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Deputy Chair And part-time, full-time, and associate members
Australian Communications and Media Authority
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Dear Authority Members, 15 Aug 2023

I write in response to the ACMA's request for feedback on the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 (the Bill). Within the supporting documentation provided for the Bill, ACMA represents disinformation and misinformation as posing "a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, as well as our democracy, society and economy."

There are many questions and statements to submit.

1. Who decides?
2. Free Speech as a Human Right
3. Debate/ Discussion / Censorship Access to Information to form one's own opinions (singular debate)

- 1 Who decides what is Miss or Dis information ?

Without an answer or ability to debate to this question, it would appear to me that this bill could not be proceed.

For one group or one person to be given this position of decision of what is Misinformation or Disinformation leads to many questions. How can one group or one person based on an opinion be the decision holder of information _ through time new information is gathered for all subjects all the time. If scientist stopped at one decision on a subject, how would we have evolved in the sciences. Questions have always been a driver of new discovery.

At the time of a new development or discovery, many may believe or have opinion that the new information is incorrect , until over time it is proven to have merit. E.g Information supplied by Government was that the Covid injections would stop transmission, we now know that this is incorrect as stated by a ██████ employee in a European Committee hearing.

For decision to be made all evidence and opinion would need to be examined.

One person has evidence, and another has different evidence – in this situation neither of this data can be categorised into mis or dis information as the truth of the data supplied might not be known to be true or untrue for much time or years later, as many science data has shown over time.

Consequences of shutting down Debate of Data or Opinion when deciding what is Miss or Dis information - when in the future this was found to actually be true, could have dire consequences on current and future decisions by the people, by Corporations and more that could negatively impact.

- 2 **Free speech** If we do not allow open conversation, then we do not have the ability to learn and Grow as a nation or in science or as living beings –

Debate is absolutely necessary, no matter what, the people who have something to say must be allowed to say it.

This is not about the people speaking and if they are likable or other – it is purely about the information that is being shared.

We miss every opportunity to improve and learn and we cannot learn anything new if we do not allow people to say things that we may think we know or believe are wrong.

All new information leads to discussion and debate that leads us to explore a direction that leads to more information to be gained.

New directions that explored with information are a betterment to our nation or people individually.

By definition – “ you cannot learn anything new if you not letting people say things that you THINK are wrong”

- 3 We know through history and up to day 2023 that information that was believed true has been proved to be incorrect. Over time and with debate and exploration, the information has been found to change direction on many a subject.

Eg a farmer is taught to farm with Chemicals to get better production to reduce the insects that may destroy his crop, now in this decade we have learnt that regenerative farming and letting the soil to return to a state of homeostats that you can grow crops without chemicals that destroy the soil and return is healthy foods with higher levels of nutrients and ability to grow foods for longer through the generations.

If this information was **censored** and farmers did not have the ability to **explore and debate** the concept, then it would have changed the course of direction farming.

Evolving in any format comes from new data to consider and debate.

The way that information is shared has become heavily relied on social media, yet that is no different to sharing information via Newspaper or TV, Radio Media or a letter that is sent between people to people.

How can one Group of media be subject to the Bill and other media or sources are not subjected to bill.

How are there exemptions for certain groups in the Bill. This bill (should it be used) should be subject to all, and no exemptions allowed.

One group should not be above another when making such a dire decision on information.

Information is the right of every person to have access to for each to have opportunity to critically think and find their own opinion to a discussion.

It is not the place a select few to make that decision for people.

It is the right of all people including yourselves to Free Speech.

Caution – if information can be proved to encourage / urge direct action to cause HARM on a particular person or persons then that is against a people's human rights.

However even this is difficult to put in a box. Each situation would be needed to be valued on the individual situation.

Even information classed as harmful has the right to be heard (when it DOES not encourage direct action of harm to a person or persons and infringes on a human rights)

I'm a Free speech advocate – right up to - but not including if a person is calling for the direct violation of a people's human rights.

Censorship can be Misused to change the direction of a discussion / debate / science / belief that may well be and can be extremely HARMFUL to a people and a nation.

I'm against this Bill amendment and to give power to the ACMA regards to the

The proposed powers would:

- enable the ACMA to gather information from digital platform providers, or require them to keep certain records about matters regarding misinformation and disinformation
- enable the ACMA to request industry develop a code of practice covering measures to combat misinformation and disinformation on digital platforms, which the ACMA could register and enforce
- allow the ACMA to create and enforce an industry standard (a stronger form of regulation), should a code of practice be deemed ineffective in combatting misinformation and disinformation on digital platforms.

I do NOT agree that the people of Australia should be subjected to censorship of information from any source

When there is only a censored allowed narrative , on any subject of information or conversation then this censorship will stop growth of a nation and people and inventions and so much more.

Critical thinking is required for advancement of all, an invention comes from people looking at all information to come up with new information that creates new thoughts.

Censorship will distort the course of our history that is in the making.

Regards

