

My Say on the exposure draft of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

As an Australian citizen, I write to express the strongest possible objection to the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

This bill is a direct threat to the democratic principles upon which Australia was founded.

If enacted, it would suppress, even usurp, intelligent, informed debate and critical-thinking analysis on any and every topic that the government deemed should be locked out of the arena for free expression and free exchange of ideas, opinions, hypotheses and research results.

Even more seriously, it could stifle any attempt to speak out against governmental and institutional corruption, or hold those in power accountable.

Besides which, what person/s or body would have the power to declare what constituted misinformation or disinformation? This is not made clear, just as the terms themselves are not made clear. And what chance would there be for any independent, highly credentialed person or body to prove to the public that what the government had decreed to be mis/disinformation was, in fact, completely accurate?

This bill is a blatant attempt to suppress and control social media in order to suppress and control Australian society.

Even the submission process is an exercise in suppression, as it does not allow anywhere near ample time for the bill to be fully considered and debated by the best independent minds and institutions in the country.

In addition, it is outrageous, even egregious, that the government, its mouthpieces (mainstream media) and specific protected organisations would be exempt from being accused of or taken to task for spouting misinformation or disinformation themselves. It would, in effect, allow all of those bodies to twist or sideline the facts and the truth, and even to tell outright LIES if they so chose!

Regarding hate speech, does not Australia have perfectly good laws covering this area already? Likewise, *real* incitement to violence? I would have grave concerns that this bill, if passed, would allow the government to conflate free speech and legitimate protest with hate and violence, as already happened during the pandemic period.

No one could publicly go against 'The Science' then (and now still) without being ridiculed, vilified or shadow-banned, and at least one political figure was declaring 'anti-vaxxers' to be domestic terrorists. Hate speech in itself.

Science is and never should be 'settled,' as evidenced in just one field by scores if not hundreds of changes to medical knowledge and recommendations this century and last. Right now, there are fresh discoveries revealing that the global scientific community deliberately covered up the origin of Sars-Cov-2. Separately, the possibility that the Covid injections were/are NOT safe has emerged from reliable data showing that excess death rates have exploded across the world during and following the massive uptake of Covid vaccines, a possibility that most politicians and mainstream media studiously ignore (along with serious vaccine injuries) and that would almost certainly attract a mis or dis label if this bill was enacted.

As for harm ... this is another vague descriptor that is not defined or explained in the bill (except in the area of hatred). I assume that this is deliberate, in order for the government to have free rein in declaring what constituted harm, in line with its own agenda, which no doubt would include protecting 'The Science' around man-made climate change, despite hundreds of independent scientists thinking differently.

Meanwhile, over in the USA, sanity has prevailed in an American Supreme Court judge's decision to ban, or at least limit, the ability of Biden administration officials to use social media sites to censor information that isn't favourable to them.

I call on you to follow that eminently wise, morally correct and politically enlightened decision and abort the draft bill before it even gets to Parliament. It is (a) totally redundant, (b) the abject antithesis of democracy, (c) in direct contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (to which Australia is a signatory), as well as Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and (d) clearly a deliberate and intentional pathway to totalitarianism.

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