

Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 - Submission

Name: Barbara Tragarz
Address: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am opposing the government bill to protect us from misinformation and disinformation. This bill is essentially a totalitarian assault on freedom of speech. It is Big Brother censoring and manipulation information of Australia Citizens.

I don't want government to give all the powers to themselves, both Australian and foreign media companies, and bureaucratic few – to destroy free and open debate. To think clearly and be able to access by many different points of view and debate and choose what is relevant and thought through.

As Christian I hold different views regarding moral values that may be censored or removed from public debate as a result of the proposed changes. I am pro family and pro life and that is what is most important to me, and most of people of faith.

Independent schools may be targeted, censored, and prevented from teaching their faith freely with online and access limited to information beyond what is professed by the state. As someone born in a Communist country where information was tightly regulated and mistruths propagated by the government, I am highly sceptical the powers granted will achieve anything good. The legislation seeks to cement the political status quo held by politicians of the day by preventing opposing views being shared.

In politics and scientific endeavours nothing is ever settled. It is short sighted to infer the powers granted will be used benevolently to promote a greater understanding of what great minds have through reason discerned. It will be used to enforce the agenda of politicians of the day and quell dissent.

During Covid 19 many Citizens and professional medical staff were censored by Government. 4,200 posts were removed as misinformation, but most of them were true as we know now. Similar to the

way forcing Citizens to take Covid vaccinations was a travesty of justice, removing the ability of people to voice their oppositional viewpoints is equally so.

An example of this was when deleterious policies were carried on for longer than they would occur in a society with free speech. China is a case in point where the chilling effect of the policing of speech declared incorrect misinformation (running contrary to state narratives) resulted in 3 years of lockdowns after the mild effects of Covid were widely known elsewhere.

Melbourne which laid claim to the unenviable title of “most locked down city in the world” at the time could have remained locked down longer if the information control apparatus proposed as part of this bill were in place at the time. Equally as infantilising is the proposition a government ministry of truth is needed to ensure the undiscerning proles don’t fall for the blatantly obvious and often brazenly satirical information posted on the internet.

Given the above concerns and complete absence of any benefits resulting from the proposed legislative change, I strongly submit to you the proposed amendment be abandoned.

Sincerely,

Barbara Tragarz.