

*To: The Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts,
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601*

Re: New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation
(the *Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and
Disinformation) Bill 2023*)

I am distressed to see how far down the path to tyranny this government and the previous government has taken Australia.

The last three years have demonstrated clearly that our Constitutionally-guaranteed rights to breathe freely, choose what we will and will not allow in our bodies and even our ability to educate our children or ourselves and be able to continue working at our careers has been restricted.

Now, the Commonwealth wants to take things a step further and determine what we can and cannot say or even think by holding the social media platforms accountable for 'allowing' us to have freedom of political speech or even speech on any topic. Government power must really be tenuous if the only way it can hold onto it is by suppressing any and all debate.

Our media companies are owned by foreign actors who only allow very limited information to be distributed to the Australian people. Much of this is misinformation and dis-information. However the proposed laws will exempt these foreign corporations from the legislation. It will also exempt government from the law.

The other side of many issues is only available on social media and in the alternative broadcast media. This might not pose a problem for the authorities if it weren't for the fact that more and more people were ignoring the mainstream and availing themselves of the data being reported by non-Government-approved sources.

Australia has already seen the shocking ramifications of people being arrested for unpublished thoughts and publishing calls to legally and peacefully protest against corrupt and authoritarian state regimes. Victoria being a case in point.

Australia already has laws in place to protect people from hate speech or threats. These laws are effective and used regularly to protect minorities and vulnerable people.

ACMA should not be the arbiter of what is mis or dis-information.

The answer to scientific or political controversies isn't more censorship – it's more debate. Even before this legislation was proposed, I was the victim of a coordinated campaign of censorship including having my Facebook account suspended without reasonable explanation.

So I absolutely oppose any laws which would empower ACMA or any other Australian body to restrict in any way my right to legally communicate freely and openly on any issue whatsoever.

Kind regards,