



**Subject: Feedback on the
Communications Legislation Amendment
(Combatting Misinformation and
Disinformation) Bill 2023**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**I am writing to express my deep concern
and outrage regarding the proposed
Communications Legislation Amendment
(Combatting Misinformation and
Disinformation) Bill 2023. As an Australian
I strongly believe that this bill infringes**

upon the fundamental right to freedom of speech and shows a complete disregard for the democratic principles I and many others value.

Firstly, this bill creates a two-tier system, whereby politicians, journalists, and members of educational institutions are granted the power to spread information, whether true or false, while regular members of society are subjected to strict regulations. How is this possibly okay!?

This unjust distinction not only undermines the democratic ideals of our society but also hampers the power of ordinary individuals to voice their opinions and contribute to public discourse.

Furthermore, the excessive fines imposed by this bill will lead to digital services

becoming overly restrictive, stifling free speech and inhibiting open and honest discussions.

The broad industry-wide application of the code without any "pressure escape valves" only exacerbates the harm caused by this legislation, resulting in the suppression of diverse viewpoints and the domination of a select few. Wrong on every level!

The task of accurately distinguishing between true and false information is an impossible one, as new discoveries and evolving consensus constantly challenge established facts. The examples provided in the draft text demonstrate how information that was once considered factual can later be proven false. This is precisely why freedom of speech is so

valuable, as it allows for open debates and the pursuit of truth through a diversity of perspectives and we must protect that at all costs.

Even Dr. Nick Coatsworth, a former Deputy Chief Medical Officer of Australia, has expressed serious concerns about the scope and application of this bill. His comment on Twitter raises doubts about the effectiveness and fairness of the proposed legislation.

Moreover, the reliance on industry bodies, which are often influenced by major players in their respective industries, poses a significant risk to the competition among digital platforms. The potential for the largest services to create onerous codes that hinder smaller competitors is a clear example of how this bill can lead to

anti-competitive behavior and limit innovation in the digital space. The corruption will only continue if this is allowed.

Additionally, the extraterritorial reach of this bill and its impact on foreign digital platforms is a concerning overreach of Australian law. It is unreasonable and impractical to expect foreign entities to comply with Australian industry codes when they are unaware of their existence and have no representation on those industry bodies.

Furthermore, the threats posed to digital platform providers and individual users through reputational damage, financial penalties, and interference with their personal lives are deeply concerning. The potential implications of this bill on

freedom of political communication and the restriction of diverse viewpoints are alarming and reminiscent of oppressive regimes rather than the democratic society we aim to uphold. It would be pure tyrannical overreach.

Lastly, the proposed bill contradicts the principles underlying the News Media Bargaining Code enacted in 2021, further highlighting the inconsistency and arbitrary nature of the government's approach to combatting misinformation and disinformation.

The limitations placed on digital platforms and independent media organizations are contradictory and ultimately restrict access to diverse perspectives and information. Independent media must be protected at ALL costs.

In conclusion, the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 is deeply flawed and poses significant threats to freedom of speech, democratic principles, and the diversity of opinions in our society.

I urge the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to scrap this bill.

If any bill is required it should be structured in a way that ensures that any legislation enacted truly respects the rights and freedoms of Australians.

Thank you for considering my feedback. I hope that you take these concerns into

**account and act in the best interest of our
democratic society.**

Yours sincerely,



