

## Submission

Submission in response to a proposed legislation amendment giving the ACMA new powers to combat misinformation and disinformation.

Firstly, I wish to express that I am absolutely against this proposed legislation.

It is impossible to 'balance the freedom of speech'. You have 'freedom of speech', or you have a governing authority which doesn't give you 'freedom of speech' You cannot have both.

Past governments have been proven to give "misinformation" and to further promote that misinformation even though it has been proven untruthful. Why then should they be exempt?

What constitutes misinformation/disinformation that poses a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians? Information that is false, misleading or deceptive. How it is to be determined is of great concern. It has such a broad scope, and the legislation is vague and would be very open to interpretation by social media platforms/ACMA.

It seems that ACMA will have unchecked powers to create enforceable rules without the ability to be questioned. This is dangerous to Australian citizens when potentially the information censored could actually be factual. If members of ACMA currently or in the future, are negligent or have possibly been persuaded by government or NGOs to censor certain information what recourse will there be?

To suggest that by censoring what is – at a point in time – considered misinformation/disinformation will protect society from harm is harmful in itself. Information is fluid in that when more/other information comes to light it can alter what was thought previously as fact i.e. the earth is flat. This is how society advances. This is also how science works. This is what keeps people safe. Sharing of information and knowledge is important to the safety and advancement of society and social platforms provide a space in modern society where this can be done. Individuals have the right to speak freely and express themselves in all matters.

Healthy debate is a part of Australian culture and although now occurs on social media platforms more than backyard BBQs it's a human right to be able to express yourself and share your opinions. I believe this is a constitutional right.

Australians also have the right to share their political views as discussion/debate is important to make an informed choice. Much of this occurs on social media platforms. Much is also done in satire. How will social media platforms/ACMA decide what is expressed in satire or not as this is very subjective.

Many digital platform providers have already signed up to the DIGI code. I don't see why this legislation is required. It is a government body taking overarching control of what needs to remain as open platforms available to the public to express themselves without the fear of penalty.

I believe this bill would give ACMA too much unquestionable power and does not serve the Australian public or keep them safe. It opens up the door to all information, opinions, beliefs, expressions, knowledge, discussions being misinterpreted and censored.

This is the type of legislation that would be passed by a tyrannical government not a democracy that values the freedom of speech and expression of its citizens. Or a government that assumes its citizens are not capable of discerning information for themselves.

I vehemently oppose this bill.

