

Comments on Exposure Draft Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

Summary: I object to the passage of this legislation

Please note that I believe granting ACMA, a government-appointed and controlled entity, the authority to label information contradicting official government messaging as misinformation or disinformation establishes a disturbing level of control over free speech which I consider essential to the efficient operation of our democracy.

This becomes especially concerning given the observable the effects of bias and conflicts of interest, leading to biased reporting within academia, biased media content and profit-driven public policies. History amply demonstrates the bad consequences of authorities making decisions without being held accountable or having to be transparent about their actions. We must be cautious when policies, based on concealed public policy advice (eg health) are determined by those in power without the requirement for empirical validation and logical reasoning and support, effectively bestowing on the government the power to define what qualifies as true information.

As a taxpayer and elector, I wish to see the basis of all decisions of public policy and welcome those decisions, and their basis, being freely debated. I am most confident in making an assessment on a complex issue when all sides of the debate are presented. I consider Australians generally are best placed to sift information and weigh up the consequences and judgements required.

My views are consistent regardless of which political party is in government.

Brad Holzberger

18 Aug 23