

Leah Suffolk

06th August 2023

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Australia

Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

Attn: The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

House of Representatives/The Senate – Current sitting members elected by the people of Australia to serve and protect.

My name is Leah Suffolk, I am mother, an employee, a taxpayer and an Australian born proud citizen of this once great nation, requesting you accept my submission for your review and consideration in relation to the proposed Communication Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

I will start with words from Jonathan D. Casper *“The freedom to express varying and often opposing ideas is essential to variety of conceptions of democracy. If democracy is viewed as essentially a process – a way in which collective decisions for society are made – free expression is crucial to the openness of the process and to such characteristics as elections, representation of interest, and the like”*

Australia is a democratic country, previously upholding the rights of its citizens and those choosing to call this nation home. It is a country that prides itself on diversity, and with diversity the nation has been equipped with knowledge and education from all corners of the world. We are unique, yet share the same core principal values of respecting this country which we call home.

You are serving members - sworn in to represent our shared and diverse opinions and to ensure the rights of every individual to live freely. Fundamentally inclusive of these rights you uphold to represent, is the right to determine and view of ones own accord, information. Information that no governing agency has the right to label and classify as Misinformation of Disinformation.

Historically speaking and even more prevalent in recent years, is the proof of censorship, and the harm this may impose on those individuals who cannot willingly seek their own truth. Narratives have changed, and as has the information that is provided to the public audience. What was once censored is now front-page news.

The ACMA has existing powers in relation to media, both written and verbal and across all current platforms. This reach does not and cannot be extended to reach further and encroach into the rights of Individual Australians to access media content they choose of their own free will.

It is safe to question, and you must also question the ACMA’s decision making and where they obtain the information that determines what is Misinformation and Disinformation. If a government agency does not agree with information available to the public, this does not make this information Misinformation of Disinformation, what it does is makes this a difference of opinion, enabling Australians to form an opinion for themselves, to which the majority are responsible law abiding

everyday people. Your bill will not prevent those that do not meet the criteria mentioned in my previous sentence from accessing and sharing content, your financial penalties will not prevent this either. What this amendment will do is silence the individual and remove their right to free speech.

We the people of Australia do not need a government to silence our voices, we need a government that empowers us to use this right and to make this country stronger, to represent us for all our individualism which makes us collectively one Australian voice.

The Communication Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 cannot be supported, it is the epitome of being Un Australian, do your due diligence. Remember the voices of the people who elected you, and serve them well.

I will finish off with wise words from John Adams *"Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the people, who, have a right and a desire to know"*

I am available to discuss at any time on the below mobile number or email:

Regards

Leah Suffolk

Leah Suffolk

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