

The Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts,
GPO Box 594 Canberra ACT 2601

19th August 2023

Re: New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation (*the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023*)

Dear Officer,

I am writing to express my vehement opposition to the proposed legislation. This bill would allow this government department (which would act as a proxy for the views of the government of the day) to control the free flow of ideas on the internet and effectively censor any information it doesn't like or disagrees with by declaring it to be misinformation. This is antithetical to the idea of free speech that is essential in a democracy for if the people are no longer able to hear all opinions and make their own decision regarding information then we are transitioning from a democracy to a totalitarian form of government that shapes and controls the views/knowledge of its citizens to presumably its own ends.

This is especially poignant in light of the recent covid pandemic and the government's control of public opinion via censorship of social media posts that have recently come to light in senate enquiries. This is especially troubling as the government and its organs such as the ABC and other mainstream media outlets (which were offered a tax incentive in 2020 to help propagate the government narrative on COVID) were unfortunately one of the key disseminators of disinformation on such item as:

- The vaccine stops the spread of the virus – this was later admitted to be false by a Pfizer executive before the EU parliament
- The vaccine is not associated with myocarditis/pericarditis – this is now a recognised side effect and is included on government issued consent forms regarding the vaccinations
- Masks are effective at stopping the spread of the virus – This was disproven by multiple studies including the huge Danmarks-19 study and the curious fact that the NSW government fined businesses \$1million dollars if they sold masks to protect against the SARS pandemic in 2003 as they deemed them ineffective.

The abuses of truth won't just be limited to COVID related matters but to other issues on which the government seeks to erode citizens' rights in order to further their agenda, such as

- The Voice referendum
- Climate Change
- Central Bank Digital Currency
- LGBTQI+ Rights
- 15 minute/smart cities

A quick search of the internet and social media will find the views of eminent people, including Nobel laureates, on these topics whose opinion runs counter to the prevailing orthodoxy and would be censored by the proposed bill, denying Australians' the right to make an informed decision.

This bill will stop the Australian public being able to judge the veracity of information presented to them both by their own government and other sources. The government will effectively become the

arbiter of truth and Australia will become a totalitarian regime not dissimilar to North Korea or the former USSR.

This bill is antithetical to free speech and the free transfer of ideas and information which is crucial to the survival of the Australian democracy. As such it is a danger to our democracy and I vehemently oppose it passing into law.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.