

Dear Committee Members,

Submission

Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

I do not support this Bill.

A democratic society cannot function without freedom of speech. The ability of an individual to communicate their opinion, feelings and attitudes is paramount to expression as free people. Are we no longer free in Australia? Does the Government consider its citizens so incompetent that we must be muzzled like misbehaving dogs?

This bill will be extremely detrimental to the lives of the Australian people if it is passed. As the exchange of information between humans involves a lot of subjectivity, it is extremely difficult to determine what can be categorised as disinformation or misinformation. It is inevitable that the important flow of communication, information and exchanging of ideas that are vital to human interaction, growth and learning will be terribly stifled and may even fail to occur under this bill. Ultimately, the erosion of the free flow of speech within Australia will occur due to such a bill being instated, thus, this bill is dangerous, extremely heavy handed and perhaps even militaristic in nature.

Australia was once a country that celebrated freedom, individuality and difference of opinions. Over the past three years, Australia has become unrecognisable. Individuals who, respectfully disagreed with certain opinions or ideas (or even simply questioned them), were blocked from media outlets and shunned. Can the citizens of Australia not discern for themselves, what is deemed appropriate when it comes to information and communication? Have we become a nation where our government seeks to control and suppress every aspect of our lives like a Nanny state? Religious freedoms are also under attack, now the freedom of speech; what's next? The pressure is immense!

This bill will only divide our nation and further oppress the people.

I fear that under this bill, our people will no longer step up to respectfully discuss or debate policy within the Government. How can a democracy function without the ideas, voices and attitudes of its people being expressed openly and freely? Under this bill; out of fear of being punished or reprimanded, the people may remain silent about important issues and decisions. It is our fundamental duty to express speech freely! The ability to express ourselves freely in written and verbal forms is vital to the success of our democracy.

Regards

