

***‘Should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? ... Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.’***

*John Milton, 1644*

It is my view that we need not venture beyond the fact we cannot know anything for certain. However, we also cannot be certain of the private intentions of those charged with the execution of these duties. Further, it is not in the best interests of the Australian people (or any people) to limit free speech, because without it we cannot challenge the status quo and our country will fester and eventually fail as demonstrated throughout history.

### **Replication Crisis**

Everyone is aware of the replication crisis in scientific research. A survey reported in Nature disclosed *‘more than 70% of researchers have tried and failed to reproduce another scientist’s experiments, and more than half have failed to reproduce their own experiments’.*(2016)

One need only look to their own experience over a lifetime to recall examples of once unimpeachable and heavily promoted theories now disproven, discarded and largely forgotten. The cereal heavy Healthy Food Pyramid is a favourite example.

### **Corruption**

According to Transparency International since 2012 Australia has plummeted 10 points in the Corruption Perceptions Index, now ranked 13<sup>th</sup> below Hong Kong. (2023)

*‘The 13 different data sources used to calculate the CPI all measure various aspects of corruption in the public sector. This ranges from bribery, the diversion of public funds and the effective prosecution of corruption cases to adequate legal frameworks, access to information, and legal protections for whistleblowers, journalists and investigators’.* (2019)

This is not to suggest that should matters improve the proposal may be viable, only to establish that corruption is very healthy and active in this country. In fact, any expansion of government inevitably leads to greater opportunities for corruption.

### **Conclusion**

If you cannot guarantee the accuracy of information and we cannot trust the institutions that might administer this service it is clear that any attempt to establish a misinformation authority would be a costly and feckless endeavour.

Always remember the capacity you grant yourselves, you grant to future governments. Despite (or due to) your efforts to suppress them, it might be a government comprised of those of whom you yourself disapprove. Think what they might do with such powers.

## References

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