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27th July, 2023

To whom it may concern,

RE: Proposed new ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation bill.

I would like to express my objection to this proposed bill.

The fact that this bill has been proposed seems to indicate that the Government is concerned that Australian people do not have the ability to discern for themselves what is true and what is false. This immediately puts me in mind of other countries around the world where the governance structure has the power to control information the citizens consume. Governance structures such as dictatorships or totalitarian regimes. This is NOT the governance structure of Australia. Australia is a democracy and has a constitution to ensure that the rights of the people are protected.

I am concerned that this proposed bill will affect my right to freedom of speech which is granted to me within the constitution. A nation of people that is without the ability to speak or to debate ideas publicly is by very definition not free but enslaved. The era in which we live involves considerable public interaction by individuals on internet-based platforms such as social media. In order to maintain a free and just society, Australia must protect the ability for Australian citizens and residents to interact freely in both face-to-face situations and internet-based platforms without unwarranted interference from government authorities. If this bill were to be passed, the people of Australia would ultimately be enslaved by people who would have the authority to decide what is mis/dis information or 'truth.'

What is truth? Instead of the Australian Government creating a bill to combat mis/dis information, what if it allowed ALL information to be exposed to the public sphere of free thought and debate? In other words, let the people decide. When false information is exposed to public scrutiny, the arguments and theories it is based upon will eventually crumble. It is alarming that the Government would think that the people of Australia are not capable of making informed decisions for themselves regarding information. I believe this is an overstep of the authority and power granted to a democratic Government.

If power is granted to this proposed bill, where will this power end? In time, what else will be defined as mis or dis information? What other sources of information will be open to the Government defined authority to discern truth? Certain books perhaps? In a by-gone era there was a regime that sought to control mis/dis information by burning books in 1933. The atrocities that regime went on to perpetrate haunt the world to this day.

This bill should not be passed. The people of Australia should not be silenced and enslaved. I strongly urge the Government of Australia to not overstep the power and authority which was democratically granted to you.

Yours sincerely

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