

## Governmental Feedback on Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill

I believe the Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill being proposed is a gross over reach to try and fix the problem of falsehoods being spread on the internet.

I am very concerned that the current proposal of the Government's for controlling falsehoods on social media platforms would result in users being unable to express their views on social media with this bill they are saying is about "misinformation and disinformation". Especially as the Government (but not the opposition) appears to not be willing to be held to the same standards that they want to apply to the rest of us. This seems to reflect that it is really based on censoring people's opinions and not trying to reduce falsehoods. There are so many examples of ideas being floated on Covid and vaccinations that were said to be false but later proved to be correct.

I agree that genuine proven falsehoods should not be allowed to be presented as fact on social media and therefore misleading people. But people presenting ideas and alternate views or having debate about something that people can legitimately have different views about should not be stymied by government in a free democratic society. This can also lead to a further eroding of freedom of having different views and expressing them. This can be applied to political views, religious views and any alternate view someone wants to express without running the risk of being accused of dis/misinformation. This is a very worrying development if allowed to proceed and can again be a source of cancel culture that is very real problem at the moment.

The other side of this is also when people have differing views and then the other side try and shut down the other persons legitimate views by saying that it is "hate" speech or may cause 'serious harm'. This is very subjective and as the bill stands would be based on an ACMA bureaucrat and could lead to false accusations and shutting down debate or even expensive litigation. Why do people have to have their personal views and choices validated by everyone when there are 2 sides to the debate or views. It isn't hate speech to have different views due to cultural, religious or political ideation. We need again to learn to tolerate differing views, learn again to debate ideas and not to need people to agree with us to feel validated.

This proposal relies on a government appointed ACMA having the power to dictate what they believe is truth or what the group think of ideas should be. And also having the big financial stick hanging over the social media companies will make them very edgy and perhaps over inclined to take down posts just to be on the safe side. And the overreach continues with being able to have the social media companies being required to store and or to provide media posts of individuals to ACMA and thus be accumulating information of peoples views. This sounds like keep tabs on individuals and could lead to group think being required by people living in democratic Australia.

Why this is bad in a nut shell:

- The government would be the ultimate authority of truth via ACMA
- ACMA requiring storing or providing some records of its citizens
- ACMA could demand that social media organisations take down content that they disagree with
- ACMA being the arbiter of what is too loosely be defined as hate speech
- Ideological conformity could be demanded and enforced in our democratic Australia through this mechanism
- Only one idea being tolerated and promoted is indoctrination
- Having overseas social media companies monitoring post more could also mean they have undue influence on the group think in our country and an invasion of privacy
- Not enough transparency or accountability built in to the proposal
- Is against human rights

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

Thank you for this opportunity to present my views.

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