

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins with the following paragraph;

*“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with **reason and conscience** and should act towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood.”*

As human beings our brains are rational and moral, and we have an inalienable birth right to think and have our own thoughts.

There is no government body, council, committee, association, bureaucracy, legislators or other human being that has any rights to determine, control, or direct how or what any other human being thinks.

The proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 is in complete contradiction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as it violates the human right to freedom of thought and freedom of speech.

It is the right of a human being to determine for themselves what they want to think and what they want to say. The human brain is sophisticated and capable of conscience thought and reason, and this ability needs to be nurtured and used. Determining right from wrong is fundamental for growth.

There is no reason whatsoever for powers to be legislated to control what information is available on social media.

A community that is under this mind control has no democratic base and any government interfering with their peoples' thoughts has no regard for Human Rights.

Promoting individual thought, critical thinking and debate is a far better alternative. History shows that progress and prosperity occurs only when competing thoughts and ideas are openly debated.

The last 3 years has exposed how dangerous the government initiative of labelling important topics as misinformation has been. As it turns out, it was and continues to be, the government issued information and advertising campaigns in relation to covid that has been the source of misinformation.

Without having a system where public debate can take place without interference, there is a real danger of an entire community and/or nation being misled and making catastrophic choices.

It appears from the wording of this Bill, that the only thing that is being protected is the narrative and agenda of the government. To give government an exemption from the rules is an admission that they intend to spread misinformation. This Bill is making it legal for government to spread misinformation!!

Perhaps the writers of this Bill need to be reminded of the Magna Carta. In particular they need to read from the book "Australia's Magna Carta", issued by the Department of the Senate, Parliament House, Canberra.

On page 38 it talks about rights that are fundamental to democracy. Magna Carta embodies those rights. Its whole point is to enable citizens to live under the rule of a law that curbs the power of the sovereign (meaning the government that controls parliament) to abuse them, whether by executive action or by passing oppressive laws. It is the point that was made to James I by Chief Justice Coke, and made much more forcibly by the Puritan judges in 1649, who cut off the head of Charles I: **no sovereign is above the law.**

NO GOVERNMENT IS ABOVE THE LAW, therefore no government can be given exemption from laws.

I am also very concerned to discover that throughout this entire Bill, the word 'truth' is not mentioned, not once.

The omission of the word 'truth' is yet another admission that this Bill has nothing to do with what is true or false.

This Bill is oppressive in nature, designed to silence people with opposing views to government narratives. It is designed to give government free reign in what information is allowed and therefore gives government control over what people think.

This Bill is in complete opposition to the Magna Carta in which our Constitution, democracy and moral principles were founded upon.

Magna Carta protects citizens from government abuse by curbing power of government, and therefore it stops oppressive laws from being passed.