

To ACMA / officer

Re : Re: New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation (the Communications Legislation Amendment [Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation] Bill 2023)

I write to express profound concern about the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment [Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation] Bill 2023. The bill's redundancy, lack of clarity in key terms, and potential violation of human rights raise alarming issues that warrant serious consideration.

The bill's premise, that misinformation and disinformation threaten Australians' safety and our democracy, is unsubstantiated. Our existing legal framework already addresses genuine security threats, fraud, and incitement to violence.

Moreover, the bill's vague definitions of terms like "misinformation," "disinformation," and "serious harm" create ambiguity. Who determines what constitutes these terms, and how will this determination be made? Such opacity is concerning and could lead to misuse of power.

The proposed bill also contradicts essential democratic principles. Liberal democracies value the right to hold and express diverse opinions. Attempting to regulate speech and information dissemination is a dangerous departure from these principles, with potential for misuse against dissenting voices.

Furthermore, the bill's classification of harm lacks clarity. It attempts to regulate emotions, questions democratic processes' integrity, and presents ill-defined criteria for harm to health, environment, and economy. These definitions do not align with existing legislation, rendering the bill redundant.

This legislation also raises concerns about its conformity with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression, including information sharing, are fundamental rights protected by the ICCPR. The bill's potential to curtail these rights contradicts our international commitments.

In conclusion, I urge careful reconsideration of the Communications Legislation Amendment [Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation] Bill 2023. We must uphold our democratic principles, protect citizens' rights, and ensure transparency in our legislative process.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]