

17 August 2023

**RE: Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023**

I strongly oppose this Bill.

This proposed legislation places extreme limitations on the freedom of speech of the Australian people while exempting governments, media and educational institutions from the same limitations. This can only lead to a situation where the population are only given one side of a story that suits the political agenda of the government of the day, and any opposition can easily be labelled “misinformation” or “disinformation”, the definition of which is unclear. What is clear is that the government (ACMA) will be the arbiter of that definition which will likely be fluid depending on the situation. This will shift any and all power from the people to the government, giving them absolute power over all public information. To quote Lord Acton *“Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”*.

This proposed legislation severely impairs the people of Australia to hold the government to account on any future policies/proposed legislation and is a dangerous threat to the democracy my grandfather and his ANZAC brothers fought for. We cannot risk sliding into a communist dictatorial State where the people are not able to freely express their views, and be punished with fines, sanctions and/or imprisonment when they do.

The Australian population do not need the government to protect them from information they may not agree with. We are not children, we are a mature nation and can navigate any issues using logic and critical thinking and decide for ourselves.

This Bill must be stopped.

Regards,  
Wayne Hoskins

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