

Submission on the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

To the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts.

I object to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bil 2023.

I am a proud citizen of Australia and have held in high regard the fundamental right of freedom of speech. The proposed Bill wants to place a 'balance' on this fundamental right with the notion of what is to be determined "misinformation".

Freedom of speech is an individual view and to try and place a 'balance' of what is allowed, can only undermine this fundamental right.

To have a government agency that decides the definition of "misinformation" raises concerns. Definitions are subjective and to have a government agency that will be entrusted to determine the truthfulness of information is troubling. This is not democratic representation of the citizens of Australia.

The notion of 'misinformation', unless it encourages violence, does not cause direct harm and there are currently laws in place that deal with information that incites violence. To have a government agency that will define a harm-based criteria, will be problematic, as it will be based on a subjective view of the authorities involved.

This bill provides exorbitant powers to the authorities and will lead to censorship of those who fit into their definitions. An absurd notion in a democratic government.

Freedom of speech empowers people to be involved in debates and have a say in what happens in our communities and our Nation. It encourages self - responsibility and pride in the democratic processes in Australia.

Other options should be explored that will not infringe on this fundamental right.

Kind regards

Patricia Thomas