

I write regarding the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

In the study of history, it is clearly seen that the first step towards tyranny is the stripping of free speech from the *hoi polloi*. Whether the established authority demanding the silence of the masses is the church or state, knowledge expansion is stifled. Some examples of tyranny perpetrators are:- the inquisition, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, and examples of victims of censorship:- Socrates, Galileo, Martin Luther, Bertrand Russell and Martin Luther King Jr.

There is nothing to commend this proposed bill.

It is now public knowledge that most of the government mandated medical protocols used for covid19 lacked scientific merit. The restriction of the free flow of information from credentialled medical professionals led to questionable and dangerous treatment protocols that cost the lives of many citizens.

The experiences of the last three years demonstrate how dangerous, to the “greater good” is the restriction of free speech.

Would the Labor government want this Bill to be made law and, in the future, used against their members and their political ideology if an extreme right-wing government was elected? Labor is rarely in government for more than one term.

Let us do a thought experiment. Imagine this law was in place, and that social media was the town square during the Howard government. All assertions on social media that the narrative of “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq was a lie, would be labelled disinformation and suppressed.

Simply put, if we don't have free speech, we don't have a democracy.

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