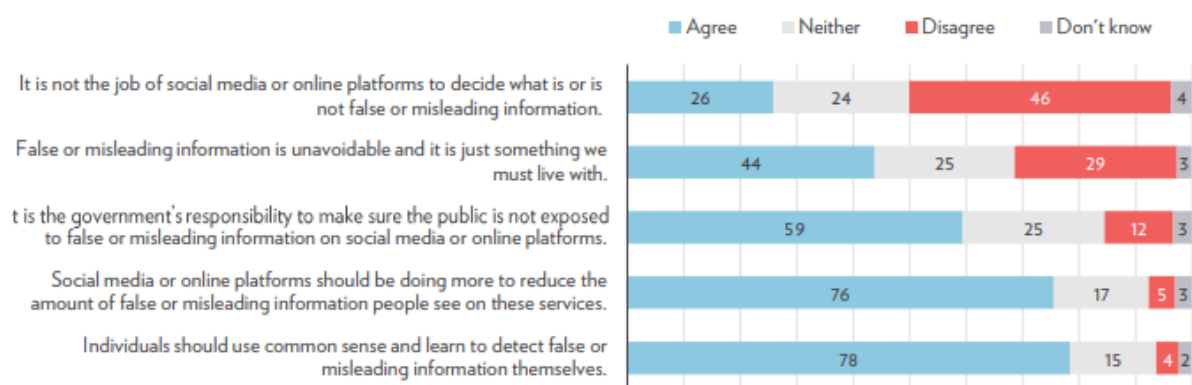
So to the question of the probity of the governments we have, and have had, here in Australia. Have our various administrations always been hand on heart truthful with us, the paying public? Well, history is a funny thing isn't it? I'll just reel of a few porkies, starting with perhaps the most relevant, the Thalidomide debacle, where hundreds of innocent children and their parents were disabled or killed because our federal government once again was slow to react, did not listen to concerned and qualified experts who rang the warning bells early, and continued to allow this drug to be available. They, the government of the day effectively lied.

But what else has the government either been wrong about and covered up, or actively lied about? Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq anyone? Or maybe Robodebt, or maybe the Pink Batts Scheme or the White Australia Policy. All terrible policies, with awful results, and misinformation or disinformation provided by both politicians and/or the public service and other invested parties. My point being, there is no one font of all knowledge, not education providers, media, or Government, that truth comes when open and respectful debate occurs, when all parts of an argument can be shared and heard.

### 3. That the Australian public is unable to discern for itself what is and what is not true

Much of the justification for the Labor governments and ACMAs claims about the “harms” of misinformation and disinformation stem from the University Canberra N&MRC survey and focus group study commissioned by ACMA. The study has a number of flaws, chiefly that the participants were very skewed towards a particular cohort of highly educated, Canberra dwellers whose sources of information over the 2020-2021 period studied were quite limited. The majority were sourcing much of their information from “government approved” sources, such as ABC, government websites and Meta platforms. Lets be honest, the government was actively encouraging, sometimes financially, the larger social media platforms to censor non government approved viewpoints and to enhance the government messages. Even with this severe bias, the vast majority (78%) of participants agreed that individuals should use common sense and learn to detect false or misleading information themselves. Information provided in a vacuum with no opposing debate does not allow for people to determine for themselves what is truth and what is not.

**FIGURE 69** RESPONSIBILITY TO DEAL WITH MISINFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 (%)



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about who is responsible for reducing the exposure to false or misleading information about Covid-19? (Base: N=2,659).

COVID-19: AUSTRALIAN NEWS & MISINFORMATION LONGITUDINAL STUDY

### 4. That harm follows from misunderstanding truth, and that the harm is disabling to the proper functioning of the nation

The draft legislation does not adequately define what a harm is. There is no quantification. Whilst motherhood statements such as:

“harm means any of the following:

8 (a) hatred against a group in Australian society on the basis of

9 ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, age,

10 religion or physical or mental disability;

11 (b) disruption of public order or society in Australia;

12 (c) harm to the integrity of Australian democratic processes or of

13 Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government

14 institutions;

15 (d) harm to the health of Australians;

16 (e) harm to the Australian environment;

17 (f) economic or financial harm to Australians, the Australian

18 economy or a sector of the Australian economy.”

None of these “harms” are quantified, leaving the interpretation open to the censors and others. A harm could be as large as inciting mass riots, or to distributing a leaflet that one person finds slightly disturbing. This is not how a properly operating democratic and open society can thrive. A society that can debate wildly divergent theories in a respectful manner, hearing all points, and mustering valid arguments to counter, is one that is inclusive of all, diverse and stable. Conversely a nation that routinely uses censorship, squashes debate and silences opposition is more commonly known as a totalitarian dictatorship, not something that the vast majority of Australians have any desire to see happen in our nation.

*6. That digital platforms equally, have any better claim to be able to judge what is truth and what is not.*

All humans err. Even AI errs. No one human or a committee of humans ever know the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth. When vested interests are allowed to intervene in the “truth telling” the truth finds itself in an even murkier lair. The Australian public can have no faith in the faceless fact checkers employed by huge international digital platforms. Recent revelations in the US Congress hearings re Twitter files, revelations in Australia on a similar theme, withholding of vital information requested through legal FOI for all manner of information re the Government Covid response give us little comfort that this legislation is designed to help the public, and leads to a suspicion that it is more about aiding organisations and government to cover up misfeasance and malfeasance.

In conclusion, I ask all parliamentarians to contemplate the words of two great truth tellers:

*“I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts.”*

**Abraham Lincoln**

*“All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them.”*

**Galileo Galilei**

and to have faith in the commonsense of the Australian public when presented with contrarian information to discern for themselves what is truth. I urge all representatives to vote down this attempt to silence the Australian public.