

3 August, 2023

Ms Nerida O’Loughlin PSM, Chair of the ACMA
Ms Creina Chapman, Deputy Chair
And part-time, full-time and associate members
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Dear members of the Authority,

The claim has been made that, “Misinformation and disinformation pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, as well as to our democracy, society and economy.”

The past three and a half years have shown us that it is, in fact, not misinformation and disinformation per se but rather the censorship of thoughts, ideas, observations and discoveries that is actually to be of concern in Australia in 2023 and in the coming years. It is biased, unproven, financially profitable and internationally driven propaganda that, in truth, poses a threat to the “safety and well-being of Australians, as well as to our democracy, society and economy”.

With the proposal of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023, Australian citizens are being treated as though we are incapable of deep, independent, critical thought. This is insulting and very concerning. No person, organisation or government department, however well-intentioned it may be, has a monopoly on truth nor should they be given unrestrained agency to suppress and censor the sharing of knowledge and ideas. Freedom of thought and the freedom to peacefully deliver one’s thoughts and opinions in the public sphere are essential facets of life within a truly democratic nation. It is the very sharing of ideas and opinions that allows us to continually learn and grow as individuals and as a society.

So I ask, in relation to the Communications Legislation Amendment Bill, who will really be given the power to determine what is fact and what is fiction? Who will really decide what is truth and what is dis/misinformation? Will it be the partisan government of the day? Or will it be big corporations who seek to suppress the truth? Will it be international bodies that wish to dictate to our nation’s leaders what is acceptable and not acceptable? What have we come to in this country if this the level to which our supposed leaders will stoop in order to control the minds and lives of Australians? It will be a grave and sad situation in this country if the proposed “Disinformation Bill” passes into Australian law.

As someone once wisely said, “Beware those who are quick to censor. They are afraid of what they do not know.” It is this that I will continue to teach my children daily, for only in learning to think, analyse and reason *for ourselves* will we ever really be able to protect our safety, wellbeing and democracy.

Please reconsider enacting this unnecessary bill. Allow Australians to reason and think for ourselves.

Sincerely,

