

Why has there not been an enquiry into the harm caused by so called misinformation/disinformation. Can the harm be quantified? If it can't be quantified, how do we know it even exists?

Can you highlight the instances and then quantify the following harm that has been caused to the disrupted public health responses, foreign interference in elections, and undermining of public institutions?

Members of Parliament are employed under the Commonwealth, they are paid by taxes paid by the people, to work for the people's interests. How are they representing the people's interests, if no enquiry has taken place, to highlight and quantify the harm and issues taking place, let alone to propose legislation, merely because they say it exists.

If the harm and damage exist, evidence should be forthcoming and quantifiable.

In the same way in a court of law, litigation concerning defamation or injury to a person, organisation or business has a burden of proof to show harm was caused, and has to be able to quantify the lost earnings, good will, or damage to reputation leading to future lost earnings, the ACMA has the burden of proving through evidence collated from an independent third party and assessed through a public enquiry, to justify the introduction of this Bill.

Is the ACMA's views and assessment verifiable, and repeatable, to be able to act as the standard by which content is judged?

Again, we as citizens are supposed to merely believe your assessment of it is, and isn't, misinformation or disinformation, without any verification or evidence?

Why is professional news & satire exempt from these proposed powers?

We saw during the Pandemic, State and Federal members stating without doubt in the media, that the way out of the pandemic was social distancing and vaccination.

Recently it has emerged through studies by the CDC and other health organisations, that natural immunity was superior, and that subsequent vaccination booster shots had poor results.

We also saw Pfizer admit, under a US senate enquiry, that they did not test nor know if their vaccine would stop transmission. Yet we had State Premiers in this country declaring the vaccine as our only way to stop the spread.

Clearly this meets the threshold of misinformation, regardless of the best intentions at the time.

It is very problematic for the public to now know, that politicians and the TGA took the advice of Pharmaceutical Companies, without any long term safety studies or evidence to verify, where those same companies had a financial interest and benefit to promoting misinformation about the legitimacy of the results from their vaccines.

We also learn recently that the Moderna vaccine has been quietly removed from issue in Australia by the TGA, when it was professed by our elected officials, that there was no risk of heart related problems, myocarditis, adverse reactions, etc. In recent times, independent Peer reviewed studies

have revealed direct links with the Moderna vaccine, and unknown onset of heart related illness in previously healthy individuals. Again, the TGA is guilty of not doing it's due diligence, and it's comments clearly meet the threshold of the meaning of misinformation.

The public deserves better performance from its elected representatives. Those federal representatives themselves know that there is a professional standard to their role, and the importance of representing their electorate, which they failed to do during the pandemic. An embarrassing affair for all those involved, and yet the media will not be held to the same account as Digital Platform providers under this proposed Bill.

Specific Issues identified in the Bill.

Powers granted to the Minister.

Page 11, paragraph 6, seeks to give "The Minister" the power of discretion that he could use to ultimately undermine the freedom of speech we still enjoy in Australia. The possibility that he could use this authority to silence a digital platform basically through his or her opinion under the banner of "adequate protection for the community" is something that needs heavy consideration when debating this bill. What could be seen as "satire" by some, but perhaps something more by a minister leaves the door wide open. A single opinion without any consultation is not democracy. This is also covered on page 9 and page 11 when it comes to "Digital Service" which the minister could also determine as per Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023. Open provisions of power unregulated handed over to a single person given ministerial privilege not only to restrict, but to provide exclusions to ones he or she sees fit.

Page 6 Harm

Page 6 conveys that as a society, we should not condone any hatred or segregation to any Australian. We all should be given a fair go, yet we are seeing the opposite of this not only among our community, our media and even our government. Political protest needs to remain an avenue for freedom of speech in this country if we are to remain a democracy. Wording "Disruption of public order or society in Australia" is way too vague. What denotes "Public order"? Is a political protest against something a large section of the community in the realm of public order?

Paragraph 35 – Limitation – electoral and referendum matters

We have a very democratic uniformed amendment or declaration of what this bill needs to abide by. But we need to remember this is restricted to social media. It does not involve political comment or even the professional news content media. Advertisement of “yes” campaigns to a referendum should come under stringent review as quoted on page 31; “Unless matter communicated or intended to be communicated for the **dominant** purpose of influencing the way electors vote in a state, territory or local government election or referendum”. If this is true, any sided campaign which has tax payer finance attached to it via social media must be intercepted by ACMA. More importantly, if the side of the referendum which was **not** receiving any funding should share their side of the argument, and be restricted in anyway, yet the funded campaign free to influence their bias, then that is a direct attack on our freedom of speech. As tax payers, it would be in contravention of our right to proper public discourse.

Paragraph 50 Emerging Circumstances

This clause appears to open up the availability for swift action if things are getting out of hand. Question is, what would this be used for? Where a minister appears to be given extra powers, so would ACMA. Where would that decision come from? Say the public are frustrated with things and putting forward these frustrations across social media where they do have somewhat have a voice, who is to make that decision? Does it remain in Australia or does it extend to a global organization such as the United Nations? Would the UN (and its affiliates) influence misinformation and disinformation if this bill is passed? Information has been left out here which needs to be addressed. If the topic in question is good for social media one day, but not once either the government in power or the organization attempting to change international law outside of Australia but the citizens of Australia disagree with it, what other platform do they have to express their opinion? How does the ACMA intend to show it is transparent and not capable of censorship against it's citizens?

Paragraph 33 Fact Checkers

Fact checkers are a commercial entity that write articles and discriminate people's vies in return for remuneration. AN example of this is where Meta pays over a million dollars per year to a section of RMIT in Melbourne to fact check articles posted on facebook, and receives a fee per article of over fifty thousand dollars. As you can see here, the Ract checking entity motives will be to generate income to justify its existence, and the truth will n ot be the primary goal in writing the articles. If it is easier to discredit people's views in order to generate a fee, the path of least resistance will always nbe chosen in commerce, over the truth that does not align with Corporations views.