

I am writing in regard to the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 which is both concerning and anti-democratic. This legislation if made law will provide governments with the ability to censor legitimate factually correct information because it doesn't fit in with the incumbent government's political agenda and rhetoric, let me explain.

To combat misinformation and disinformation, governments are increasingly trying to enact laws like the above to target the creation and dissemination of information. If implemented correctly and not abused it can strike a balance between preserving freedom of speech and tackling harmful content, which I support but we know from experience governments whether left or right will weaponize such legislation to enforce the incumbent administrations' official stance on a particular topic.

Let me use COVID 19 as an example, the whole premise around pushing the vaccination program was to protect not only ourselves but our families and the rest of the community from this so-called deadly virus, now I won't share any particular article because there have been many papers written to provide evidence for both sides of the COVID 19 discussion. However, information providing evidence that herd immunity or vaccines not preventing transmission of the COVID 19 virus would likely be classed as misinformation or disinformation under this new legislation and this is where my concerns lie.

As Australians we must be able to challenge the Status Quo and have our constitutional right around freedom of speech upheld. Any proposal that suppresses that freedom of speech is sending us down a very rocky road and no political agenda must get in the way of that.