

Submission:  
Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill

I wish to express my opposition to the Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill.

- The Bill will empower ACMA to silence anything they interpret as “false information”.
- The State will dictate how to interpret whether information is acceptable or not.
- The State will control the availability of information from and to Australians.
- The State will decide what is truth and determine what is false.
- By the same token, whatever the government determines to be truth and authorises as truth cannot be declared false, deceptive or inaccurate by anyone

This amounts to state imposed sanitisation of all online information. There is no place in Australia for such dictatorial shenanigans reminiscent of what happens in dictatorships such as China, Russia and numerous other communist as well as religious-extremist and terrorist governments.

Australians are intelligent, well educated people, used to and capable of applying the principles of critical thinking and therefore well able to judge for themselves what is true and what is false. Our freedom to think for ourselves, to question and to speak out when something does not make sense, or is jeopardising democracy and human rights, is at stake.

Our culture promotes free access to information and acceptance of differing opinions and ideas. This is foundational to a democratic society that maintains justice for every individual. We don't need or want government officials arbitrating truth. The best remedy for misinformation is always free and open debate.

This bill is a clear curtailing of our democratic right to participate freely in open debate. It is a shocking assault on free speech and on our individual freedom of conscience and thought. It is an attempt to suppress dissenting voices or individuals who differ in their opinions from the government narrative, or who have information that does not fit with the government's idea of truth. For instance, there is information about cases of babies born alive after an abortion. Many politicians in power disbelieve the statements of professionals who assert to that fact. Under the status quo, this information can still be tested and assessed as to its accuracy. If this bill were to pass, government would very likely enshrine their narrative of “It is impossible for babies to be born after abortion, and this does not happen” as truth, and no dissenting voices would be allowed to find expression on censored social media, initially. It does not require a lot of imagination to envisage the next step - censoring individuals for expressing any disagreement on any media whatsoever, including private, business or NGO websites, then email, and eventually personal face-to-face conversations.

The government has not demonstrated correct and conscientious discernment of harmful online misinformation and disinformation in the past and already created much social and private trauma by declaring what is clearly disinformation as truth in numerous cases. For instance, disinformation is being spread on social media about gender fluidity, manipulating naive teens and pre-teens into disbelieving their biological gender identity, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Instead of taking steps to expose this manufactured social trend, the government, along with what appears to be the majority of medical and sociological professionals, has adopted the narrative of supporting this movement and even making it illegal in parts of Australia for parents, other family members or independent professionals to counsel these young people or express a contrary opinion to these victims of this disinformation that has been circulating on these social media sites.

I urge you in the strongest terms to reject this bill outright!