

Dears members of the committee and all members of the federal parliament and senate,

I am apposed to the “Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023” as indicated below.

The ACMA should never be given power to make or enforce laws. Their role should be at the most to promote common decency in our media. Unfortunately ACMA does not have a good track record at doing this. For example the promotion of sexual themes and lewdness abounds in media targeted at, or in the view of young children and the ACMA allows that situation to continue and grow worse. The ACMA should work to prevent this form of sexual harassment, enticement, seduction, manipulation or grooming of children. Children should be allowed to be children and protected from such perverse influences and only be exposed to information as appropriate and at the discretion of their parents or guardians.

The ACMA is not in the position to be the arbiter of truth. The ACMA is not a law maker like the government, given the authority and held to account by, law enforcement and the citizens of Australia. The ACMA is not a court held accountable by the government, law enforcement and the citizens of Australia. The ACMA should not, in order to determine truth, be deferring to “independent experts” who are not held accountable to government and democracy. They should instead allow all media to do its job of providing information, facilitating discussions and debates. This facilitates a much broader, and more open and accountable dialogue and dissemination of information between members of our democracy, and includes a much broader scope of experts than the narrow scope of input achieved via the ACMA seeking expert advice. The ACMA should not prevent discussion about what is true and what is not, but rather it should ensure that these discussion are not impeded by the ACMA.

It is unreasonable for the ACMA to enforce a narrative, philosophy, or a view on religion, science, education, politics, medicine etc. The Federal Government is not permitted to do this and should not, as it undermines free speech, freedom of religious and freedom of belief and democracy. If the ACMA enforces a narrative or philosophy or religious or medical point of view it clearly contravenes the Australian Constitution and undermines the basic principle of democracy, that everybody has a right to think, express their opinions, hear what others are freely saying even if they do not agree, engage in community dialogue and debate and contribute to democratic decision making. In effect the ACMA would be attempting to hijacking public debate and making it only the domain of its hand picked “experts”.

The ACMA must treat Australian citizens with respect and dignity and trust them with the responsibility of determining what is true and what is false rather than censoring, manipulating or penalising people that the ACMA see as out of line and preventing others from hearing their perspectives and accessing their reasoning. To do otherwise is to judge Australian citizens as incompetent, and irrational, and it undermines our freedom, public discussion and debate which is essential for democracy, and is what media infrastructure should facilitate.

If you would like clarification on what I have said please contact me.

Yours Sincerely

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