

Submission: Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

I am completely opposed to the Labor Government's proposed 'Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023', because it is clearly intended to silence free speech, shut down debate, and silence any opposition to the government narrative.

Considering that most misinformation and disinformation in relation to 'COVID' came from the then government and its agencies, as well as from the opposition, and from the mainstream media (as is becoming increasingly apparent) - while dissenting scientists, medical practitioners, and world renowned experts (who have since been proven correct) were censored, gagged and vilified - this is a particularly dangerous piece of legislation.

Furthermore, the current Prime Minister has been guilty of spreading misinformation by claiming that the "Uluru Statement ..." consists of only one A4 page – which is demonstrably untrue. And this has already led to the censorship of at least one media presenter who exposed this lie – even without this proposed legislation having been passed.

Who chooses the arbiters of truth? What qualifies them to decide what is fact, and what is mis/disinformation? Certainly the 'fact checkers' who have censored the internet and social media to date have been poorly qualified.

This bill treats Australians as idiots, incapable of critical thinking or discernment. Of course, its intent is to **prevent** critical thinking that opposes what the government claims (rightly or wrongly) is truth.

With the appalling level of censorship already in place, this draconian bill is a step too far. It is something we might expect in Communist dictatorships, but it is unacceptable government overreach in a supposedly free, democratic society.

Sonja Hardy