

To the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

Thank you for giving me opportunity to 'have my say' regarding the Communications, Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

To say that I am shocked by this Amendment Bill is an understatement! I am shocked that at the same time as our current government is proposing a "Voice" to give greater expression & recognition to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, the Misinformation/Disinformation Bill is also being proposed! What a contradiction!

I am a 70 year old Australian citizen & I take offence at our government thinking it needs to protect me & our community from the free exchange of thoughts & information shared on Digital Media Platforms. Our democratic way of life is in danger from such a proposal. Individuals, Families, Communities & Nations thrive & flourish where there is freedom of speech, opinion & religion. This Bill gives god-like powers to ACMA to prevent the DM Platforms from allowing any content they consider could 'cause harm'! Who are they? ACMA are not people I have voted to represent me. What are their beliefs & biases? Are they not human & therefore fallible and subjective like we all are? How can we trust their judgements? How can we not be absolutely appalled by this proposal as it more closely resembles the modus operandi of totalitarian states. Our government clearly has no trust in the Australian people to be able to make their own informed decisions in matters of debate. Sadly this works both ways and causes us to lose trust in our government and our democratic and legal processes.

Instead of such a proposal, alternative approaches should be explored that do not infringe upon freedom of speech & our liberties. My grandfather was part of the Light Horse Cavalry Charge in the Battle of Beersheba in 1917. Their idea to charge was considered crazy by their British commanders. If they had not been allowed to express their different idea and act on it the battle would not have been won. My grandfather & others like him bravely fought & died for our freedoms & liberties. The Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation Bill 2023 must not be accepted into Australian Law. It is un-Australian & un-Democratic as it would silence 'the voices' of the wonderful people of Australia.