

I write to vehemently oppose the Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2023, a proposed legislation that strikes at the very heart of our democratic values.

The idea that the government would assume the role of arbiter of truth is both alarming and contradictory to the principles of a free and open society. To place such power in the hands of the government is to walk a path that leads to the shadow of totalitarian regimes, where individual rights are sacrificed at the altar of state control.

Australia's reputation as a beacon of liberty and free speech has attracted countless individuals seeking refuge from oppressive regimes. This proposed bill stands as an affront to the very principles that have welcomed those in search of freedom, giving a chilling reminder of the tyrannies they escaped.

Who defines what constitutes truth? On what grounds does the government claim the right to impose its version of reality? These questions reveal the inherently subjective nature of truth and the dangerous path this bill would set us on. It creates a slippery slope where the government can manipulate, restrict, and ultimately silence dissenting voices.

The bill's ambiguous and subjective terminology, especially in defining 'harm' from misinformation, leaves wide-open doors for misuse and misinterpretation. The potential ramifications on individual thought, rational discourse, and even religious freedom are far-reaching and deeply unsettling.

Furthermore, this bill is symptomatic of a growing trend towards a 'woke' culture that seeks to suppress differing opinions and ideologies. It not only threatens individuality but also stifles healthy debate and intellectual growth. This is not the path that a vibrant and diverse nation like Australia should tread.

In conclusion, I urge the Australian government to abandon this perilous proposal. Such a law undermines the very foundations of our democratic society and cannot be allowed to pass. We must remain steadfast in our commitment to freedom of speech, intellectual diversity, and the right of every citizen to think, speak, and believe as they choose.

I would like my submission to be made public.

Thank you.

Adrian Bertino-Clarke