

**Public submission regarding: Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.**

Empowering the ACMA as a “Ministry of Truth” is an abomination.

The Bill makes the assumption that the Government knows the “truth” and that all other opinions are false. History has shown time and time again that governments do not have a monopoly on the truth as governments are comprised of individuals with a variety of experiences that colour their conclusions.

The unscientific censorship during the COVID crisis has proven that government agencies cannot be trusted to be the arbiter of what is misinformation” or “disinformation”, let alone “malinformation”.

The proponents of this amendment claim: “The rapid spread of false, misleading and deceptive information online has resulted in a multitude of harms from disrupted public health responses to foreign interference in elections and the undermining of democratic institutions.”

Just look at the claim in the USA regarding election interference. It was a government agency (FBI) that promoted the “Russian collusion” hoax and suppressed the Hunter Biden laptop story during the 2020 election campaign.

Trust in online information is best earned with uncensored comment and open civil debate. To ban free speech is the worst possible outcome of this draconian Bill. We do not need the ACMA “Ministry of Truth” powers.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Coleman

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