

I am concerned that PM Albanese and Labors Misinformation Bill contradicts our rights under the Australian Constitution

In Australia you have a right to hold an opinion, Article 19(1) Australian Constitution, and Article 19(2), protects freedom of expression in any medium, written and oral, communications, media, public protest, broadcasting, artistic works and commercial advertising. You have the right to form and hold an opinion and you have the right to express that opinion.

The Albanese government is currently seeking powers to “hold digital platforms to account for harmful misinformation and disinformation online.” By this sleight of hand they can claim that they are not empowering bureaucracy to determine what is true or the power to censor individuals. They are only threatening Big Tech, not us. They are expecting Big Tech to threaten us, censor us, punish us and deplatform anyone if they speak against the government approved information – but it is not technically the government punishing you directly. The government will bring a big stick to Big Tech if Big Tech doesn’t keep you in line.

Yet even without this proposed legislation, that is exactly what the Department of Home Affairs admitted to doing in recent years. The Australian government interfered more than 4,200 times to censor opinions – many eventually substantiated – which merely disagreed with official government propaganda.

Would critical commentary of the claims that Saddam Hussein absolutely definitely had weapons of mass destruction justifying the invasion of a foreign country by Australia among others have been labelled “misinformation” by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

Would ACMA have ordered social media posts disputing that refugees ever threw the children overboard as falsely claimed again by the Howard government have been censored as disinformation because they disagreed with government experts?

Will preachers who publish videos of their scriptural sermons or Christians commenting accurately on God’s design for gender and sexual ethics, and the medical and emotional consequences of transgressing those boundaries, come afoul of Big Tech knives freshly sharpened by the looming threat of new government powers?

I have no confidence in a government which demands the power to deplatform or punish citizens who debate the government-approved opinions.

If freedom of speech is valued then this Misinformation Bill must be rejected.