

I wish to express my opposition to the proposed New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation.

In my opinion, what we have witnessed during the last 3 years clearly demonstrates exactly why we don't need these changes because what we were being told was misinformation or disinformation, has been shown to at least be partially true if not totally true.

For example, initially we were told that the Covid-19 vaccine was mandated because it would a) stop you catching the virus and then when that was clearly evident to be untrue, then b) it would stop the transmission of the virus to your family and friends and when that was clearly evident to be untrue then c) it would stop hospitalisation or serious injury and that is now been shown to be clearly untrue.

Anyone who opposed this propaganda was labelled as a spreader of misinformation or disinformation but in hindsight those opposed to the above propaganda have largely been proven to be right i.e. it doesn't stop you getting it, it doesn't stop you spreading it.

There have been a number of social media posts in my feed lately that have a common theme and that is that the people who try and censor free speech are never the good guys, and I think that is applicable in this situation... To try and censor free speech by labelling one side of an argument as misinformation or disinformation is not something that promotes a robust progressive society and has the fingerprints of communism all over it and in my opinion is dangerous.

If you allow society to freely express differing opinions then the truth works its way to the top, and that is especially relevant in regard to science. One scientist has a hypothesis that is accepted until another scientist proves that a differing hypothesis is more likely to be true until eventually one hypothesis is regarded as the truth and remains the truth until it is proven wrong.

We need to allow all sides to have input into any important discussions in society and then let individuals decide for themselves what is 'their' truth.

Again the Covid-19 vaccine mandate is a clear example where people should have been allowed to listen to every side of the argument and make their own decision because in hindsight the vaccine provided so very little benefit to society, maybe a very short period of increased immunity, but that is offset by the massive increase in mortality in all the countries that mandated the clot shot plus the massive increase in cancers, heart issues, autoimmune disease, to name a few of the known side effects of the clot shot.

So I ask the question, what benefit was there in censoring all those that opposed the mandate of the vaccine? The alleged misinformation/disinformation was not a danger to society and was not dangerous as alleged by the 'fact checkers'. In fact there are medical experts that have clearly demonstrated that not mandating the vaccine was important to achieve herd immunity. Also the information that Ivermectin was dangerous to humans, and was a horse dewormer medication, when it has been used by humans for 40 years and is considered one of the safest drugs on the market... who was purveying misinformation there... clearly the people that were saying that it was a dangerous drug but they weren't censored, in fact just the opposite, they were promoted as telling the truth...

This just proves why we cannot have censorship on free speech.

I also ask, who determines what is misinformation or disinformation... that seems to be a very subjective ruling. We have seen 'fact checkers' that don't seem to have any medical qualifications deeming information provided from medical experts who have had a long career in their chosen field labelled as purveyors of misinformation – do you really think we are going to believe a non-qualified 'fact checker' knows more than a medical expert that has spent 40 years studying in their chosen field... that is ridiculous.

The Australian Government is trying to 'sell' these proposed changes as being overseen by an independent body but frankly I do not believe that for one moment and it seems to be a power grab by the government.

I have seen reported that it will be only the government that can determine what is misinformation and what is not – even the opposition could be subject to these proposed changes which would restrict their ability to bring issues to the attention of the people. If the government doesn't like their message they can just label it misinformation and they are censored, which I consider is dangerous to our freedoms.

So I strongly oppose any changes that would censor free speech on any platform, including censoring free speech on social media platforms.