

Myles Rye

1 August 2023

The Chair, Australian Communications and Media Authority

Dear Chair,

I write in response to the ACMA's request for feedback on the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 (the Bill).

The Bill, despite the political rhetoric, is nothing short of government censorship.

It is clearly apparent that this government DOES NOT WANT A COUNTRY OF CRITICAL THINKERS WHO ARE CAPABLE OF THINKING FOR THEMSELVES. The ACMA as a government agent, through this Bill seeks to purport that only governments know the truth and as such will control media platforms through punitive actions to stifle any information that a government agency does not believe meets the states' narrative. This a key feature of totalitarianism.

Governments in this country and some other previously democratic nations have completely forgotten it is the people who run a democracy, and any such containment of information as outlined in this bill, solely at the discretion of a government agency, is simply a tool for a transition to totalitarianism, in which propaganda, misinformation and disinformation is controlled by the state in order to control the people. It is clearly undemocratic.

This is further exacerbated under the following extract of the Bill:

excluded content for misinformation purposes means any of the following:

- (a) content produced in good faith for the purposes of entertainment, parody or satire;
- (b) professional news content;
- (c) content produced by or for an educational institution accredited by any of the following:
 - (i) the Commonwealth;
 - (ii) a State;
 - (iii) a Territory;
 - (iv) a body recognised by the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory as an accreditor of educational institutions;

The federal and state governments, their agencies and bureaucrats, as well as the "Professional news content" have shamelessly lied to the people and provided so much misinformation, and disinformation, particularly over our recent history, yet they are excluded from being held accountable for misinformation under this Bill! It is abhorrent that the federal government would think this acceptable to the people. Shame on any bureaucrat that assists this undemocratic, anti-Australian law to pass, as its sole purpose is clearly to stifle free speech and the discussion of ideas.

This, in exchange for the notion that only the government, its politicised bureaucrats and its supported mainstream media know the truth.

This condescending, dictatorial piece of legislation is an affront to our democracy and collective intelligence. The oxymora and hypocrisy of including a definition of harm from misinformation as: "harm to the integrity of Australian democratic processes or of Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government institutions;" when this bill itself is of great harm to our democratic processes of open debate and discussion, whereby the reasonable individual is able to make their own decisions and undertake their own research, uninhibited by government censorship.

Where is the appeal process? When so called fact checkers get it wrong, and where it is clear from recent events here and particularly in the USA, where it has been proved that "Fact Checkers" were not checking facts, but checking compliance with government narratives; where is the accountability of the ACMA for its decisions to curtail real facts from being published? There is no appeal process. The ACMA, ie, the government of the day, only, have the final say on what can be discussed openly.

This Bill is not appropriate for a democratic society and should be withdrawn in toto.



Myles Rye