

Date: 3/8/23

To: The Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts,
GPO Box 594 Canberra ACT 2601

Re: New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation (the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023)

Dear Officer,

SUBMISSION

It is my opinion that this bill should not be passed. As an Australian citizen I do not need ACMA to 'protect' me, I am quite capable of choosing what information I read or watch, then critically analyse ideas for myself. I do enjoy exposure to a varied interpretation of information, which at times can allow me to consider ideas that I might not have thought of. If I do not want to engage content, I can simply turn it off. As a teacher I am aware of how varied the human brain can respond to information and how sharing different interpretations can enrich understanding.

Reading through this bill I find it inconsistent with basic human rights of freedom of speech and expression. Freedoms that should be fundamental rights in a democracy where people have the right of self-determination.

This Bill is highly ambiguous in terms of 'misinformation codes' and who is going to develop them, who will replace or vary the code used. In my opinion this Bill allows ACMA too much power in deciding what is misinformation, without any meaningful checks and balances in place. The penalties are heavy handed and unconstitutional. This Bill has the potential to turn law abiding Australian citizens into criminals for expressing their democratic rights to free speech and expression.

The words "The Parliament intends the services be regulated", are not adequate protection for the Australian people considering what we have witnessed over the past three years. Government representatives daily encouraged the dangerous Covid 19 shots, which have now been proved neither safe nor effective. And an unparalleled waste of taxpayers dollars.

To 'protect' the Australian people this Bill would be better served as a check and balance for the 'information' coming from the parliament to the people. This Bill needs to be used for those that are on the exclusion list, except for (a). It might help the Parliament remember that they are supposed to represent and work for the good of the people of Australia.