

The Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 is nothing short of alarming in its attack on free speech. And as such it undermines the safety and wellbeing of all Australians, as well as to our democracy.

This Bill must NEVER be introduced. It is utterly totalitarian in nature. It attributes extraordinarily dangerous powers to Australian Communications and Media Authority. And totally exempts the government for any accountability for any and all misinformation.

The Government already has the necessary power in place to take action against criminal activity, human trafficking, child exploitation and hate speech. There is no need for this legislation.

It is outright dangerous to bestow to any body the right to determine 'what is true' and to censor anyone who may question the accuracy of government information.

We know that during the COVID government demanded social media companies implement aggressive censorship. Much of what what censored under the guise of 'misinformation' has seen been substantiated by peer reviewed research as having been true. The censorship of true information in fact caused immeasurable harm and even loss of life. For example anyone who questioned the safety of untested/ experimental vaccines was immediately censored. Yet it's now widely know that they are in fact unsafe. And many of us have lost relatives and friends to the vaccines. Even the government now recognises how unsafe they are and some vaccines have now been withdrawn by the government.

Rather than learning from these errors and offering apology for the harm that censorship caused, the government is now with this bill attempting to enshrine into legislation the informal censorship arrangements forged during COVID.

Aside from the example over COVID years it is apparent that this legislation gives to the government the power to censor all political opponents who may question any government information regardless of how false such information may be.

There is no shortage of examples of the government lying to its citizens about critical matters. For example in 2002 the Australian government lied to us about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction.

What we need is stronger legislation to hold government accountable. This bill does the very opposite, it explicitly exempts any government communication, of any level

of government, from being considered misinformation or disinformation. This totally enshrines in legislation a total lack of accountability by government. The government is free to say whatever they wish no matter how false it may be and censor anyone who may question government information. This bill enshrines into legislation the power of government to lie and censor and punish all attempts to expose their lies.

We do not need legislation that suppresses free speech. Free speech is the fertiliser of democracy.

Suppression of free speech is the building block of totalitarianism.

NO NO NO to this Bill!!

Yours sincerely

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