

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

I am vehemently opposed to this Bill. If passed in its current form, this law would render Australia's commitment to freedom of speech and expression useless.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Article 19 says that everyone should have the right to hold opinions without interference, and everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression, which includes receiving and imparting information of all kinds, through any media of his/her choice.

Over the last three years of the pandemic we have seen the suppression of free speech and expression in the mainstream media and on social media. This suppression of free speech and information – with the labelling of it as misinformation or disinformation - is in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Passage of this Bill would further erode our human right to freedom of speech and expression and access to information of all kinds.

Over the last three years we have seen the censorship of information from world-renowned, highly published, respected, frontline, experienced scientific and clinical medical experts with no conflicts of interest. The role of conveying public health information has been usurped by bureaucrats and governments.

If this Bill is passed, I believe the resultant censorship will further erode the public's collective trust in government and authority and be the death knell to democracy in Australia.

Sincerely

Concerned citizen