

I object to this bill draft for the following reasons:

1. It clearly violates Freedom of Speech, the foundation of any free society.
2. When only one point of view is allowed, a population becomes bigotted. Bigotry breeds hatred; hatred leads to violence. How is that going to protect the Australian population from harm?
3. Who will decide what is correct information and what is misinformation/disinformation? Many of the fact checkers who served as gatekeepers of information over the past two years or so, have been found out to be ill-qualified and oftentimes quite wrong in their judgement. How is that going to protect the Australian population from harm?
4. Innovation often challenges the existing information status-quo. Innovators, inventors, scientists at the forefront of research have historically been ridiculed and censored and their views and data pronounced misinformation/disinformation. Your draft bill will silence such groundbreakers and movers-and-shakers and remove them from the public debate arena, condemning Australians to blissful (or not) ignorance while innovators in other nations surge ahead. How are Australians going to be protected from harm, when the nation lags behind others in this rapidly advancing technological age?
5. Such censorship as you propose leaves a wide opening for corruption. Any political or commercial concern will be able to promote their selfish interests, masquerading as the public good, by squashing dissent or whistleblowers. Just recently we Australians have been treated to a taste of this, when a certain untested medical procedure, causing unprecedented harm, was promoted while any alternative was so heavily censored it is not yet allowed to be even mentioned in any media. Whose interest has been protected from harm here?

While on the subject of health: your example of disinformation - ingesting bleach to prevent a viral infection - while ignoring altogether the widespread harm caused to innumerable Australians as a result of the above mentioned experimental medical procedure, is disengenuous. Do you really think the public is that unaware of the truth?

In view of the above points, I express my VERY STRONG OBJECTION to your bill draft. In my opinion it should be scrapped and never looked at again.

One final thought: Misinformation is best countered by *open debate*; disinformation is best countered by *exposing the lies*. Censoring facts and opinions prevents both from taking place, and is the hallmark of a totalitarian dictatorship, not a free society.