

29 July 2023

**Submission to the Inquiry into the Communications Legislation Amendment
(Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023**

I do not support this proposed bill at all. I am asking you to recommend not to proceed with this bill.

Firstly, the premise of the bill is that reserve powers will be granted to ACMA “just in case.” The fact sheet says that the voluntary code is already working well. Therefore there seems to be no need for this bill. This bill seeks to give ACMA powers to combat a problem that we do not even know whether we will have it or not. I do not support granting powers to agencies to address problems that are not even there. The timing of this bill seems to indicate it is taking advantage of the covid chaos to make a power grab.

Secondly, the main effect of this bill will be to restrict free speech and this seems to be the purpose of the bill. The extreme penalties are well out of proportion.

Thirdly, free speech is one of the pillars of democracy. It seems the purpose of this bill is to use democracy to take away democracy. Therefore I am opposed to this bill by its very principle.

Fourthly, this bill only applies to some organizations. Government and media are exempt. Free speech is for all.

Fifthly, I am opposed to this bill because I do not trust any organization (government or otherwise) to accurately or disinterestedly determine what is and what is not “harmful.” I have seen ample evidence during the covid period to know that no organization can be trusted to make this assessment. I also do not agree with the premise that words on a computer screen cause “harm.”

Sixthly, I am opposed to this bill because I do not trust any organization (government or otherwise) to accurately or disinterestedly determine is and what is not “fact.” I have seen ample evidence during the covid period to know that no organization can be trusted to make this assessment.

Seventhly, I am opposed to this bill because I do not want any organization to determine what I am allowed to read, see or think about, and I do not want any organization to usurp my right to think for myself. I do not need an organization to act as a nanny-state for me.

I am utterly opposed to this bill and ask you to recommend not to proceed with it at all.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry.