

Submission regarding: Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

As many have written, the most important aspect or principle of the rule of law, is that those who make and apply the law must be as responsible for compliance with it as everyone else.

There is no place for any law where the populace, except members of government and public servants, are required to obey rules established by the Parliament.

Once the principle is established that members of government and public servants are free to lie, to tell half-truths, to obfuscate, all without consequence, and be accepted as tellers of the truth that must not be gainsaid, while all others must refrain from telling the truth if it runs counter to that emanating from government and its servants, the state is in a truly parlous state.

The so-called *Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023* is a profound breach of the rule of law. The possibility of there being any degree of congruence between the actions of government members and public servants and the law, is to be lost.

No longer will anyone be permitted to debate issues around the concept of limited government, around the benefits of free trade, around the benefits of low taxation, around the benefits of free speech or freedom of religion, around the benefits or injury of climate change, around the science of anti-viral preparations, around the benefits or drawbacks of childhood sex/gender change, around voluntary euthanasia, around late term (or any term) abortion, around the provision of alternative energy, or any other aspect of life when someone in government or the public service propounds that 'the science is settled', or those who disagree are racists, or gender phobic, or any other euphemistic expression of disapproval that renders those receiving the epithets silent under pain of prosecution.

That somehow, by the mere vote of those who exempt themselves from criticism, the world will be a better place and human rights and democracy saved from the pernicious must be the epitome of hubris.

If Australia is to be a beacon for the rule of law in a world rapidly falling into the trap of allowing its leaders to believe they are the font of all wisdom, this proposed legislation must not be passed.

August 17, 2023