

Submission concerning draft Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

The Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 (“the Bill”) seeks to curtail citizens freedom of speech. Without freedom of speech and robust open public debate in our country, there can be no democracy. Ironically, the legislators attempt to justify the motives for this Bill as necessary to protect ‘the safety and wellbeing of Australians, as well as our democracy, society and economy’. As discussed below, it is now obvious that the greatest perpetrators of misinformation during the recent pandemic was the government. As the overwhelming data and information currently emerging makes this apparent, it is not surprising that the government are scrambling to censor information which may awaken Australians to this fact. Nor is it surprising that the government have, exempted themselves, and the wider political-media-complex, under this legislation, from scrutiny for perpetrating misinformation. Surely, if the legislators, as they imply, have derived an objective and reliable method of verifying information (for example by showing that there is credible science and data to support it) this should be applied above all to government and “professional news content”. The exemption of government and “professional news” clearly exposes the biases inherent in this legislation and the structures it intends to implement i.e. that the single government narrative, which no doubt will be reflected in the selection of ACMA members, will by definition be deemed good and true.

We are increasingly seeing our country indirectly governed by unelected and unaccountable bureaucratic bodies with invisible stakeholders, and our government hiding behind such bodies to avoid accountability. During the pandemic, the state and federal governments constantly said that their policies were based upon ‘expert advice’, but were never able to provide the actual science of data to support their policies, or the specific advice of their experts, despite repeated requests to do so. Despite imposing draconian measures, including masking, lockdowns, and mandates which resulted in the resignation of 4,000 nurses in Queensland alone and bankrupted thousands of businesses, Chief Health Officers were unable to provide any scientific evidence to support these policies when requested in senate estimates. In particular, despite the propaganda, there was never evidence that unvaccinated persons presented a greater risk of transmitting COVID than vaccinated persons. In fact, recent data emerging from Australia indicates that currently 99% of COVID hospitalisations and deaths are amongst the vaccinated.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (“TGA”), on which the government allegedly relied to support their policies, have recently admitted that they did not conduct independent studies on the safety or efficacy of the Pfizer COVID vaccines approved in Australia, but relied on the Food and Drug Administration in the U.S. (“FDA”). The FDA have also admitted that they did not conduct independent studies but relied on the research carried out by Pfizer. This lack of oversight is alarming, but hardly surprising, given that

1. the big four pharmaceutical firms, [REDACTED] have in the past decade, collectively been ordered to pay over \$3 [REDACTED] al penalties and damages for defrauding regulators, lying to doctors and falsifying science;
2. both the TGA and FDA are not independent but sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry and so have a clear a clear conflict of interest;
3. the pharmaceutical industry spends on average US\$233 million each year lobbying the American government alone -

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7054854/>.

Nevertheless, the government throughout the pandemic reiterated that the vaccines were “safe and effective” and that if you had the vaccine you would not get Covid, while they censored and ridiculed anyone who questioned the narrative regardless of their pedigree and qualifications. The government have since continued to ignore clear signals in the data of injury and excess deaths following the roll out of the vaccines and indeed appear to be suppressing this information. Given the governments complicity, it has never been more important that citizens, particularly dissenting scientists and academics, have the right to freedom of speech and that this is protected at all costs. Real science and truth invite and withstand debate and challenge. Lies and propaganda are threatened by truth and perpetrators need to use force to suppress dissent before it awakens people, which is why governments who have imposed censorship in the past have never been on the right side of history.

We saw the same political-pharma-media complex mobilise in the coordinated campaign to malign Ivermectin, a component of a proven treatment protocol designed by a team of some of the most published pulmonary virologists in the world at the outset of the pandemic and presented to the US Senate, proven in widespread studies world-wide, and used to end the pandemic in a matter of weeks in Uttar Pradesh, India. An effective treatment protocol for Covid, however, threatened the emergency use authorisation of the vaccines, which had no long term safety data, and the billions to be made by the pharmaceutical industry. A treatment would also have precluded the government declaring a state of emergency, masking and lockdowns which were instrumental in attempting to convince the public to accept a universal experimental vaccine template. Despite being awarded the Nobel Prize for six decades of multifaceted use in controlling human infectious diseases, and extensive data demonstrating its value in treating Covid, Ivermectin was quickly banned by the TGA and maligned by the media as “horsepaste”, and its advocates, some of the most published physicians in the world, were ridiculed for ‘peddling’ the same. A bill which was designed to protect the people against the harms of misleading and deceptive misinformation would surely ensure that this could never be repeated, but instead the current Bill exempts the government and seeks to silence the very voices that might have averted the harms inflicted on Australians by this fraud. After the lucrative mass roll out of the vaccine, Ivermectin was approved.

Throughout the pandemic, the government used alarmist modelling and messaging and exaggerated cherry-picked statistics to create fear and public acceptance of a universal vaccine template. They also deliberately omitted to provide context to their messaging which would have made their messaging statistically insignificant, and in fact deceptive and misleading. Every evening ‘professional news’ platforms broadcast government officials announcing the deaths from Covid that day, giving the impression we were in a deadly pandemic and pleading with viewers to get vaccinated. However, they deliberately omitted the following context. Every year there are a significant number of mortalities from influenza and pneumonia. Pre-covid, in 2019, for example, flu and pneumonia were the underlying cause of 4,124 deaths in Australia (ABS), compared to 905 reported deaths from COVID in 2020 pre vaccination. However Covid deaths were exaggerated, by quoting patients who had died *with* Covid and not from Covid. 75% of reported Covid deaths had a significant comorbidity. To provide context and compare apples to apples, if we were to report mortalities from influenza and pneumonia in the same way, 17,385 people died *with* flu and pneumonia in 2019, (i.e. where flu or pneumonia was either the underlying cause or an associate cause of death). Interesting that there was no daily government faux condolence for 17,385 flu mortalities in 2019 but they found it necessary to remind the public daily of every covid death with the tag line that viewers should get the experimental vaccine or risk death. It was also not brought to the public’s attention that the

average age of the Covid mortalities reported was in excess of the average life expectancy in Australia and the risk to healthy persons under 50 was negligible. Misleading and deceptive.

Through the pandemic politicians publicly blamed, shamed and segregated those who were concerned about the safety of the vaccine, including thousands of nurses who had worked selflessly at the beginning of the pandemic and before the experimental vaccine was made available, and who were forced by the mandates to resign. Many of these people lost their livelihoods, homes and many lost their families and friends. And yet, despite the hearsay, there was zero science, and still is no science or data to demonstrate that the unvaccinated presented a greater risk of transmission than the vaccinated. Again, segregation was designed to create fear and punish the non-compliant. If ever there was an example of deceptive and misleading information causing “serious harm to a significant portion of the Australian population (‘about 20% of the population at that time) and economy” it was this. Last week’s Weekend Australian carried the headline: “Covid cover-up: how science was silenced”...as indeed were doctors, academics and citizens throughout the pandemic who called out the government’s non-scientific policies and lies. And yet, the Bill as currently drafted would not prevent history repeating itself, since, according to the architects of this Bill, the government apparently does not do hate speech or misinformation.

The Bill proposes extortionate and disproportionate penalties (\$0.5 million for individuals, \$6.88 million for corporations) particularly given the ambiguity and potentially subjective interpretation of the Bill. This is the same strategy we saw state governments use to enforce the Covid measures which in the large part were legally unenforceable. Disproportionate penalties of this magnitude are designed to create fear with the potential to ruin people’s lives and businesses and thus suppress freedom of speech through fear without having to enforce anything. Just as the responsibility of vaccine mandates during the pandemic was delegated, via directives, to individual human resource manager’s within organisations, who were threatened with extortionate penalties, the bill threatens alternate media platforms to censor anything which risks falling foul of the ambiguous legislation, deflecting from the government’s culpability and hand in the censorship of free speech.

It is evident from the pandemic that we cannot rely on our government for the truth and should certainly not allow them to create a Ministry of Truth by legislating to be the arbiters of truth, albeit by proxy of ACMA. A government that can censor it’s critics has licence for every atrocity – it is the beginning of totalitarianism. “Propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state’ (Noam Chomsky). There has never been a time when we look back that those censoring people were on the right side of history. In the last three years, we have seen unprecedented government overreach and the systematic erosion of our civil liberties and democracy. This Bill should be opposed at all cost.

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