

## **Re: Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.**

I feel compelled to write a submission on the proposed bill on 'Disinformation-Misinformation', rather than just sign a petition or comment as I feel this is a very important issue.

As a mother and grandmother, I want my children and grandchildren to be able to debate and question anything that comes from government, corporations, health, school or any other organisation that claims their information is true!

Once free speech is removed, then we are no longer a democracy. People around the world look at Australia as the 'lucky country'. Once we are unable to have healthy debate on any issue, we have become like the people of China.

Watching videos of the people in China, who are unable or afraid to speak freely against anything their government says, even in the privacy of their own home, then we are as close to communism as you can get.

I recently viewed a document in which a judge in America ruled that 'free speech' was fundamental to a free America. America, has it written into their constitution. They also have a 'Bill of Rights', which we do not!

The Judge quoted some famous, important and influential people in his judgment which I have added below: -

**"The principal function of free speech under the United States' system of government is to invite dispute; it may indeed best serve its high purpose when it induces a condition of unrest, creates dissatisfaction with conditions as they are, or even stirs people to anger."**

**"Freedom of speech and press is the indispensable condition of nearly every other form of freedom."**

**"For if men are to be precluded from offering their sentiments ... reason is of no use to us; the freedom of speech may be taken away, and dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep, to the slaughter.' George Washington"**

**"Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the free acts of speech.' Benjamin Franklin"**

**"I may disapprove of what you say, but I would defend to the death your right to say it.' Evelyn Beatrice Hill"**

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Placing an authority like 'ACMA' to censor people is another step towards communism. The social media companies already have in place a censorship policy of people promoting violence or posting violence against an individual or group. That should be enough. I do not condone hate speech or violence, whether personally or on any platform.

What we have seen the last few years is that anyone who questions the narrative is wrong, regardless of whether it was true or not!

If this bill is approved, then that should cover every individual in Australia, including Government, corporations, media and all authority figures. No one should be immune!

This bill singles out the Australians with a voice, those asking questions and also those with influence across the world. Media of any sort in Australia would not be worth reading or watching. Many have already turned away from main-stream media as a result of the last three years, myself included! This bill would effectively kill it to most Australians.

Many of the things that were censored over the last three years have proven to be true, so this bill would not inspire confidence in government in the future in anything it says or proposes!

A healthy, functioning democracy requires freedom of speech, which means that ideas from across the ideological and political spectrum are discussed and debated with the hope that good arguments, guided by the light of truth, will win the day. However, words like harm, misinformation, and disinformation have been weaponised to shut down critics of the broader ideological agenda at work in western nations, with COVID being a prime example.

When you tell a lie, you steal someone's right to the truth. I certainly don't believe we have had the truth for a very long time from those elected to look out for its people.

We only need to take a look into history to see what happened when Hitler censored people, used propaganda to gain the approval of the public and the devastating consequences of that censorship! 'Never again' has been the mantra since!

I would consider myself an intelligent individual, who is able to discern fact from fiction and apply due diligence in my effort to do so. Looking at 'all' the evidence at hand, whether by government, individuals with credentialing in that area or others expressing their feelings or knowledge.

I want my grandchildren, children and all children in this country to grow up in a democratic environment where the ability to challenge and debate is not censored!

Kind regards

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