

I read about this proposal with complete alarm and felt compelled to make a submission. I categorically and totally reject this proposal. This is just like the so-called Ministry of Truth from George Orwell's 1984. That book is supposed to be a work of fiction by the way, not a "how to" manual.

I am an ordinary Australian who has worked hard in the productive private sector and paid my taxes, which pay the politicians and bureaucrats, including those at ACMA, who will purportedly now decide what makes up misinformation and disinformation, but more importantly, truth.

I have a number of questions and concerns.

First and foremost, why on Earth should ACMA be the arbiter of truth? How will they decide what is misinformation or disinformation? What gives them the special power to determine what this might be? Will they have experts on every subject imaginable who will be able to correctly determine if something is correct or not? Or will it be like social media companies over the last few years who admitted that the so called "fact checkers" were expressing nothing more than their opinions?

Of more concern is the fact that the federal government as well as mainstream media will be exempt from this. There's also the possibility at some stage, the state governments and/or local governments may also be exempted.

Are you serious???

If the last three years have told us anything it's that it was our governments that were one of the biggest distributors of misinformation and disinformation. This was duly parroted by the bought for and totally compromised so called "mainstream" media, who have all totally lost credibility due to the complete lies and untruths that they have passed on as absolute truths, including and especially those that came from governments.

This is a very slippery slope, and if the government does not want to completely lose what little trust (of which I have none I might add) it may have with the general populace, who incidentally, pay their salaries and perks, then it will not introduce such a grossly ridiculous, dangerous and completely unnecessary legislation.

We supposedly live in a democracy where everyone has freedom of speech. Everyone has a right to state their truth. It is not up to someone else to decide whether something that someone states is true or not. There have been countless instances over the last three years where things were marked as supposedly misinformation and disinformation and so called "conspiracy theories" that have almost without exception, turned out to be completely true. Where would these truths be if they were just arbitrarily dismissed because they didn't agree with what turned out to be someone's opinion, or worse, the supposed acceptable narrative that's being pushed on the populace?

We have come to a point where those who lie and pass off their opinions, or parrot a specific government narrative, as absolute truth get away with their lies and are not punished. Yet those who do actually tell the truth are punished. This will be further enforced under this proposed bill as once a truth is eventually revealed, it won't ever see the light of day.

It might be time for Australia to introduce something similar to the US First Amendment where freedom of speech is a right and enshrined in legislation.

This disgraceful proposal must not be the light of day, and that it's gone this far is a reflection of how arrogant our politicians have become, how low they have sunk and how desperate they have become.

We would do well to remember this quote attributed to Thomas Jefferson. When governments fear the people, there is liberty. When the people fear the government, there is tyranny. We are well on the way to tyranny and authoritarianism.

Please stop treating us like children who need to have all aspects of their lives controlled by the nanny state. We are fully able to discern these things for ourselves as long as we have access to ALL the facts, not just those that the government wants us to believe to be true. The increasing number of with critical thinking skills can decide whether to accept information or not. They don't need the government or their bought for and compromised "mainstream" (which people are abandoning in droves) media or bought for, compliant and obedient social media companies.

Stop. Just stop.

"The truth is like a lion. You don't need to defend it. Let it loose. It will defend itself". St Augustine.

"Truth is incontrovertible. Panic may resent it. Ignorance may deride it. Malice may distort it. But there it is." Winston Churchill