

Submission:

Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

I wish to express my strong opposition to the passing of the proposed Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2023.

If the past three years have taught us anything, it's that the biggest disseminators of misinformation and disinformation has been the government and mainstream media, causing devastation to millions of Australian lives. The fact that there has been no acknowledgement that the authorities got it wrong during the pandemic is such an insult to the Australian people who have suffered so much as a result. Yet, some of the alternative information disseminated during the same period that was deemed to be misinformation, has now been revealed to be the truth.

This bill proposes for one governmental body to be the sole authority over what is misinformation, disinformation, essentially a Ministry of Truth. This has no place in a free and open society. The Australian people have a right to access information regarding different points of view and the freedom to decide for themselves what the truth is. Public confidence in government and mainstream media's ability to disseminate truth has severely diminished over the past three years. I believe a significant proportion of the population have lost trust in government and media and are hungry for the truth, therefore any law that denies access to certain information from social media sites under the guise of being misinformation or disinformation will be seen as possibly truthful and will be sought out through alternate means.

The proposed Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill will exempt government and mainstream media from complying with these laws. This is another insult to the intelligence of the Australian people, while social media platforms are censored under threat of heavy penalty for posting information that is not in alignment with the official narrative.

We see this bill for what it is. It is not about our safety, it is about control through censorship. Millions of people around the world have awoken to the corruption and lies from their governments and want change.

In a democratic society, freedom to express differing views accompanied by open and transparent debate is how the Australian people can decide for themselves what the truth is, without derogatory name calling or censoring of ideas outside of the official narrative.

Rob Henderson