

Owen Miller
Founder, Non-Human Party
2023-08-11

An open letter ([syndicated at https://nonhuman.party](https://nonhuman.party)) to the Australian government, and more specifically, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, in regards to [new ACMA powers for misinformation](#).

We, the [Non-Human Party](#), are writing to make it known in the record of history that we can see your *misinformation powers* for what they are – a Ministry of Truth. The go-to strategy of every dictator and supervillain; the wool that gets pulled over the eyes of a naïve and complacent populace.

We will explain here how trying to combat misinformation is actually the *opposite* of what you should be doing; how you're being hypocritical for trying to combat it; and how combating misinformation is fundamentally impossible anyway.

Doubling Down on Failure

By removing misinformation, who is meant to benefit? The naïve Australians who might be easily fooled? What did they ever learn at school, if they still need protection from someone wiser and stronger? The admission that your citizens need protecting is an admission that industrial society is training people to be obedient slaves, not free thinkers. A Ministry of Truth would further infantilise such victims, wasting away their bullshit-detection abilities and making them further dependent on outsourced thought.

Your youth discipline camps were already weakened when web2 allowed widespread copying across school boundaries, and now ChatGPT is [turning cheating up to 11](#). AI detectors are receiving funding and being hailed as the saviour, but they rely on traits that are only matters of coincidence – it is totally possible for an AI to generate an essay identical to one from a human student.

Why are Australian students forced to take a state-imposed curriculum and think the same? Thinking in a banal, derivative way that is indistinguishable from a chatbot? Our nation which apparently values multiculturalism and immigration has a training regime that scrubs out originality and diversity.

Now is a better time than any to train children to become mature adults – free-thinkers capable of setting their own path in life, not mindless automatons whose lack of intellectual depth leaves them stuck digging things out of the ground, or serving avocado toast to each other. Their lack of philosophical insight leaves them lonely and helpless. Their awful emotional intelligence leaves them unable to form respectful relationships, and now [2 million Australian adults have experienced sexual assault since age 15](#). We should be able to raise children who can tell *yes* from *no*; *truth* from *mistruth*.

If the best and brightest are dumbed down by spoon-fed truth, where are we meant to find minds equalling the current generation of the Labor Party or the Australian Communications and Media Authority?

The Sidelined Hypocrite

If all you have is a hammer, every problem is a nail. All you know is control, coercion; the monopoly on violence.

It was only recently that the Australian government battled with Meta, propping up the flailing media industry in Australia. With another battle now, and a desire to join the censorship club with [North Korea and Myanmar](#), a reasonable observer might ask why the Australian government doesn't create its own source of information?

Wasn't this the purpose of the ABC? To help keep the Australian populace informed, and to spread Australian culture through soft diplomacy, around the world? Instead, the state media only reports on what's being said by our major parties, thereby undermining the other candidates, and in turn, our democracy.

A true democracy is the will of the people. This government and the Liberal coalition have already undermined this by tripling the membership requirements for establishing a party; and your desire for a constitutionally recognised Aboriginal Voice is an admission that it's not possible for an Aboriginal voice to be heard any other way – you've made it totally unfeasible for an *Aboriginal Party* to be formed and elected into any seats.

An approval of the Voice would quell the growing sentiment for an Aboriginal Party; while a rejection of the Voice would serve as grounds for censorship. By blaming a *No* victory on "racist misinformation", you'll get to create a Ministry of Truth and you'll get to avoid admitting that the failure might've actually been related to your proclivity to [rope in American basketballers](#) and celebrities as representatives for historical constitutional reform. You refuse to answer questions about the details of the Voice because ***it doesn't matter*** – whatever the outcome of the vote, your [two-party fake democracy](#) gets further cemented.

Why does your state media never air more than 3-second snippets of what Xi Jinping or Vladimir Putin are saying? If this government really had a desire for truth, why are our fellow AUKUS members allowed to keep Julian Assange rotting in a prison cell, for the crime of *journalism*? How is the Australian government any better than the Saudis, who continue to drill oil and chop up journalists?

How is the Ministry of Truth supposed to handle military disinformation when it arises on social media? What would happen if Australian citizens started saying that [it doesn't make a lot of sense that Russia would blow up its own pipeline](#)? That instead of just turning off the taps, Russia would sneak deep-sea divers to Denmark and plant 4 bombs.

Does the ACMA stand for truth, or for *truth*?

An Impossible Quest

Scientific endeavour has always involved challenging preconceived ideas of how the universe works, and the validity of previous theories. If any mistruths were banned, then scientific research would effectively become a race to publish first, automatically preventing any subsequent papers from disagreeing.

But even if we happened to be enforcing a *truth* that really was true, what would be the implications of banning anyone saying the opposite? In the development of any theory, people will bounce around ideas with each other, or they'll write it out, since we can only hold a small train of thought, after all. Here you're not just banning mistruths from scientific publication – your Ministry of Truth is banning people from pitching new ideas even to their friends and family. Your Ministry of Truth is policing people's exploration of their own thoughts.

Myspace was started in 2003 and YouTube was started in 2006. Here you are complaining decades later that your government has insufficient influence over the zeitgeist, and how our nation is beholden to American tech companies in our apparently democratic society.

As the world has become more globalised and interconnected, Australia and most other nations have ceded the public square to the US. Australians have only been able to vote for a shrinking portion of our lives: just the physical activity that happens on our isolated geographical segment – the portion where you have the monopoly on violence and the illegitimacy of British imperialism.

As OpenAI's language models continue to improve, Twitter and Facebook will be tricked into creating more user accounts, creating trillions of conversations about Australia. How can the Ministry of Truth possibly keep up? By making your [Digital Identity System](#) so restrictive to 3rd-party developers, the only heuristic for proving that someone is a unique human is to purchase a SIM card and prop up the telecommunications industry.

In a not-too-distant future, the government will be piling on ever more employees into the Ministry of Truth, to police randomly-generated conversations between chatbots.

Once chatbots become more prevalent, and more governments sabotage the town square, we'll inevitably see more people moving to private, encrypted messaging apps. What is your government meant to do then? Maybe the employees in the Ministry of Truth will themselves create some of the chatbots for Facebook, keeping the conversation going and keeping their own employment alive.

Socrates equated knowledge with virtue, and claimed that we can never fully succeed in reaching knowledge; we can only approach it. How ignorant he was that he failed to predict that actually, the Australian Communications and Media Authority would achieve enlightenment, and would be able to enforce truthfulness in all conversations.

A Better Way Forward

If people are spreading misinformation in the town square, they themselves need to be won over, not just the people hearing their theories. In a true democracy where citizens are treated as autonomous beings, every citizen is a source of creativity and insight. Incorrect ideas *and* brilliant insights can occur anywhere, so to prevent mistruths, we can either prevent citizens from thinking, or we can ensure easy access to truth.

Our state media should focus less on competing with breakfast TV gossip and should stop propping up a fake democracy with only two parties given any airtime.

Our schools should be raising diverse and liberated free-thinkers.

If social media companies are imposing a clickbait cesspit of distractions, then it's totally within the Australian government's power to fund [alternative, open-source services](#) geared towards social harmony, intellectual flourishing and self-actualisation.

More generally, as citizens become more autonomous and capable in determining their sovereignty, the Australian government needs to relax its monopoly on violence and pivot towards a society that people willingly choose to join.