

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed “Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

PREFACE – THREE PRELIMINARY GUIDING STATEMENTS

1. To cut to the chase, if you believe in democracy, then you believe in freedom of speech along the lines of this guiding principle:

“I may disagree with what you have to say but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”

2. Free speech, a free press, honest politicians and honest bureaucrats are essential to the health of a democracy.
3. The above-named Communications Legislation Amendment 2023 presupposes, assumes, that some individual/s at ACMA can be the “oracle of truth” for the entire country at all times. That is a dangerous and unacceptable gratuitous assumption. No one person, no one entity has a monopoly on the truth.

POINT ONE:

Primarily, this amendment is supposed to be about fake news. But who determines what is fake news and what is not? There are many cases where something was considered **correct**, accurate news but which was later on proved to be **incorrect**. And vice versa. If discussion on the topic had been stifled, we would never have discovered the accurate facts of the matter.

For example, during Covid the government forced people to take the jabs to keep us safe. That was completely wrong. The jabs were not effective and had [serious side effects](#) (24 times more side effects than all other jabs put together). For the evidence, click on the links.

By shutting down all the discussion about it and labelling that discussion misinformation, the government of the day prevented these errors from being corrected. Therefore, discussion is absolutely essential and must not be shut down and labelled misinformation if we want to avoid the same disaster in future.

POINT TWO:

It is difficult to distinguish between good information and misinformation and government has a very poor track record of distinguishing between them. The government sometimes falls in love with its own narrative and suppresses divergent opinion as misinformation.

Also, this amendment suggesting yet another supervisory committee to make judgements on truth or lack of truth just adds another level of bureaucracy that Australia certainly does not need.

The concept of what is proposed in this amendment comes dangerously close to morphing into the “Ministry of Truth” as described by George Orwell in his book “Nineteen Eighty-Four”, which we must avoid at all costs.

SUMMARY:

In my opinion this proposed amendment does not look like it is intended to keep Australians safe. It is purely and simply a method of political control, an attempt to prevent valid and wide-reaching discussion of topics that do not fit the government narrative. My husband and I are immigrants from Europe and this amendment has too many shades of the fascist regimes of the first half of the twentieth century in Europe that our parents lived through. We do not want to see this in a democracy like Australia.