

Submission for ACMA Powers Bill 2023

This submission is based on the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023—Fact sheet, dated June 2023.

The very first statement in the *Fact Sheet* for this bill says:

Misinformation and disinformation pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Australians, as well as our democracy, society and economy.

This claim, alleged to be a “growing challenge”, is repeated in various permutations throughout the *Fact Sheet*, yet is never substantiated with any persuasive evidence.

This claim is then used to justify a raft of draconian and Orwellian rules and restrictions which it is proposed be placed upon online content in Australia.

Subsequent statements include:

Misinformation is online content that is false, misleading or deceptive, that is shared or created without an intent to deceive but can cause and contribute to serious harm.

Maybe God can know the absolute truth and falsity of information, but for human beings there is never universal agreement on what constitutes truth. It is up to each individual to decide for themselves what they choose to believe as truth and what they regard as false. This cannot be determined by law or by the arbitrary edict of some government department such as ACMA.

Then we come to the notable statement that:

the code...will not apply to authorised electoral and referendum content and other types of content such as **professional news...**

This is laughable. So called “professional news” is one of the main purveyors of propaganda that is deliberately intended to mislead and cause harm. There is nothing new in this fact. There is an old saying “Don’t believe anything you read in the newspapers”.

Every listed provision of the proposed legislation, as described in the *Fact Sheet*, is perched upon the very narrow base of the unproven assumptions of the truth of these opening statements about prevalence and dangers of misinformation and disinformation.

I strongly object to this proposed legislation. It is not needed. The documentation is cleverly written to camouflage an underlying agenda which is never overtly stated, but which is obvious, and that is to imposed a form of Orwellian centralised control of information, a veritable “Ministry of Truth”.

Such an idea is an anathema to the history and culture of Australia. It is an insult to the intelligence of the Australian people. It needs to be rejected outright as completely unacceptable.