

I write to express my seriously grave concern in regards to the draft Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

I draw your attention to many documents created over history which have been established to protect living humans from censorship of free speech and ideas.

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
2. The Charter of Human Rights;
3. Nuremberg code;
4. American Constitution (The First Amendment);
5. The Victorian Charter of Human Rights.

History teaches us that people are different, we come from different cultures, are raised in different geographical locations from varying living conditions. We come from various socio-economic backgrounds and have been influenced by different cultures, religions and beliefs.

Civil rights serve a community to ensure all of our differences are respected and our difference of opinions is valued. As humans we do not have to agree on all things. As humans we all possess free will and a brain granted to us by Our Creator which we can use to listen to all sorts of information and make a discernible decision in regards to our own human individual value and belief systems.

The draft Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 seeks to endorse and create a type of prototypical government censorship framework where certain groups are exempted from the rules.

Censorship in any form seeks to control forms of communication and provides a dangerous opportunity for permissible government sanctioned propaganda to be engaged without opposition. This approach is the antithesis of free speech. Any control of this degree seeks to destroy democracy and civil rights. It will create a greater mistrust of any platform or controlling body who seeks to silence what the government deems mis or disinformation.

This Bill seeks to begin a centralised approach to censorship of free speech. Controlling or restricting what can be posted online through the threat of persecution, duress or any form of constraint or coercion can only be described as a systemic erosion of our constitutionally protected personal freedoms.

All living humans have the right to hear all sides of every issue and to make their own judgments about those issues without government interference or limitations. Humans should be allowed to speak, publish, read and view all the information available online. It is not the role of government or any agency to protect individuals civil or personal rights by attempting to suppress ideas and information. The right to receive ideas is a necessary predicate to the recipient's meaningful exercise of his own rights of speech, press, and political freedom." *Board of Education v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982)

Freedom of expression and belief are a critical right. No Bill of any kind should seek to remove an individual's protected right to exercise those freedoms. The government should know that it has no place to infringe on these rights and it should in fact encourage and advocate respect for the right of all individuals to freely express their views whether contrary to those who are currently in power.

Rather than engaging in censorship and repression to advance one's values and beliefs, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis counsels persons living in the United States to resolve their differences in values and belief by resort to "more speech, not enforced silence."

There are very serious concerning flags that this Bill raises in relation to historical events where these tactics have been engaged. The outcome has never been advantageous for the humans involved. Censorship is a form or undeniable control and a step towards absolute obedience. We have borne witness to censorship in 1930's Germany which began along the same population protectionary promise. Ultimately it led to a one-sided propaganda machine where people were prevented from exercising their freedom of speech and belief.

We have seen in very recent times what this Bill could look like if enacted. Our very own government conducted varying levels of censorship during the pandemic in direct breach of Human Rights charters and the Nuremberg Code. The Australian population has been provided a front seat to the clearest example of what exempting laws would and could create which is an unintended conclusion of physical, emotional and psychological harm to Australians. The humans of Australia were provided a one view fits all solution with the very narrow-minded view of elected bureaucrats who sadly were misinformed by government that treatments were 'safe and effective' resulting in the deaths and injury of thousands of people including members of my family who now have permanent cardiac conditions. Had the other side been presented instead of censored the personal liberties and constitutionally protected human rights would not have been discarded.

This Bill is the introduction of a very authoritarian intrusive step into communism. A Bill where the rules do not apply to everyone draws attention to any government who attempts to create and implement it.

People are born with free will and therefore have the ability to access education which allows them to foster the deduction and discernment skills and critical thinking skills required to make the best informed consenting decisions. I do not provide any consent to the contents of this Bill. I will assure you that any politician who votes for this discriminatory censorship Bill will not be representing the views of consenting Australian.

There are other ways to tackle the issues of dis and misinformation and I suggest the government looks at its own track records in these areas before playing dictator to any free minded and free willed individual.

May God be with you as you ponder the above.