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3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2023.

Hon. A. Albanese,  
Prime Minister of Australia,  
Canberra,  
ACT. 2600.

Dear Mr Albanese,

I am deeply concerned about the Commonwealth Government's proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill. Sadly, it is a flawed attempt to control unsavoury or incorrect information in the public square for the following reasons:

1. No body or institution can ever claim to have infinite knowledge or truth about an issue
2. No one is infallible, meaning that no one is incapable of making mistakes or being wrong
3. Mankind is inherently biased in thought and attitude to many issues, often ignoring or rejecting evidence to the contrary
4. There is a real risk of committing injustice if punitive measures are undertaken against a person or body when dealing with controversial or conflicting data that needs further comprehensive study
5. It is a fundamental human right to have freedom of speech and any curtailment of this diminishes the stature of personhood
6. Often the truth about a matter only becomes clear after informed dialogue occurs, which may follow a period of 'misinformation' or 'disinformation'

I am only too aware that in medical science, which is my background, it is not uncommon for dogmas to be overturned as new research findings become available and basis for medical practice is replaced by alternative hypotheses. Even though randomized, controlled clinical trials are the best mechanism of trying to establish the truth about an issue, there is always some chance for error, and particularly so in relation to observational studies.

Referring to the dignity of personhood, it is only totalitarian states, imposing in a top-down approach, restrictions on what people want to express. If this proposed Bill, via ACMA's (Australian Communication and Media Authority) arbitrary authority, results in this outcome, Australia would be condemned by the rest of the world's free countries and be in violation of UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights which has stood the test of time since 1948. It is therefore my plea that your Government does not create a bad legacy such as this.

Yours sincerely,

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(Consultant Physician retired)  
Adjunct Professor, QUT

